

## PROF. ROYCE'S REFUTATION OF REALISM AND PLURALISM.

Professor Royce's recent book, *The World and the Individual (First Series)*, is without doubt one of the most substantial of contemporary contributions to philosophy. The work is avowedly devoted to a systematic consideration of the central problems of metaphysics and epistemology. It proposes, moreover, not only to be comprehensive and fundamental, but irresistible in its logical force. The author's claim for the "absolute logical necessity" of his conception of being (*The World and the Individual*, p. 349) will naturally be accepted as a challenge by any one who ventures to dissent. I undertake in this discussion to evade this same logical necessity by proposing certain miscellaneous criticisms, first of Professor Royce's general method, and secondly of his systematic refutation of realism and pluralism.

A critic approaches Professor Royce's dialectic with some timidity in view of his preparedness for a very aggressive sort of defence. There are three doors which invite the entrance of the dissenter; No. 1, labelled "Realism"; No. 2, labelled "Mysticism"; No. 3, labelled "Critical Rationalism." If you enter any one of the three, "Absolute Logical Necessity" is there waiting for you; and, after being vigorously assaulted, you are led in a dazed condition directly into No. 4, which is the proper abiding place of this monster, and is called "Constructive Idealism." The critic's only hope of safety is to linger outside, and bombard the whole fortification with masked batteries.

Professor Royce's treatment of ultimate problems is essentially epistemological. His classification and criticism of metaphysical theories, as well as his own constructive argument, are based upon a consideration of the ways in which reality presents itself as an object of thought. He is "one of those who hold that when you ask the question: What is an Idea? and: How can Ideas stand in any true relation to Reality? you attack the world-knot in the way that promises most for the untying of its meshes" (*ibid.*, pp. 16, 17). Realism he finds to be a metaphysical theory defining the real as that which is independent of ideas. Mysticism is a definition of the real as that which satisfies ideas by substituting an irrational immediacy. For "Critical Rationalism," the real is empirically verifiable truth. Finally, the author himself finds that to be real which "presents in a completed experience the whole meaning of a System of Ideas" (*ibid.*, p. 61). These definitions show not only that Professor Royce's method is that of reflection upon thought, philosophy's self-criticism, but that the real end of the discussion is a logical one. Although he announces as his central problem, "What is Reality?" (*ibid.*, p. 6), it soon becomes evident that he is not seeking to discover what is real, so much as what it is to be real. In short, it is the conception of being that he is concerned with first and last. The object of study is the intension rather than the extension of that term. This it seems to me is an essentially fruitless metaphysical

method, which found its *reductio ad absurdum* as long ago as the time of Parmenides. Its essential fruitlessness follows from the fact that it is untrue to the original philosophical consciousness. Philosophy is begotten by the desire to know more about a certain definite world that is already evident in part. The philosopher is desirous not of creating but of enlarging knowledge. He would never seek after reality if he had not already found it. The proper philosophical motive is not the self-conscious pursuit after the inner meaning of unconscious utterances, but the desire to know more and better the world that is continuous with the thinker's practical life. The philosophical spirit does not direct a man from the study of real things to the study of the adjective "real," but to a study of more real things in the hope that he may compass all things in some thoughtful belief. He has no need of defining the predicate of existence, nor is this a part of his search; for he is already familiar with that predicate before he can conceive the philosophical problem. I believe that it is only by being true to the original healthy philosophical impulse, that our results will be sane and enduring.

But the fallacy of making the idea of being the object of our reflection, is more directly evident in the fact that such reflection can never reach a definition of its object. A definition that contains the term to be defined, is, of course, no definition at all; and every definition must contain the existential predicate. As Professor Royce himself assures us, every universal proposition cancels certain particular beings; and in so doing it must employ the idea of being. The existential predicate cannot, therefore, be defined; and it very properly does not occur to the ordinary mind to attempt to define it. The man who first enters upon philosophical reflection is already familiar with a great many real things of various kinds. Some of these fulfill his desires, others thwart them; some appear to be independent of his will, some dependent; for some he has appropriate ideas and meanings, others appear only in immediacy, and can be represented only symbolically. But he calls them all "things," or "facts," and they already have about them one common aspect which he recognises implicitly in the crudest activities of his consciousness. As our human being proceeds with his reflection he continues to assume this predicate. His aim is to enlarge, and possibly to unify his experience; that is, to find more real things, or to find certain latent similarities in those he has already observed. His problem is best expressed by the question: What is all reality *like*? Is it composed of many ingredients after the manner of his present experience? Is it reducible to some one of those ingredients? Or is it all composed of some neutral element analogous to certain of those ingredients? He is interested in the composition of the real, and not in reality as an hypostasised aspect of his experience. The true classification of philosophical theory will be that which states the different answers to this objective inquiry. Realism, Mysticism, Critical Rationalism, even Constructive Idealism may be so defined, and made to assume the form of hypotheses about the composition of this world—a world whose reality is accepted in the beginning as an aspect of the preliminary experience of

each thinker. By such definitions Professor Royce would not only have used the first three of these titles in a manner more acceptable to their several proprietors, but would have given his own doctrine greater vitality and concreteness. He has abstracted in the case of each of these historical doctrines the conception of the relation of the real to consciousness, and defined the doctrine in terms of it. But independence, fulfillment and validity are supposed by realists, mystics and critical rationalists respectively, to inhere in a being that is given, and that possesses a rich qualitative character apart from this specific aspect. This aspect is not defined as constituting the existential predicate, but as being part of a whole existence and sharing the existential predicate with the remainder. The mystic, e. g., in asserting that the real fulfils thought by substituting an irrational immediacy, would not mean that this aspect of the real is synonymous with its reality as such. The *immediacy* is the real, and its reality-aspect is its *givenness*, its *actuality in experience*. The claim of this immediacy to be a synthetic and all-comprehensive reality rests upon the supposition that in a certain unique experience you may see all reality to be so encompassed. The normal human experience lacks not actuality, but completeness and unity. "The real fulfils," and "reality is fulfilment," are not convertible expressions. Herein is a subtle ambiguity that is constantly threatening Professor Royce's discussion. The ambiguity is due to the substitution of a psychological account of the philosophical activity for that activity itself. "My intellect desires the real." "The real, therefore," says Professor Royce, "is the object of your intellect's desire." Now the real which your intellect desires, and the real defined entirely in terms of that desiring, cannot be the same. The desiring cannot be without an object other than its own desiring. The intellectual inquiry assumes the possibility of an answer, and that answer cannot be a repetition of the question itself. If thought is to be a quest at all, it must be in quest of something other than its own quest; otherwise a man may lift himself by his bootstraps. That of which it is in quest, it already assumes to be something, to be a given fact; otherwise it could not figure as an object of thought. So it means nothing to define being as fulfilment, or say that to be means to fulfil. That which is, must *be* in order to fulfil; and its being is implied in its fulfilment, and cannot be identical therewith.

In consideration of these facts, it seems to me that we are safe in standing by the common-sense assertion that being is an irrational term, contained as an aspect of the first experience, and connoting nothing but synonyms. Moreover I believe that it is fair to say that Professor Royce, in other parts of his own discussion, not only recognises this ultimate fact-aspect of things, but makes a very generous use of it. This same irrational, so impossible at a time when logic and epistemology are in control, is nevertheless called upon to assume the very dignified rôles of Will and Freedom. But for the present let us turn to an examination of our author's criticism of realism. Our discussion up to this point has already precipitated the issue, since realism is primarily an outgrowth of that common-sense reference to

an irrational factor in reality which we have already defended. Professor Royce's account of the matter is of great importance, not only for the sweeping character of its criticism, but for the part which it plays in preparing the way for his constructive argument. He so orders his dialectic as to involve pluralism in the same logical ruin that befalls the realism of his own defining, and the Absolute is already in sight when this encounter is over.

Since Professor Royce has himself defined the realism which is the opponent of his dialectic, it behooves us to discover whether that opponent is so truly representative as to make the battle one of genuine strategic importance. There is to be noted, in the first place, a very serious ambiguity, arising from the author's failure in the early part of the discussion to specify his use of the term knowledge. Realism, he announces (*ibid.*, page 66), "asserts that . . . independence of your knowing processes, and of *all such knowing processes*, as is your seeing, i. e., of all actual or possible external knowing processes whatever, is not only a universal character of real objects, but also constitutes the very definition of the reality of the known object itself, so that to be, is to be such that an external knower's knowledge, whether it occurs or does not occur, can make no difference, as mere knowledge, to the inner reality of the known object." Elsewhere (*ibid.*, p. 100) Professor Royce illustrates his definition by reference to Locke, and accepts as typically realistic the latter's account of his Primary Qualities: "The particular bulk, number, etc., of the parts of fire, or snow, are really in them, *whether any one's senses perceive them or no*." So far it would seem that he means by realism the proposition that reality is essentially independence of any form of consciousness. Such a definition, however, represents neither common sense nor any historical type of philosophy. Even materialism, which it approaches most closely, has invariably selected as the essence of reality some definite substance, such as the water of Thales, and the ether of some contemporary "Monists"; or certain spatial predicates, as in the case of the more refined materialism that has issued from Galileo and Descartes. Materialism is a positive ontology, and not a negative epistemology. Nor has common sense ever regarded as essentially real that which might exist apart from consciousness. Common sense has always posited the reality of conscious beings, together with the subjective content of their minds, and has recognised consciousness as in this case identical with existence itself.

But Professor Royce, in a later passage (*ibid.*, p. 96), gives to realism a very much more liberal interpretation. "One could be a realist in his definition of Being," he says, "and still insist that all Being is in its nature entirely psychological." He intimates his doubt as to the possibility of consistently working out such a theory, suggesting the difficulty of dealing with certain relations; but realism evidently no longer means the definition of reality as independence of consciousness. Schopenhauer, with his conception of will, and Berkeley, with his spirits, would be realists in so far as they conceived it to be impossible adequately to represent these entities in idea; and one would be liable to a similar charge who

maintained that, e. g., *A*'s selfhood was indifferent to *B*'s thought about it. Professor Royce now explains his definition as follows: "You, for instance, as a conscious mind, might be viewed by a realist as a being that he would call real in his sense. That assertion, if made by a typical realist, would simply mean that the contents of your mind, although present within your own consciousness, are real without regard to whether anybody else knows of your existence or not." (*Ibid.*, p. 96.) Realism now means that it is of the essence of reality to be independent of such representative ideas as may be referred to it. The entity may be an object of experience. If so, there is a primary order of experience in which it is real, and which is to be contrasted with a secondary order of ideas, having a purely symbolic and representative value. The real may be essentially irrational, or accidentally irrational, i. e., capable of being rationalised; but its being is in no sense derived from ideas.

This conception of realism corresponds more nearly with common sense, in so far as there can be said to be any utterance of that authority in this particular matter. Common people are not epistemologists, and realism is an epistemological theory. Hence it is doubtful whether there is any such thing as the "naïve realism" so commonly referred to. But there are certain general practical postulates which are capable of a realistic interpretation. The common man assumes that things, for the most part, "stay put," i. e., may be depended upon to endure for some period of time. At any rate they are regardless of his will, unless he can bring other things to bear upon them. He must reconcile himself to them, even if he is to change them. They are what they are, for better or for worse. He is liable to respect the independent reality of other human beings in proportion as they exhibit a similar indifference to his will. This same presumption applies in the case of his *thought* about things. He imagines what they may be, names them, defines them, asks about them, constantly taking for granted that if any discrepancy between them and his thoughts is revealed, *he* must give way. The facts are stolidly indifferent to his gropings, and unsympathetically "stare him in the face," when he finds them. The term "fact" signifies more of reality for the common mind than any other popular quasi-epistemological expression, and as ordinarily employed it stands for the givenness of the real. We have it "on our hands." Possibly the tacit realism of every-day life might be summed up by the saying: "It is a *situation* and not a theory that confronts us." Or, as Professor Royce well says in another connection, "Necessity comes home to us men through the medium of a given fact" (*ibid.*, p. 257).

We may now state a definition of realism that seems to me to be representative of both philosophical realism and common sense; and to be the most consistent statement possible of what Professor Royce has named realism in his account. The realist believes reality to be a *datum*, a *somewhat that is given independently of whatever ideas may be formed about it*. According to the realist, the real has a *locus*, a *habitat*, whether or no within some individual experience.

Here the real primarily *is*, and *is*, regardless of whatever secondary meanings, symbols, names, relations, or ideas of any kind may be referred to it. The realist conceives of a *thing*, and *thought about that thing*. They are two orders, not necessarily two kinds; for the thing may be a thought. But in every case the thing of the first order is indifferent, as far as its being is concerned, to the thought of the second order; which may reveal, but does not constitute or create its object. Realism being so defined, has Professor Royce succeeded in overthrowing it?

The first step in his argument is to inoculate realism with pluralism. It should be evident from what has been said, that the realist has in mind a very definite relation between the idea and its object. The real may be found or interpreted by ideas, which are nevertheless adventitious as respects its being. The idea, on the other hand, is strictly dependent upon the reality, being derived therefrom, pointing thereto, and tested thereby. This relation may present difficulties, but the realist means it, and would never recognise as descriptive of himself, Professor Royce's statement of the *absolute mutual separateness* of idea and object. Nevertheless our author argues that this mutual independence is the logical outcome of the realist's position as stated above. Let us examine the argument.

In the first place, as we have seen, realism defines the real object *o* so as to be independent of the idea of *o*. One may suppose the idea of *o* to vary or to vanish; and there is no relation between the two such as to compel a corresponding change in *o*. But the idea of *o* is itself a real object, and upon the realistic basis must therefore be similarly independent of—what? Professor Royce says, of *o* (*ibid.*, pp. 265, 266); but this is obviously fallacious. The realist would contend that the *idea of o*, as a psychological entity, was independent, not of *o*, but of another idea, the idea of *idea of o*. So this proves no reciprocal independence.

But in another connection, we are told that, "The idea will have to be, in its own separate essence, independent of the object. Otherwise, by merely examining the idea, taken by itself, you could prove something about the existence of its object" (*ibid.*, p. 119). The contention is, supposedly, that if the idea were in every case in some way related to an object, the presence of the idea would be a sure indication of the reality of its object; and the being of the object would so be logically dependent upon the existence of its idea, which, according to our author, would contradict the realistic hypothesis. Now how far is this argument really cogent? Let us suppose the idea to be in every case dependent upon an object. Consider any cognitive idea, e. g. the idea *o*, where by hypothesis the idea is derived from *o*. The idea has a certain content, *o'*, and a certain objective reference. *o'* may be attributed to reality in general, or in particular. If to reality in general, then its object, *reality in general*, is, it is true, deducible from it; i. e., finding the idea of *o*, you may be sure of reality in general. Or the idea of *o* may attribute *o'* to reality in particular. In this case reality in some particular is deducible from the presence of the idea of *o*; i. e. the specific locus to which *o* is attributed, may be assumed to exist. That locus is defined by its context, and the experienced self

of the moment is a part of that context. But has the realist's original position meanwhile been abandoned? Has reality become dependent upon idea, when reality in general, or a certain direction from the experienced self of the moment, is made a certainty by the presence of an idea? We may apply Professor Royce's own test. Under the circumstances described, no change in *o* need follow from a change or the disappearance of the idea of *o*. Two kinds of change may be considered, (1) eternal, and (2) temporal. (1) Omit the idea of *o* from the universe, and only my deduction of *o* is impaired, since, by hypothesis, the idea of *o* was originally derived from *o*, and not *o* from its idea. (2) Cause the idea of *o* to vary or disappear in time, and *o* does not necessarily change; for *o* need not be sensitive thereto any more than a body to its shadow. On the other hand the annihilation of *o* will inevitably affect its object. (1) Omit *o* from the universe, and you destroy the idea, since the idea was by hypothesis derived therefrom. (2) Cause *o* to disappear in time, and you destroy the idea, since you destroy the self, from which *o* was defined as a direction. *o* may, however, *change* without a concomitant variation of the idea of *o*; or the idea may have inaccurately represented *o* from the beginning. These will be the cases of erroneous ideas, to which our author refers. Such have an objective point of reference, to which they ascribe a content that does not correspond to the actual experienced content. Thus it is possible to state the realistic hypothesis in such a way as to involve the relation of an idea to its object without vitiating the independence of the object; or, so as to specify that the object shall be independent of its idea, without implying a similar independence on the part of the idea. The importance of this analysis consists in its defense of realism against Professor Royce's imputation of abstract pluralism. The realist means a certain definite kind of relation between idea and object. The most important step in Professor Royce's dialectic is the reduction of that relation to absolute mutual aloofness. The writer finds no other proof to warrant this step than that which has been examined above. For the sake of clarifying the issue let us formulate as representative examples as possible, to express the realistic position at this stage of the discussion:

1. An idea of the State House in Boston. My idea has a content derived from actual experience, and consisting mainly in visual memories. I attribute this content to a certain locus in human experience. That locus is defined by spatial and temporal direction from my present moment of experience, and by contiguity with other remembered and imagined moments of experience. My idea may refer to the past state of its object, in which case I judge that were I to retrace my own experience back from the present moment, I should meet with a definite fulfilled expectation. In this case my idea is incorrect in so far as such expectation would be thwarted. The degree of surprise would indicate the degree of error. On the other hand, my idea may refer to the present condition of the State House. In this case, I judge that were I now standing in a certain place in Boston, I would not be at a loss, but would recognise my surroundings. Meanwhile the State House

may have been burned to the ground, in which case my error would consist in the hypothetical defeat of expectation, the failure of my present mental content to be such as to prepare me for the actual experience to which I refer. My idea, it is seen, has been derived from the actually experienced object, and is not possible in a universe without the individual State House in Boston. Were the object to become in time absolutely nothing, my self and my idea must disappear with it. For the object as referred to is a direction from the self; and one direction cannot be lost without the loss of all direction, or that orientation upon which self-conscious existence depends. Nevertheless the State House may have burned down without my ever knowing it; i. e. a relative change of content may have taken place, and have falsified my idea without at the same time changing it. On the other hand, the main realistic contention holds, since the waxing and waning of my idea has no effect upon the Boston State House, and a universe without my idea might still be a universe containing the Boston State House.

2. The realist's idea of the world. Professor Royce has used this same illustration in connection with the specious argument cited above. He maintains that since the realistic ideas of the world are real objects, they must be as regardless of the real world as the real world is of them (*ibid.*, pp. 135, 136). But it is perfectly possible for the realist to hold that his philosophy, though as content of his conscious life it is independent of what ideas others may form about it, is nevertheless as idea entirely derived from the actual world of experience. The realist's philosophy will consist in a set of ideas referred by him to the totality of experience. Their truth will mean their power to prepare their thinker for an experience indefinitely enlarged or prolonged. They will be erroneous in so far as they are baffled when confronted by experience, or in so far as such a perplexity is possible.

In such terms as these the realistic position may be stated without involving it in an absurd and self-contradictory statement of the absolute mutual independence of idea and object. Such a mutual independence once admitted, it is very easy, as Professor Royce does, to show that it prevents the idea from being an idea at all, since it could not refer to an object, or to the standards of truth and error.

Though we decline to assent to Professor Royce's reduction of realism to abstract pluralism, the next stage in the argument must be examined in the interests of pluralism itself. Assuming that he has reduced realism to a statement of the absolute mutual separation of idea and object, he considers such independence of many beings as representative of pluralism, and proceeds to attack that general thesis. At the outset let me enter a general demurrer to the way in which our author conducts his case. In the main he takes for granted that the burden of proof lies with the pluralist, and demands of him that he shall *prove* the existence of many absolutely separate beings. Now the pluralist, having empirical predilections, very properly refuses to make any such effort. He is concerned neither with abstract separateness, as the monist defines it for him, nor with proof, as the

rationalist defines it for him. He has found the world to be many. He has encountered, e. g., other selves, many of whom think quite differently, and all of whom feel quite differently, from himself. Such selves are not absolutely separate; on the contrary their community is the very source of their mutual discovery. He alleges that there is in the world just so much unity, and so much difference, as there seems to be. His proof of it is the seeing of it. Professor Royce, on the other hand, admits by the whole character of his discussion, that he is undertaking to demonstrate; and that he is undertaking to demonstrate the necessary reality of a transcendental unity. The burden of proof lies fairly and squarely with the transcendentalist. The importance of this demurrer is twofold. In the first place, it makes plain the futility of setting up for controversial purposes an absolute pluralism, which no other than a transcendentalist could ever have conceived, and the destruction of which injures nothing so much as the prestige of his own method. In the second place this general objection will very largely destroy the cogency of our author's specific arguments, of which we may consider three.

1. Applying first the empirical test, Professor Royce challenges the pluralist to find in the world any cases of objects that are mutually independent. For some reason he weakens his defiance by limiting such objects to "any two physically real objects which are so independent of each other that no change in one of them need correspond to any change of the other" (*ibid.*, p. 125). As respects "physically real objects," one will readily admit that in defining them so, Professor Royce has already precluded the sort of independence he assigns to pluralism. It is ridiculous to demand of the pluralist that he find two objects so independent, that he cannot imagine one to influence the other; and it is more ridiculous to posit that such objects shall be assumed to be "physical," i. e., already defined as in space together. The pluralist would naturally reply that, as Professor Royce allows, he is not concerned in this particular argument with hypothetical possibilities, but with what he *finds* to be the case. He finds physical objects that, so far as he knows, do not influence one another. The actual variations of the one, as far as experience informs him, effect no concomitant variations in the other. More notable for their indifference to one another are the feelings and ideas of different subjects. In innumerable cases, *A's* idea *x* has been correct or incorrect, has come into existence or ceased to be, with no effect upon *B's* idea *y*; at least such is the testimony of experience. And we can conceive that in our world such objects should be eternally independent of one another, so that the changes of one should never in any way affect the other.

To be sure, we cannot conceive two objects to be so related that we cannot *conceive* them not to be so related. In the case of the independent objects that we experience or imagine, there will always be for our knowledge the possibility of a change to a relation of dependence. I can imagine *a* and *b* to be so sundered that no variation of one as a matter of fact ever effects the other. But I cannot describe that independence so as to preclude for my imagination the possibility of some

event that may bring  $a$  and  $b$  into a relation of dependence. And here Professor Royce would contend that this theoretical possibility of interaction, is itself a bond of union. Given  $a$  and  $b$ , admit that though at present variations of one do not affect the other, they may conceivably come into such a relation of mutual affectibility; and you have already destroyed their independence. But why so? On the contrary, you have merely expressed your inability to state that  $a$  and  $b$  may not at some time change their relation. That possibility, which Professor Royce holds to be a part of the being of  $a$  and  $b$ , is merely a confession of one's ignorance as respects what the future, or the entire universe, may contain; and by the realistic hypothesis, this does not necessarily concern the objects.

There is great danger of confusing the contention just stated with what is distinctly another logical issue. "Possibility of definition," and "definition of a possibility," are obviously very different propositions. To be unable to define  $a$  and  $b$  so as to prevent their theoretical modification to a relation of dependence, is not the same as to define  $a$  and  $b$  as actually capable of entering into such a relation. So we have not yet raised the question as to whether  $a$  and  $b$  could be actually independent, and at the same time potentially dependent. This question of the possibility of change from independence to dependence is specifically discussed in the next stage of Professor Royce's argument. But up to this point the pluralist may insist that he finds objects which do not actually affect one another in their present observed changes, and that he can conceive the possibility of the permanent or eternal separateness of such. The burden of proof surely lies with those who deny the actuality or the possibility of such objects. For experience, though it testifies to the connectedness of much of reality, testifies to no ultimate all-comprehensive unity.

2. "Assuming the real world . . . to contain many mutually independent beings," says Professor Royce, "I will prove" that "the many different real beings once thus defined can never come to acquire or later to be conceived as possessing any possible real linkages or connections, binding these different beings together; and so these beings will remain forever wholly sundered, as if in different worlds" (*ibid.*, p. 127). Assume  $a$  and  $b$ , so defined that one might remain unchanged if the other vanished. Could they ever become so related as to be in any way dependent upon one another? Such a change would involve the entrance into the world of a new fact, e. g.,  $a$  influencing  $b$ . Can this fact come to be, and yet be purely adventitious as respects  $a$  and  $b$ ? Professor Royce argues that if the new fact were purely adventitious it could not constitute a link. The argument is much clearer if we reverse the order. Suppose  $a$  to be influencing  $b$ ; then  $a$  and  $b$  could never have been indifferent to one another's existence. For had  $a$  at any previous time disappeared, the event, *influenced by  $a$* ," would have been eliminated from the future of  $b$ . In other words, if you define an object  $b$  so as to affirm that it sometime will be changed by another object  $a$ , you have already defined  $b$  as affect-

ible by  $a$ , and so not independent of it. In this sense, once dependent, always dependent.

So far I admit the cogency of the argument. But the real value of the conclusion is determined by other considerations. In the first place, as has been remarked, the pluralist is not necessarily concerned with the reality of objects that are not in any way subject to alteration by one another. There may still be such independence of origin and such independence of being as refuses to be embraced in any closer unity. Again, the pluralist is not necessarily concerned that the absolutely independent objects, if there be such, should ever become dependent. Finally, he will still deny the validity of the more extreme pretensions of our author's argument. For Professor Royce has undertaken to prove that such independent beings as make no difference to one another can never acquire *any sort of relation*, but must remain "wholly sundered, as if in different worlds." This conclusion would follow from the above argument only in case we assumed that all relations involve dependence; and such is by no means either proven or self-evident so far in our discussion.

Let us suppose, e. g., that  $a$  and  $b$  are thought together by a finite consciousness  $M$ , so as to give rise to the new psychical fact, the idea  $a'b'$ . They might still have been once so independent of one another that the vanishing of one would not affect the other. The non-being of  $a$  would have made  $a'b'$  impossible, but that would make no necessary difference to  $b$ . For by the realistic presupposition,  $b$  is indifferent to  $a'b'$ , i. e., to thought about it. What  $b$  is and what  $b$  becomes, is by no means necessarily altered by what may be imputed to it of relation to other objects. To one who objects that we have not linked  $a$  and  $b$  but only their ideas, it is sufficient to reply that they are at any rate in the same world of thought and possible experience, and that they have obtained some sort of connection that they did not originally have. But Professor Royce might still reply that  $a$  and  $b$  defined as independent, could possess no such resemblance as that which would be necessary in order to make their comprehension in one thought possible. This is the substance of his third criticism of the "independent beings."

3. "The many real beings thus defined can have no common characters; they are wholly different from one another" (*ibid.*, p. 127). Suppose two objects  $a$  and  $b$  to possess a common quality  $Q$ . Could they at the same time be defined as independent in the sense that one could vanish without affecting the other? Professor Royce replies in the negative, alleging that if  $a$  were to vanish with  $Q$  in its possession,  $b$  would necessarily lose  $Q$ , and so change. Or, to state it differently, if  $a$  were to vanish with  $Q$ , and  $b$  were to persist with  $Q'$ ,  $Q$  and  $Q'$  could not be the same. The proposition is simple enough upon the supposition that for the realist similarity involves identity. Common sense would without hesitation attribute any quality such as  $Q$  to quite separate objects such as  $a$  and  $b$ . But even common sense would not conceive of  $Q$  as an identical entity leading a double life. On the contrary, similarity is commonly regarded as dependent upon the judgment of

a synthetic consciousness. One *finds*  $a$  resembling  $b$  in some particular,  $Q$ . In turning from  $a$  to  $b$  one experiences recognition as respects one part of the content of  $b$ . Now cannot  $a$  and  $b$  be independent, and yet similar in this sense? As has already been maintained, togetherness in consciousness may be adventitious as respects the being of the objects so experienced. Then it is no part necessarily of the being of  $a$  that it should be found to be like  $b$ , or different from the indefinite number of other objects with which conceivably it might be compared.

But would not the very possibility of such comparison indicate some sameness or community of character as already present? If  $a$  and  $b$  can be thought together must they not already be alike in that they are members of the same spiritual universe? Or, supposing finite consciousness  $M$  to compare  $a$  and  $b$ , were  $a$  and  $b$  not previously alike in that each was capable of becoming a part of  $M$ ? We must reply in the affirmative, and would seem to be compelled to resort to some other comparing consciousness, which if it were not an eternal and all-embracing consciousness, would refer us in turn to another and so on *ad infinitum*. It must be admitted, then, that Professor Royce is upon us with his Absolute unless we can define similarity apart from actual joint presence in consciousness. And this issue is of the greatest strategic importance, because it involves the fundamental epistemological argument which is elaborated in the later portions of the book. It is there maintained that an idea can have an object, and be true or false, only when the intention of the idea is noted by a consciousness that embraces the totality of the world, and can observe the degree to which the idea attains its end. Must the fact of truth or error, or the fact of similarity, be contained in one individual synthetic consciousness?

The pluralist will reply finally, that it is perfectly legitimate to define sameness in terms of possible experience. Suppose  $a$  and  $b$  to be alike in the particular  $Q_1$  when compared in the consciousness  $M$ . Before this observed relation there was that which made it possible;  $a$  in itself possessed a definite character; and  $b$  in itself a definite character. Whoever experienced  $a$ , experienced  $Q_1$ ; whoever experienced  $b$ , experienced  $Q_2$ . The sameness of  $Q_1$  and  $Q_2$  consisted in the fact that should  $a$  and  $b$  be compared, just this likeness  $Q$ , might be noted. Moreover this fact of sameness was not a *mere* possibility of experience, but existed in the experienced content of  $a$  and  $b$  severally. When  $a$  and  $b$  are actually compared, there is, to be sure, in  $Q$  a new fact of *observed* sameness. But such new facts cannot be explained away on any hypothesis. That finite individual  $M$  should come to see the resemblance between  $a$  and  $b$  denotes a new fact in the universe; a fact previously contained potentially in the separate elements here synthesised.

Similarly, one may contend that the truth or falsity of an idea can be construed as the hypothetical fulfilment or defeat of expectation. Subject  $M$ , holding idea  $x$  of reality, is mentally so constituted that were he to experience the content of that locus which his judgment designates as direction from himself, he would experience some degree of surprise or recognition.

A far more careful examination of the query, "What is truth?" as well as an examination of the problem of individuality, would be necessary before Professor Royce's challenge could be adequately answered. We have considered his refutation of realism and pluralism, in so far as it is nominally concerned with these theories. Thus considered, the argument is a fragment, since, according to our author's plan of campaign, realism and pluralism are to appear again as "almost persuaded," under the title of "Critical Rationalism." But it must suffice to express the belief that the general line of defence here projected could be maintained to the end.

I hope that these arguments may remind some who are of an empirical turn of mind that the great critical epistemology of *a priori* idealism is as yet unanswered; and at the same time suggest that it is not unanswerable. The writer of them arrogates to himself no little virtue for having turned from the tempting ethical and metaphysical quarry contained in this volume of transcendentalism, to an attentive examination of its proof.

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