nóema
Rivista online di filosofia

THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN PHENOMENOLOGY IN JOSIAH ROYCE'S *NEW PHENOMENOLOGY*.

Reflections on the 1878-1880 *Thought Diary* in Dialogue with the Philosophy of Contemplative Practice in Husserlian Phenomenology and Peircean Pragmatism.

Jason Bell

The origins of an American phenomenology, whose later developments were appreciatively read by the founder of German phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, as well as other key figures in continental philosophy, can be dated to 1878-1880 in a hand-written notebook, entitled the *Thought Diary*, written by a young professor of literature at the University of California, Josiah Royce (1855-1916), in which he proposed the outlines of what he termed the «*New Phenomenology*», one that would trace the creative interaction of the real and the ideal in consciousness, placing phenomena in the «*honored place*» of philosophical inquiry. This honored place is given it owing to phenomenology's study of ideal interests in *aspects* of reality, given from subjective perspectives in space and time, and yet that open onto vistas of intersubjectively valid essences and the sound understanding of reality, thereby linking the ethical desire to know, the ideal attainment of knowledge, and the known thing as an aspect of reality. Through this linkage, phenomenology finds a middle path among the undifferentiated monism of a block universe, dualisms of ideal and real discrete substances, realisms, in which reality is merely imprinted upon passive observers, and subjective idealisms, in which we may only know the conditions of our subjectivity, and nothing of the real thing-in-itself. The *Diary* has, until this volume of the *Transactions,* remained unpublished as a whole.

Husserl was introduced to the thought of Royce, through the interpretations of William Hocking, in 1902; this interest continued to develop a decade later, through a dissertation that Husserl directed on Royce's thought, written by a former Master's student of Royce's at Harvard, Winthrop Bell.[1] Bell's dissertation, and its citations of Royce, will be key to tracing the subsequent developments of Royce's phenomenological thought after the *Diary*. To distinguish the 1878-1880 *Diary* from Royce's subsequent publications, most of which are sourced from Bell, the former will be italicized when quoted, the latter will be given in normal type (whereas if the quotation is mainly normal type, and with certain words in italics, the italics are Royce's own). Another key text in the interpretation of the *Diary* will be Royce's *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*[2], his first original monograph, published five years after the completion of the *Diary*. Royce terms that work, in the introduction, a «phenomenology of the religious consciousness», and by «religious» Royce describes the way in which ideality and reality are reciprocally related, in contrast to the anti-metaphysical theory of knowledge of then-contemporary idealism, as well as in contrast to metaphysical dualism and realism, in which ideality and reality are separated as discrete substances. This «religion», for Royce, indicates the actual

[1] Winthrop Bell is no relation to the author of this article.

[2] J. Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston 1885.

binding of ideality and reality in true and false relations that marks the origins of the philosophical religion, a binding broken in the turn to naïve realism, dualism, or anti-metaphysical idealism. This sense of the fitting-together of ideality and reality in consciousness is key in the *New Phenomenology*, as an opposition to tendencies in Royce's contemporary philosophy which conflated or divorced ideality and reality.

Royce's phenomenology helps us to gain a sense of «practice» that unifies two moments of philosophy: the contemplative part, favored by Plato, Aristotle, and classical philosophy, and the active part, favored by Hegel, James, and Romantic philosophy. Indeed, this sense of practice leading to contemplative fulfillment is, in a crucial way, science and philosophy itself. As Royce wrote in *The Conception of God*, practice itself shows us a certain kind of essence: practice, like reason, binds together «many moments in my own flowing experience to the same object, not presented in any one of those moments…»[3]. The relation involved in practice means that:

> All these moments are really fragments of one Unity of Consciousness, of a Unity not bound to the limitations of our own flow of successive and numerically separate experiences, although inclusive, both of this flow, and of these various experiences themselves, – in their very fragmentariness, – but also in their relationships.[4]

It shows the psychological route to and through the metaphysical. Our perspectival sundering is not, then, a mere metaphysical divorce, because practice unifies fragments into related meanings. The phenomena are ordered by *logos*, the root meaning of phenomenology. Practice, for Royce, has its metaphysical upshot, as a noumenon, or thing in itself, viewed from within. It thus tells us something about a rational world in which such unifying practice is possible.

When we consider glowing praise for Royce's thought found among the leading lights of early continental phenomenology – ranging from Husserl (for whom Royce is an important thinker who may only be treated as such)[5], and Edith Stein (for whom Royce, along with Husserl, discovered the importance of alterity to knowledge),[6] to Gabriel Marcel (for whom Royce made crucial contributions to the understanding of the I-thou relation)[7] – as well as leading lights of more recent scholarship, such as Karl Otto-Apel, who observed that Royce's philosophy of interpretation is without doubt the American philosophy closest to the tradition of

[3] J. Royce, *The Conception of God*, New York, Macmillan,1897, p. 178.
[4] *Ibidem.*
[5] See J. M. Bell, "The German Translation of Royce's Epistemology by Husserl's Student Winthrop Bell: A Neglected Bridge of Pragmatic-Phenomenological Interpretation?", in «*The Pluralist*», 6.1 (2011.
[6] Stein favorably cited Royce in her dissertation on empathy, written under Husserl's direction.
[7] Marcel's articles on Royce were published in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* in 1917–1918, and in *La Métaphysique de Royce*, Aubier, Paris 1945). Translated by Virginia and Gordon Ringer as *Royce's Metaphysics* , The Henry Regnery Co., Chicago 1956). Marcel's introduction to the English translation is especially revelatory for its praise of Royce's foundational discussion of the I/Thou relation.

German hermeneutics, and as for J.N. Mohanty, for whom Royce's doctrine of the internal and external relation of is closer to Husserl's doctrine of intentionality than any other philosopher – we will do well to consider this decisive origin of Royce's *New Phenomenology* in his *Diary*.

Yet, beyond this intriguing fact of unexpected historical relations between American and German philosophy, we also see that there is a discovery, or a recovery, that is of crucial and enduring service to philosophy, in discovering in phenomenology the logic of the appearance of reality: one does not need to choose between *either* the ideal *or* the real, eternal apodictic certainty of logical meaning *or* changing phenomenal appearance in time, form *or* content, effect *or* affect,[8] egoism *or* duty, idealism *or* empiricism. For in practical inquiry the phenomena are really given and ideally and logically organized singly and together, which gives at once an access point to the organized and organizing world as a study of consciousness that is not «merely» mental, but which stands in true or false relations with the world to which it is meaningfully or intentionally directed.

Royce looks to the phenomena, logically organized, as partial, but genuine, apprehension of reality, capable of truth or falsity, in a union of an ethical will to truth, and possible and actual knowledge that touches reality (or that fails in this quest, in error, which in turn we can discover, with inquiry, as an aspect of truth). With this phenomenological access to a partial view of a practical skepticism that is more clarifying than a skepticism that fails to have sufficient pride in its own falsifications, we might fail or succeed in winning truth in individual instances, but we at least have rules and abilities by which to play the game.

As a «new» phenomenology, the arc of Royce's notebook, in its search for the temporal relation of ideal and real in consciousness, indicates his discontent with the earlier version of German phenomenology. For him, the earlier Romantic phenomenology noticed the effective more than the affective dimension of phenomenology. It meant a purely striving phenomenology that made perpetual war with contemplative affectivity. In this activist phenomenology, the merely apparent phenomena were taken as the paltry building blocks of an eternally busy and striving subjective effectivity. Its one-sided method advocated being *versus* appearance, rather than being *through* appearance. And yet this phenomenology was not entirely or merely wrong. It called attention to the relatively active aspect of phenomenological practice, in contrast to a *merely* contemplative-affective approach (the latter of which is no doubt also required for an adequate phenomenology).

On the other hand, Royce also expresses discontent with the reductive single-sided affective system of empiricism, as represented by Mill, a system that does not make place for the essential will to know as providing the practical

[8] For the purposes of this article, «effect» will be used in the sense of its verb rather than its noun form, «to cause to come to being». «Affect» is also used as a verb, but as the relatively passive recipient of the effective act. The distinction then, as it will be used here, is that of relatively active (effect) and relatively receptive (affect) verb-actions, rather than in the sense of verb vs. noun as is sometimes the case in the affect/effect distinction. An exception to this active/passive usage will occur once in a quote by Royce, in which «affect» is used in the sense of the active causal action.

organization that is necessary for empirical phenomena to emerge in knowledge. That will to education does not care if the truth shall be pleasurable or painful, and thus resists the reduction to feelings, because its essential purpose is simply to know the truth.

Thus, Royce's *New Phenomenology* does not, however, reject either the formal or the sensual, but synthesizes them. He recognizes in the phenomena both reception and construction. His position thus represents a middle way between traditional modes of idealism and realism; a middle way that is not a final portrait, but rather the ground of an ongoing description of the conditions and activity of creativity. And if he is right, then philosophy today remains the self-identical study of and contribution to an ongoing theory of best practice – i.e., a stable will to know, as manifested in ethical and logical principles, in the phraseology of deductive logic and ethical first philosophy; and a growing body of empirical beliefs that are the objects of the subjective will to better them, making them 'stronger' and less 'weak,' in the phraseology of inductive logic.

For Royce, the phenomena will be brought, in the *New Phenomenology*, to what he calls the «*honored place*» as the affective and effective bridge between our fragmentary, perspectival view of the givenness of reality in the present moment and the ideality of absolute being as the memorial and anticipatory unity of all present moments – with phenomenal perspectives never, for us, being displaced by the sum total of reality, but rather serving, with careful cultivation, as creative viewpoints in and of reality. Rather than the activist path of Romantic, striving phenomenology, which identified reality solely with effectivity as a struggle against affectivity, or of mere activity without a consideration of the nature of the world in which practical improvement is possible.

For Royce, the phenomena take place in the interplay between the pure light of received reality and the ideal «*shadows*», in which various aspects of the real are attended to for positive reasons of pragmatic interest, and because we cannot apprehend the entirety of the real.

The fact of the momentary perspective always remains for us as a limiting and enabling feature, neither the final end in itself, as in phenomenalism or in the idolatry of special ranges of phenomena, nor surpassed in a supposed ascension to a monistic, impersonal, undifferentiated totality. The sense of philosophy as a pilgrim's progress towards truth is indicated in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*.[9] There, Royce sees that in all major religions, including the classical philosophical religion, there is a doctrine of the relation of ideality and reality, a relation guaranteed by the fact of *error*: for error to occur, ideas must be in partial but incomplete relation to reality. Yet, for Royce, the Romantic phenomenology incorrectly and to its own great detriment obviated the possibility of error, by making a monistic, windowless atomism of thinking, and imagining that a theory of knowledge could take place

For a discussion of Royce's understanding of the role of limitation that precedes the positive activity that forms the transcendental conditions of truth, see J. Bell, "Inhibition in Intellect and Ethics: A Meeting of Pragmatism and Phenomenology," in *Phenomenology for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. J. Aaron Simmons and J. Edward Hackett, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2016.

without metaphysics. What was lost was a way to explain a most fundamental fact of our experience, that we can err in our ideal descriptions of reality, the painful point at which philosophy arises as the healing art, a sense already indicated by Socrates' final sacrifice to Asclepius, as well as in his earlier reflections on the positive upshot of falsification.

Royce's practical or pragmatic phenomenology, then, supplements a merely analytic idealism (that quite correctly holds that anything that we are thinking is a thought, and we cannot think anything that is not our own thought), with a practically synthetic idealism, that attends to the ability of our intentional thoughts to hit or miss their real intended targets.

The phenomenological reconciliation between the sensual affectivity of empiricism and the formal effectivity of idealism was also a reconciliation of two strands of thought in which Royce had read deeply. This of course also has much to do with pragmatism, and here it is interesting to note that Royce would, after the *Religious Aspect*, not often use the term «phenomenology» – likely because of its close association with Hegel's thought. Although he would continue to use cognate terms, e.g., the phenomena, and introduce Husserl's phenomenology in the English language, for the most part, he would later defend an idealistic pragmatism which he termed «absolute pragmatism». But this absolute pragmatism, can, I think, be seen as the subsequent name for his phenomenology, indicating the way in which inquiry is both relative and absolute. It is relative to the practical problems facing individuals and communities of inquiry, but absolute indicating formal essences that are intersubjectively the same despite all differences in individual perspectives (e.g., that no one can shatter a porcelain plate and then later have the same plate in which that shattering did not occur).

We may also read this reconciliation in the light of Royce's later metaphysics, as in, for instance, *The World and the Individual*[10], where the study of metaphysical individuals and their relations will make room for both eternal structures of forms of relation and genuine creative individuals, rather than needing to choose between either a block, monistic universe, one consisting solely of unmoving essential forms, *or* a radical empiricism resulting in a relativistic, atomistic universe consisting of material contents in perpetual flux.

In what follows, I will examine the development of Royce's *New Phenomenology* in four sections. The first section will give historical context for the *New Phenomenology* and Royce's and Husserl's mutual interest in one another's work. The second section will consider Royce's *Thought Diary* entries in the months preceding his discovery of the *New Phenomenology*. The third section will examine the named birth of the *New Phenomenology* on April 3, 1879. The fourth section will consider Royce's initial phenomenological investigations in his several *Diary* entries immediately following his proposal for the *New Phenomenology*. A concluding note will give suggestions for further inquiry into phenomenological and pragmatic practice as unifying the contemplative and active dimensions of philosophy.

[10] J.Royce, *The World and the Individual,* Macmillan, New York 1899.

1. The *Diary* Notebook and the Historical Context of the *New Phenomenology*

A consideration of the context of the *Thought Diary* can give a sense of the intellectual climate in which Royce began to develop his *New Phenomenology*, and, later, the way the published developments of this work then came to the attention of Husserl, contemporaneous with Husserl's identification of his own philosophical position as *phenomenological* in the first years of the 20th century, as well as to the attention of subsequent leaders of the European phenomenological movement.

The *Diary*, housed with the Royce collection at the Harvard Archives, in found in a slender hardbound notebook, filed under HUG 1755. The handwritten *Diary* notebook containing the *New Phenomenology* occupies pages 100–145 of the notebook; other parts of the notebook do not appear to be integrally related to the *Diary*. The *Diary* begins in September 1878, the first writings naming phenomenology occur in the spring of 1879, and the *Diary* leaves off in January 1880. Royce thenceforth embarked on a rapid publication pace, one that made use of frequent phenomenological considerations. This work brought him to the attention of William James at Harvard, and, soon, a teaching position at that university, where Royce remained for the rest of his life.

In 1875, four years prior to his proposal for the *New Phenomenology*, Royce received his bachelor's degree as one of the first graduates of the University of California, when the campus was just two years old. He thereafter conducted graduate studies at Leipzig and Göttingen in Germany, each of which thereafter hosted Husserl. While it may seem strange to think of the personality of a university city, it is important to note that Göttingen was a key place in the interpretation of English and German thought, given its university's founding by the royal family that was at once the Monarch of Great Britain and the Duke Elector of Hannover. Göttingen was the meeting place between languages and national philosophies, and the professors who taught there, and the students who learned there, had frequent occasion to contemplate both British empiricist and German idealistic thought. Indeed, probably no other place in the world was so well-suited for this interpretation. This context is key, I think, to exploring the realistic idealism of the phenomenology grounded in Göttingen, capable of combining empirical and logical interests, and expressed in the thought of some of its leading scholars, such as Hermann Lotze, Royce, and Husserl, as well as later figures like Max Scheler, Adolf Reinach, Winthrop Bell, and Edith Stein, each of whom showed how it is possible to combine pragmatism and phenomenology in the same philosophical individuals, and who show us today how transformative and contemplative interests are not mutually contradictory philosophical positions, but complementary ones.

Royce entered Leipzig as a graduate student in 1875, shortly before Husserl's undergraduate studies began there in 1876. Royce then departed Leipzig for Göttingen in the spring of 1876. At Göttingen, Royce was a student of Rudolf

Hermann Lotze, who later became an important influence on Husserl as well. Lotze, like Royce and Husserl, was influenced by both German idealism and empirical scientific method, even as he resisted the reduction to empiricism, and found in «value» a reconciliatory term for the meanings that justify both ideal *a priori* and empirical *a posteriori* investigations, without reducing one to the other. For Lotze, a proponent of a realistic idealism, logic permits and directs, but does not cause or predict empirical observation. Lotze's influence indeed seems to be key to understanding the relations of Royce and Husserl, and the shared influence of Lotze likely has quite a bit to do with the appreciation that Royce and Husserl would later show for the other's work in the 20th century.

Royce returned to the United States in 1876 to study for his doctorate at Johns Hopkins, America's new graduate research university, and earned his Ph.D. in 1878. Later that year, with philosophy professorships virtually non-existent, Royce received a position in the literature department at his *alma mater,* the University of California. It was there, in his first year as professor, that he came to propose the *New Phenomenology* in his *Thought Diary*. The California landscape itself, as well as Royce's position as a professor of literature who also taught philosophy, while unusual by today's standards, were important conditions for his discovery of the *New Phenomenology*, which is developed in dialogue with both Goethe's and Rousseau's literary and Kant's philosophical expressions of phenomenology as well as with the physical relation of California's geography to the embodied condition of the philosopher.

During his education at Berkeley, Göttingen, Leipzig, and Johns Hopkins, Royce was a student of the Greek and Roman classics, of Kantian, Schopenhauerian, Hegelian and Fichtean idealism, of Hume's empiricism, of the literature of German Romanticism, of the experimental psychology of Wilhelm Wundt and William James, of the new evolutionary scientific theory by way of Joseph Le Conte, and of the emergent American pragmatism by way of C.S. Peirce and James. It is possible to detect the scope of this education in Royce's merging of the classical, the modern, and the post-modern modes of philosophy in his proposal for the *New Phenomenology*, synthesizing the classical orientation towards contemplation of the real, with the modern orientation towards the conditions of subjectivity, with the pragmatic and evolutionary interest in the practical and creative meliorism of truth-seeking.

This basis helps to explain why, a quarter of a century later, in January 1902, just months after Husserl's arrival as professor in Göttingen, Royce became the first to publicly comment on Husserl's phenomenology in the United States, in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association. It is worthwhile to note a significant disparity of academic status between Royce and Husserl at that moment, as Royce was at this point a world-renowned philosopher, who would soon thereafter deliver the keynote address at the World Congress of Philosophy in Heidelberg, Germany, while Husserl was seen within Germany (and hardly read outside of Germany) as a promising emergent logician. Spiegelberg and Schumann, in *The Phenomenological Movement,* call Royce's 1902 description of Husserl «remarkably keen», and report surprise at Royce's very early recognition of Husserl, well prior to

Husserl's domestic or international fame.[11] However, given Royce's and Husserl's nearly overlapping education at Leipzig; their shared study of Lotze, Wundt, James, Peirce, and others, Royce's continued dedication to the study of German philosophy, and, most importantly, their mutual interest in phenomenology, it is no particular surprise that Royce was among Husserl's first commentators.

Later in 1902, William Hocking, Royce's graduate student, became the first student to travel to study with Husserl. Hocking wrote that he discussed Royce during his studies with Husserl in 1902, and in particular, similarities between the thought of Royce and Husserl, his two graduate professors. The relationship between Hocking and Husserl was close at this time, and a lasting friendship developed. In personal correspondence between Bell and Hocking, Bell credits Hocking's time with Husserl as being the likely reason that Husserl in 1912 requested that Bell write his dissertation on Royce's relevance to phenomenology. Describing his conversation with Husserl in 1912 on a dissertation topic, Bell wrote to Hocking: « when I began to mention names and came to Royce's, [Husserl] pounced on it as one he had heard of, obviously as an impressive one. After reading your paper I should infer that it had probably been from you, ten years earlier, that he had become familiar with Royce's name».[12]

Hocking appears, from Husserl's published correspondence, to have been Husserl's major philosophical correspondent in 1903. Husserl was at that point an emerging philosopher, but by no means the leader of an international movement, and the fact of Royce's interest in his thought may well have been significant to Husserl's intellectual development at a crucial period in which he turned to phenomenology as the central area of his philosophical investigations. Indeed Royce's attention to Husserl's phenomenology in particular may even be key in the emergence of phenomenology from the periphery of the *Logical Investigations*[13] to the honored position of Husserl's own inquiry after 1902.

This may seem a surprising suggestion, but it is interesting to note that Hocking thought that Husserl, who had of course mentioned «phenomenology» still earlier, yet first came to identify his own *position* as «phenomenology» in a letter Husserl wrote to Hocking in 1903. Royce had, in 1902, called attention specifically to the *phenomenological* aspect of Husserl's philosophy in his APA presidential address. It is at least plausible to think that Royce's commendation of Husserl's phenomenology in a prominent forum, and Royce's inspiration to Hocking's own interpretations between Royce and Husserl that were shared with Husserl in personal conversation, were decisive facts in Husserl's own turning to his phenomenological vocation, especially when keeping in mind that Royce was the established and Husserl the emerging scholar. Royce's phenomenology was, by way of Hocking's interpretations, with Husserl from the beginning of his career as

[11] See J.Royce, *Royce's Logical Essays* (1855- 1916) eds by D. Robinson, Dubuque, 1951 Iowa, , 9–10
[12] This letter, dated January 6, 1962 is housed with Hocking's papers at Harvard University.
[13] E.Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, eds. D.Moran, Routledge, London 2001.

«phenomenologist».[14] As we will see in a moment, Royce's thought was also present to Husserl at the writing of his phenomenological *magnum opus*, the *Ideas*[15], ca. 1912. So too, Husserl had read both Peirce and James even before his publication of his *Logical Investigations*, meaning that there was a strong and growing dose of American philosophy with Husserl from his setting forth into phenomenology as the central region of his philosophical inquiry. This is an interesting, and moreover, key, part of Husserl's biography, but it remains little known. Classical American philosophy and European phenomenology and pragmatism have sometimes seemed to be hermetically sealed movements, but, in reality, they were involved in crucial dialogue at their origins.

Another of Royce's Master's students, Winthrop Bell, travelled to Göttingen ten years later, in 1912, to become Husserl's first North American doctoral student, where Husserl requested that Bell write his dissertation on the relevance of Royce's *Erkenntnistheorie* to phenomenology. Husserl, by Bell's account, took considerable interest in Royce, calling Royce an important thinker who may only be treated as such. Bell would later recount: «Husserl's intention was that [my dissertation] should be, for readers who were *familiar* with Royce, a bridge to the understanding of *Husserl*»[16]

In discussing having lent Royce's works to Husserl, Bell wrote to Herbert Spiegelberg on September 25, 1955:

> Husserl asked to see some of Royce's works . . . I had some of Royce's books in Germany with me, and ordered the others, and was able to take Husserl, before long, the whole imposing heap of Royce's publications. Husserl then would have nothing else than that I should do my Doktorarbeit on Josiah Royce. He came to entertain considerable respect for Royce . . . [17]

Through Husserl's and Royce's mutual graduate student Bell (who was later, in the 1920s, professor at Harvard), the American philosophical community was able to deepen its understanding of the German phenomenology, and the German philosophical community was able to deepen its understanding of the American phenomenology. For instance, Husserl wrote to Bell that he used Bell's dissertation on Royce as a teaching aid (*Lehrmittel*) at Freiburg, which means that Royce was not merely of interest to just one German philosopher, Husserl, but could find access to the larger world of German phenomenological thought – just as, through the

[14] While Husserl had mentioned phenomenology several years earlier, it was in the then-traditional sense of phenomenology as "descriptive psychology," rather than as the central moment of a philosophical program with systematic logical implications far deeper than just psychological implications, and indeed, in opposition to the reduction to psychology termed psychologism. Hocking took Husserl to have, in 1903, moved phenomenology from its earlier adjunct position to the central position in his inquiry.

[15] E.Husserl, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, translated by D.Moran, Taylor and Francis, Milton 2012.

[16] Bell to Hocking, February 12, 1957. Letter housed with Hocking's papers at Harvard University.

[17] A carbon copy of this letter is housed with Winthrop Bell's papers at Mount Allison University.

interpretations of Marcel, Royce's thought gained access to the whole world of French phenomenology at its formation. So Royce was present, then, not only at the origins of American phenomenology – as its innovator – but also, decades later, at the origins of German and French phenomenology at the origins of these movements. Meanwhile Royce introduced Husserl's phenomenology to the English-speaking world, calling attention to its promise in showing the relation between the purely ideal and the empirical domains of logic, when these two domains were elsewhere in strife (a strife which could be seen, for instance, in the 1908 World Congress of Philosophy at Heidelberg, where it seems that the contest between them was so heated that the organizers needed to separate the warring parties).

However, because the entire context of relations between the American and German schools of phenomenology are beyond the scope of a single article, the effort here will focus on the first origins of Royce's phenomenology in the *Diary*.

2. The Opening of the *Thought Diary*

Royce begins his *Thought Diary* on September 24, 1878, with a consideration of Aristotle's differing justifications for asserting the continuity of space and of time – the first with reference to material, the latter with reference to form alone. While the consideration of Aristotle is brief, it is possible that Aristotle may have been a significant inspiration for Royce's *New Phenomenology*, first, for the focus on the ideal study of time, and second, because, unlike in dominant disputes between realistic versus idealistic metaphysics, or a dualism of separate substances, Aristotle's description recognized the complementary spheres of materiality and formality, ideality and reality, and the fitting together of form and content in being.

Aristotle could serve Royce in his own efforts to recover metaphysics in an age which tended to either eliminate the importance of essential ideas, as in empiricism's insistence on the ultimacy of feelings, or to eliminate access to reality, the temptation of idealism's *Erkenntnistheorie*. For instance, we might see a relation between this and his *Diary* entry on October 20, 1878, where Royce begins his call for a metaphysical idealism that will move beyond the Kantian mode of critical idealism that excludes knowledge of the «*things in themselves*», akin to the Göttingen phenomenologists' rallying cry in the early 20th century. For Royce, the «*thing*»*s* are not merely in themselves, separate from the act of knowing them, since the synthesis that forms objects is a «*volitional activity*». The «*things*» have already been formed in thinking, and thus it is an error to thenceforth assume a discrete independence between the activity and the result of the activity. As Royce would later clarify in his later published writings, there is a continuum of ideal investigative activity; we know some parts of reality intimately, but others we know primarily as the meaningful intention to know them – an intention that sets forth orders of investigation, and sets forth rules for which phenomena will be included, and which excluded, from the investigation of a meaningful objectivity. But this *intention* to know and the continuum of knowing and knowability already forbids a radical dualistic divorce of

ideas and things, or a divorce between a theory of knowledge and the real metaphysics that knowledge is «of». To think the «thing in itself» is already to have ascribed a positive content of the thinking self in relation to its meant «thing», not merely the negative one as described in Kant's account (i.e., that we cannot know the thing in itself; that we therefore only have a negative knowledge of the noumenon).

Knowledge, as he writes in the *Thought Diary*, is *of* a thing, rather than a thing itself; and the will is understood as the volitional synthesis between knowledge and its object: «its» object, as Royce's and Husserl's mutual graduate student Hocking wrote, is a major point of similarity between Royce's and Husserl's accounts, where, for both of them thinking, as an activity, has its motivation: to perceive an object is to conceive it, and to conceive it is to capture it within the *noose of an intention*.

What Royce terms the «*the ethical purpose of philosophy*» is given a central and active place in this *Thought Diary* and in his subsequent writings, with an «ought» built into our willful and intellectual desire to know: that we *ought* to believe truth and disbelieve falsity is foundational to rational life, but this is at first an ethical ought, rather than a product of a deduction.[18] It is indeed the ground of deduction and induction, and a common term that is shared in their process and results – we originally say that some A is some B, whether inductively or deductively, because it seems an advantage (and a good) to understand A itself and B itself and their relation. No doubt facts can thereafter be written down as part of bookkeeping, or repeated by rote, but they are first won by practical interest. In Royce's philosophy, there is a synthetic relation of ethics, knowledge, and metaphysics, with an «ought» required for knowledge of being and for the motive to know being, rather than the objective thing or the rational will conceived as alone, and as statically and valuelessly given in abstract isolation. The idea of ethics as first philosophy is fundamental to various branches of twentieth century phenomenology, especially Emmanuel Levinas and his followers, but Royce anticipated the movement in the late nineteenth century.

Ethics as an essential feature of philosophy remained a driving purpose of Royce's *Thought Diary* and, indeed, his life's labors. For instance, Bell's dissertation translates a passage from Royce's *The World and the Individual*, describing how reason has ethical foundations:

> A fact is for me, at any moment, *that which I ought to recognize* as determining or as limiting what I am here consciously to do or to attempt….The world of "accredited facts" is known to us to exist, because we know it to be acknowledged as existing. And it is thus acknowledged *because the purpose of*

[18] This bears comparison with Robert Sokolowski's phenomenological concept of veracity, as is discussed in the article "Robert Sokolowski: Phenomenological Philosophy and the Integrity of the Person," by Molly B. Flynn, forthcoming in *The Reception of Husserlian Phenomenology in North America*, eds. Michela Ferri and Carlo Ierna.

> *any instant of rational consciousness is fulfilled better by recognizing it as thus and thus existent than by viewing it otherwise . . .* [19]

Knowledge is not merely given or imposed by external sources; rather, knowledge *first* requires subjective interest and attention, as Bell's dissertation translates from Royce's first philosophy monograph, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*:

> We do not receive in our senses, but we posit through our judgment, whatever external world there may for us be. If there is really a deeper basis for this postulate of ours, still, at the outset, it is just a postulate…. The first stage in getting knowledge from bare sense-impressions is therefore the modification of sense by attention – a process belonging wholly to the subjective side; i.e., to our own minds.[20]

Bell proceeded to translate for Husserl Royce's definition of «attention as a «power »to «increase or to diminish the intensity of impressions » (a power that "directly affects the quality" of complex impressions).[21] Attention does not deny receptivity to the givenness of reality, but rather gives one necessary condition by which « . . . we turn [impressions] by our own act into symbols of a real universe, »[22] in which he may have been inspired by Peirce's semiotic turn in his 1867 *On a New List of Categories*[23]. For Royce, the world as given in symbol is not, then, mere lifeless data, but rather is given as the valuable, purposive, and contextualized meaningful union of idea and its object. As Ricoeur wrote, appreciatively describing Royce's theory of the relation of the ethical good, consciousness, the practical knowing project, and its symbolic context:

> If there is such a thing as a contemplation of the good, it is sustained only by the thrust of consciousness which incorporates its values in a project. Detached from this living dialectic of contemplation and decision, of

[19] In citing Winthrop Bell's dissertation translations of Royce into German, I will follow the convention of first listing the dissertation page of Bell's German language translation, followed by the citation of Royce in English. Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* 73–4; Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual: Nature, Man and the Moral Order* vol. 2, The Macmillan Company, New York 1901), 30–1.

[20] W.Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* p. 18–22; J.Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 302, 310. Royce had previously published a version of this argument in his 1882 article, "How Beliefs Are Made," (*The Californian,* 122–9).

[21] W. Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie*, p. 21; J.Royce, *Religious Aspect,* pp. 310–11.

[22] W.Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie*, p. 22; J.Royce, *Religious Aspect,* p. 321. Royce knew Peirce's semiotics well, but it would be a mistake to reduce the route of influence from Peirce to Royce. It was Royce who first turned to "phenomenology" as the ground of semiosis in his late 1870's writings; Peirce himself began to write on phenomenology in the early part of the 20th century, almost certainly though Royce's attention to Husserl's phenomenology.

[23] C.S.Peirce, (1867–1913). *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Vols. 1–6, 1.545-1.559.

> legitimization and invention, a value judgment loses not only its function, but even its possibility.[24]

In this way, Royce may be seen to contribute not only to the phenomenology of the essences given to the first-person perspective, but also to phenomenological hermeneutics as a purposefully unified context of investigations in time (and here we can recall Apel's observation that Royce's philosophy of interpretation is "without doubt" the closest to German hermeneutics).

Royce's *Thought Diary* several months later acknowledges that volitions are not an undifferentiated genus, but are located as embodied perspectives, which may be made better with practical intelligence. He begins this consideration on February 12, 1879, with the words "*I am a Californian . . .*" Meditating from its hills, he realizes in a doubled sense of subjectivity, individual and social, he realizes that his perspective influences his thinking, and that, indeed, this intuition is a universal feature of subjective consciousness:

> *. . . One realizes the greatness of the world better when he rises a little above the level of the lowlands and looks upon the large landscape beneath—this we all know, and all of us too must have wondered that a few feet of elevation should tend so greatly to change our feeling towards the universe.*

Perspective is, then, no merely relative fact, but universal to consciousness, and key to understanding how knowledge can progress in the understanding of being in a comparison of perspectives, distinct from Descartes' attempt at the perspectiveless clarification of concepts, and distinct from relativism in which there is nothing but perspectives without formal context of comparison or objective standards of intersubjective validity or truth. Royce's insight, that consciousness is embodied as a perspective, that this is intuitively given from the first-person perspective, but that this perspective is a more than a merely subjective fact since essential relations may be discovered therein, has become a fundamental feature of modern phenomenology, and may now even seem commonplace, yet we clearly see its distinctiveness by looking to the period that accompanied and preceded Royce's authorship, noting that this focus on perspective differs markedly from the universalist tenor of rationalism in the modernist period, in the sense that private human rationality, given a bit more time, was soon to know all there was to know; or in the contrasting critical philosophy, in which we can only know the conditions of our experience; or in the empiricism in which we can only know the habits of our experience. In the first case, we can easily know everything about the universe, in the latter two cases, we can know nothing of the universe. Royce by contrast points to the practical, gradual winning of knowledge through phenomenological practice.

The failure of the optimistic metaphysical vision would lead, by Royce's charge in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, to pessimistic despair, where it seemed that

[24] P. Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary,* translated by Erazim V. Kohák Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1966, p. 75.

human freedom was genuine, but that there could be nothing other than echoing self-assertion in a meaningless universe. The contrast, for Royce, is not skepticism. Rather, like Husserl's later argument in the *Cartesian Meditations*[25], truth-loving individual inquirers are combined in communities of inquiry. Together, they win knowledge steadily, making practical progress that is more positive than mere skepticism and yet more incomplete than omniscience.

It is in a similar sense that compared the individual perspective of the spatio-temporal moment and the contextual combination of meaningful perspectives, as Royce would later write in *The World and the Individual* (in a passage translated by Bell in his dissertation): « what I mean by [my words], or how far their sound, their connection, or the act of uttering them is emphasized or obscured in consciousness by my concern that you should hear me, or by my chance consciousness of how the light of yonder window falls upon this paper, or by my muscular sensations as I turn the leaves of my manuscript».[26] Here are two essential facts and a relation between them: that of ideal meaning, and of its real relations, a context of effectivity from a perspective and affectivity in a world of relations.

By attending to the limits and access of his own embodied, intellectual perspective, Royce found, in his February 12, 1879 entry, that he was alive in a world of conscious values broader than but inclusive of human values: «…*The place of which I speak is such as to make one regret when he considers its loveliness that there are not far better eyes beholding it than his own*». There is beauty that is experienced that is considerably more than nothing or mere otherness, and yet considerably less than fully possessed, in a given relation that convinces us that that there is still more to know – a kind of practical, mereological aesthetics which also points to a relation of knowledge and being, in which by our efforts we can improve, even as we remain still far distant from perfect omniscience.

The process by which the embodied individual beholds present value, with a permanent remainder of values not perceived and still to be perceived, and the "regret" that beckons us onwards and refuses us premature contentedness – points not merely to the limitation of our fragmentariness as biological individuals, but also to our *belonging* in a world of value, as fragments representing a genuine perspective on the whole – and to the practical, intelligent process which unites the real and ideal, in service of the «better» through purposive attention.

That shifts in perspective allow for a better vantage point, and that we may intend to and then actually move to a new vantage point in service of a «better» knowledge that still contains within it the awareness that the «still better» is possible, is not merely an insight into the nature of space, but also to the serial linking of purposive, practical investigations by binding together, in intelligent inquiry, perspectival moments in a meaningfully unified temporal order.

Royce's attention in the *Thought Diary* is then called to what he would in his later writings term the «world of life» by observing the drama of the natural world

[25]E.Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* translated by D.Cairns, Springer, Berlin 1960.
[26] W.Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* p. 73; J Royce, *World and the Individual* , p. 18.

that proceeds apace even without our human observation, but which can be noticed with sufficient attention. On February 12, Royce writes: «*While the year goes by, one is never without the companionship of Nature. And there are heroic deeds done in cloud-land, if one will but look forth and see them*».

Here is an echo of the natural law tradition, which holds that nature is expressive of a good; one that is participated in, comprehensible to, and contributed to by the good of human reason. Nature as a home for heroism is not, by contrast, merely predetermined mechanism. Here is a clear departure from modernism's quest to become masters and possessors of nature, in Descartes' phrase. Nor is nature the sum total of everything. Rather, for Royce, «*Nature*» is a *companion*, whose drama, heroism and consciousness are analogous to the drama found in the human world when self and other interact. Phenomenal perspective is broader than just human perspective, and describes a fundamental fact of consciousness in the world life.

Royce's thought here in the *Diary*, read in dialogue with his subsequent publications, is to conceive of the irreducibility of the individual perspective as both being conditioned by and conditioning the whole world of life, in a reciprocal relation, one that is not merely affective or effective, but both.

As Royce continues in his *Thought Diary*, his inquiry is to proceed from an independent, critical perspective, located in a space and time—yet here is a freedom bound by a duty to a Kingdom of Personal Ends considerably more populated than a Kingdom inhabited only by himself, or only by members of the community of human reason:

> *. . . I shall seek to busy myself earnestly, because that is each one's duty; independently, because I am a Californian . . . little bound to follow mere tradition . . . reverently, because I am thinking and writing face to face with a mighty and lovely Nature, by the side of whose greatness I am but as a worm.*

It is a substantial move to an environmental ethics, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge, at the same moment as the birth of American phenomenology. Royce's concept of the face to face relation as the ground of humility and ethical reverence anticipates the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Aldo Leopold on this topic; with Royce's ethical realization in the *Diary* helping to ground his later epistemological and ontological insight, that "In origin, then, the empirical Ego is secondary to our social experience. In literal social life, the Ego is always known as in contrast to the Alter."[27] The Alter, or Other, of experience is often human, but it is more than just human. The *cogito*, rather than merely being possessed as an outright gift, is won in a practical interpretive process of comparison between Alter (or Other) and Ego, in a process that includes but transcends humans.

Rather than the Ego being unfettered freedom, and the Alter being fettered determinism, freedom emerges in the reciprocally ongoing determined and

[27] Royce, *World and the Individual* , p. 264.

determining form of relation of self and other. Royce's discovery of empathy in the relation of I and Thou as the ground of knowledge is justly credited by Stein in her dissertation on empathy, [28] written under Husserl's supervision, as it was praised by Marcel in his book on Royce. What is indeed a key moment of contemporary continental philosophy, in its study of empathy and alterity, has, then, American roots (and here one can also think of Peirce's conception of the community of inquiry, which was an influence on Royce).

Royce's second book, on California, is a study in what he calls "practical metaphysics." It shows what happened when Anglo conquerors committed partial genocide against California's indigenous peoples, and stole the land of the Hispanic residents. Royce shows that the murder and theft did not go well, even for the Anglo 'victors.' Terrible anarchy, crime, and economic collapse followed. Royce witnessed the events up close as a boy in California, as the state first fell into a rut and finally managed to atone for its past crimes by paying back the stolen lands. The post-war experience was, in an important way, foundational to Royce's phenomenology of alterity, with its practical understanding of the miseries of exploitation in contrast to the profit in fair and friendly trade.

Developing this insight of an interpretive continuum in the *Diary,* with progress made through practical inquiry and contemplative observation of results, Bell's dissertation translates a passage from Royce's *The World and the Individual*:

> Satisfaction of purpose by means of presented fact . . . is itself the Other that is sought when we begin our inquiry. This Other . . . is at once uniquely determined by the true meaning already imperfectly present at the outset, and it is also not consciously present in the narrow instant's experience with which we begin . . . For the object is a true Other, and yet it is object only as the meaning of this idea.[29]

The next step on the path of the creation of the *New Phenomenology* arrives through Royce's critical analysis of and departure from Goethe's phenomenology, a phenomenology situated in the context of Kantian-Hegelian German phenomenology.

Beyond the fictional aspects of Goethe's *Faust,* Royce saw that it contained philosophical argumentation as to the place and value of the phenomenal--and here Royce sees in Goethe's portrait of phenomenology a subsuming of contemplative rest in the real through the phenomena, as the proper end of thinking, to the world of work, or to the discursive side of reason. The sum result of Goethe's phenomenology is restlessness and exhaustion, rather than contemplative rest. (Surely it is possible to argue that Goethe himself saw the problem, and is describing it in a literary sense. After all, he mocked restless activity in his *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Arguably, he was doing the same thing in *Faust*. But at any rate if Royce's

[28] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989), 64
[29] Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* 70, *World and the Individual* vol. 1: 330–1.

critique would not in this case target Goethe's own phenomenology, it would still target the kind of erroneous phenomenology-as-restless activity *critiqued* by Goethe).

Josef Pieper would, in the 1940s, call the conversion of thinking to work the "proletarianization" of the people. It meant an unfortunate turn in modern philosophy from its contemplative roots towards restless work, and I think Royce is here describing the same phenomenon. Here we may also compare the contemporaneous work of Peirce, in his "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," and his protest against the intellectual dilettantism that prioritizes the creation of irresolvable problems that create incessant work, and that detests solutions in stable beliefs. For Peirce, such is a perverse expenditure of energy, when thinking requires rest in order to recuperate and find wisdom. The task of Royce's *New Phenomenology*, and Peirce's new pragmatism, was to make problem-solving a means to an end of better understanding.

Honing in on the philosophical arguments of Goethe's *Faust,* Royce writes, in his March 10, 1879 entry:

> *Faust's contract with Mephisto is, in Goethe's view, no extraordinary act, no great crime, but simply the necessary fundament of an active life that strives for the Ideal . . . Im Anfang war die That [in the beginning was the deed]; i.e., the essence of life . . . is activity. This activity is not on the one hand simple blind force (Kraft) nor on the other hand pure subjective thought (Sinn), but the living union of both as seen in the work of the individual moment. The Kraft never is known but in the individual That; and in this individual That is contained also the only possible realization of the Sinn. And so the essence of life is found in the individual moments of accomplishment, and in those alone. But on the other hand the individual moment is in its inmost nature unrestful, fleeting. The Kraft is represented in the individual moment, but not adequately. The Sinn is realized, but not wholly nor finally. The individual moment is the Real;*[30] *but it is so only in so far forth as it denies itself, strives to pass out over itself, to plunge on into a future. Were it content with itself, it would be no longer That. It would become the dead factum, instead of the living Action. Such continual striving from one moment to another is the Universe itself. The works of creation are glorious because they are in eternal movement and action. They are incomprehensible, simply because the Thought involved in them is never at rest in the permanent clearness of the Sinn, but is ever changing with all the life of the Kraft. To comprehend (Begreifen) would be to hold fast. And the life of the individual moment may not be thus held fast; but flows eternally.*

And, as it is the case with this general law, so is it also with the individual life. ". . . *lives must be full of action . . . but they must also be, for the very same reason, full of unrest! . . . To remain stationary in this moment . . . is death*." Eternal activity, then, is placed above, but in eternal struggle with, the *merely* phenomenal: "*The Act as Act comprehends only itself. All other acts are but phenomena, baseless visions to it.*"[31] The phenomena are not, then, in this earlier phenomenology, the constituents and products of logical activity,

[30] My emphasis.
[31] My emphasis.

nor the access points to being and beings, but, rather, they are mere baseless appearances, illusions to be gotten beyond. To be disconnected from these is a useful discontent indeed, by the Faustian account, because discontent with the merely phenomenal world compels us to seek higher development in incessant activity, which is the truth standing behind the deadly and seductive illusion of mere receptivity. To subsume these lower appearances for the sake of the higher activity is:

> *. . . contracting with the devil, the spirit of deceit, of appearances….Life is action. Passivity, the negative aspect, must be at every moment set up and conquered . . . For the individual the passive element, whose conquest is his own destruction, appears as of its essence diabolical. For the universe this passive element, everywhere present as the reverse of the active, and so destructive not of the All but of the Individual, appears as Das Ewig-Weibliche [the eternal feminine].*

Royce concludes this study of Faust with the underlined phrase: "*Bold, isn't it?*" Bold, to be certain, as a stunning departure from classical, contemplative philosophy. Indeed it is possible for us to read Goethe as describing, rather than advocating, that conquering spirit in modern philosophy that aims for humanity to become "masters and possessors of nature," with an attendant misogyny and a destructive contempt for the natural world.

For Royce, Romantic phenomenology commits the mistake of attempting to convert a mere but genuine fragment of experience, the striving activity of the present moment, into the All, thereby neglecting the great living values found in beholding beauty, as well as forgetting the condition of receptivity to real givenness that makes our ideal activity possible, and the individual attention that makes it actual in creative acts and factual in the discoveries of scientific communities.

Thus, Royce's disagreement is not merely with Goethe's phenomenology, since, as Royce made clear in his publications over the next several years, what may be termed Goethe's anti-phenomenal phenomenology represents a larger, indeed dominant philosophical position, wherein the phenomenon is to be acknowledged as a mere appearance or illusion to be subsumed and gotten beyond—birthing a busy style of pragmatism unmoored from contemplative comprehension

However, whereas the traditional dismissal or subsumption of the phenomenal world had often been merely taken for granted, *Faust*, by calling the phenomenal to center stage, so as to enslave it to the mastery of the active principle, rather than summarily dismissing it, kept it in place so that it could be eternally humiliated, as a goad to action. Goethe's *Faust* thus served to call Royce's attention to a far broader habit in philosophy, in which, whatever its use for other purposes, the phenomenal was regarded as a dissatisfying show-world, concealing the principle of a hidden eternal activity. But even as the phenomenon is demeaned in this first phenomenology as a kind of permanent understudy, yet, in taking the center stage for a moment, Royce notices its potential for the starring role in the forthcoming *New Phenomenology*.

While Royce's shift in contrasting his position, the *New Phenomenology*, with Goethe's phenomenology is profound, yet, in these notebooks, it can be easy to miss the contrast, since Royce simply moves from the consideration of Goethe's phenomenology to his own *New Phenomenology* without announcing an argument for the transition. The *Thought Diary* was, after all, a personal philosophical diary. The shift is clearer, and the criticism of Goethe's phenomenology is direct, when we consult Royce's publication that appeared two years later, in 1881, "Pessimism and Modern Thought," when Royce asks: "[Goethe's] Faust leaves behind him a nation of toilers, whose business it will be to build dikes to keep the sea out . . . (but) is the great problem after all really solved? For what is the ultimate good of the eternal warfare with nature in which mankind are thus left?" And: "Faust is to work for human progress, and progress means the existence of a whole nation of hard-laboring, fearless men who fight forever for their freedom . . . but to have wrought by the devil's aid, through magic and oppression, is this the highest?"[32]

But here it is important to note that Royce saw, as of his 1885 publication, that Goethe seems to recognize the problem with the earlier phenomenology—what one might indeed term the phenomenology of modernity after Descartes, and not merely of German phenomenology—and names it, without, however, offering an alternative.

It fell, then, to Royce's new phenomenology to offer an alternative. Royce's metaphysical effort, by contrast to optimism or pessimism in regards to the final attainment of truth, will be to "show what we mean by Being in general"[33] (decades prior to Heidegger's thought that he himself was the first to recover this question since the Greeks, and here it is important to note that Royce's thought was well-known to the Freiburg phenomenological community of which Husserl was leader and Heidegger was a member). The effort shared between the American and German phenomenology to bring the "is" predicate to central focus as the meaningful or intentional predecessor of the knowledge of any specific beings, is brought to the forefront by the esteemed Husserl scholar Jitendranath Mohanty, for whom there is "no better means of explicating Husserl's point" on the internal and external meanings of ideas than in Royce's "doctrine…[which] comes as near to Husserl's doctrine as any other view held by any other philosopher."[34] Key is that we are able to reach real essences through ideas, but first we must mean to do so as an ethical purpose, as Being and beings are given in the form and content of the practical relation of wisdom-seeking inquiry, irreducible to either traditional realism considered alone, for which ideas are merely passive impressions of reality, nor to traditional idealism considered alone, for which there is no positive knowledge of the noumenon, but only of our own subjective constructions.

---

[32] Josiah Royce, "Pessimism and Modern Thought," in *The Berkeley Quarterly*, vol. 2 (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft, 1881), 308.

[33] Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual,* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899), Vol. I, pg. 11.

[34] Jitendranath Mohanty, *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 48.

Royce's *New Phenomenology* is in this way neither a Romantic phenomenology, reducing affectivity in quest of pure creative effectivity in a permanently busy attitude, nor an Eleatic phenomenology, reducing effectivity in quest of pure affectivity as repetition of the same statis, making of philosophy, in the words of Richard Rorty in his critique of pre-pragmatic philosophy, a "mirror of nature." For Royce's pragmatic *New Phenomenology*, slow and steady practical inquiry wins the race. This is neither a portrait of an unmoved mover, nor a mere flux, but a knowing and knowable context of creative and created individuals and relations--a stable flexibility that is sought, discovered, and contributed to by wisdom-seeking intelligence.

3. The Birth of the *New Phenomenology*

April 3, 1879 is the birthday of the *New Phenomenology*. Royce's opening words of this day's *Thought Diary* entry are marked by a sensitivity to limit and an awareness of the relation of changing appearances to the temporal process of life. He wrote, ten days before Easter:

> *This is, in a certain sense, the holy period of the year for me . . . time . . . and thought go on about as usual, the one is much faster, the other much slower than one would wish. Outward events have also happened in such a way as to disturb me. —This as in some measure indicating the atmosphere in which thought is at work.*

Might there be phenomenological reasons for Royce's naming of this period of Lent as a holy season? This holy season awaits the resurrection of the fertility of life following death, and emphasizes a period of rest and receptivity prior to striving activity. It is then, a kind of calendrical counterpoint to activist Romanticism. In terms of the religious fasts that mark this time of the year in the Christian calendar, there is rest, watchful waiting, and self-inhibition. In the terms of the memorial rites of the Christian religion, in which Royce was raised, God is about to be murdered, and there is nothing his friends can do to stop it. In the terms of natural human community, the winter stores are nearing exhaustion, the first fruits have not yet appeared, and the spring and summer labors of the field and the fall harvest are still a time away.

While the power of action fades, hope still holds: there *will be* the spring, the Resurrection, and a return to striving activity. The faithful community is met, in its openness at the moment of witnessing, by reward. It beholds the good uncreated by human labors, while also receiving the gift of rest by which practical activity becomes possible in the harmonious relation of reception and activity. As Royce's and Husserl's mutual student Hocking puts the matter of how receptivity precedes intelligent practice: "There are *data* in experience, and the word *datum* refers not only

to material accepted but to a need to accept, an incapacity of our knowing processes to operate without a raw material actually presented as gift."[35]

The case is similar with the gift of time. Royce, in this first-person study of time consciousness, notes that his own thought and time itself are, on this day, out of step: if the future and the past are ideal constructions, and time is a mere psychological phenomenon for us, then what of time that proceeds apace even when our limited efforts to ideally construct it lag behind? Here is evidence of the time irreducible to (and yet in relation to) our human time consciousness, an intellectual will that does not reach its nadir when the root cellar is empty, when the vines bear no fruit, and when the rib bones are visible on the cattle. While there is indeed psychological human co-construction of time and space, Royce witnesses processes in time that are still Other; versus subjectivism, and versus a reading of Kant in which time is *nothing but* the form of our ideal imposition, Royce admits that his thoughts do not conscribe the passage of time. Time is real, at least vis-à-vis the subjective limits of psychologism. There is, at this early moment of the spring, a hopelessness of merely self-sufficient activity—wisdom awaits the gift of the Other rather than engaging in restless striving. And it is in this receptive awaiting that Royce finds, not death at the hands of *das Ewig-Weibliche*, as in Faust bargaining, but rather the "atmosphere" in which thought is at work.

Royce marks a line in his April 3 entry, and then writes:

> *"The New Phenomenology": Would this title be sacrilegious? And this for an opening: Every man lives in a Present, and contemplates a Past and Future. In this consists his whole life. The Future and Past are shadows both, the Present is the only real. Yet in the contemplation of the Shadows is the Real wholly occupied; and without the Shadows this Real has for us neither life nor value.—No more universal fact of consciousness can be mentioned than this fact, which therefore deserves a more honorable place in Philosophy than has been accorded to it. For it is in view of this that all men may be said to be in some sense idealists.*

Royce's phenomenology set out a path that would be at once realistic and idealistic. While Royce's claim that "*all men may be said to be in some sense idealists*" was a rebuttal of the growing common-sense realism and empiricism of his day, in which data seemed to merely wash over value-neutral or indifferent observers with ideas merely being the recordings of what is observed (and in which empirical data was yet also taken to be the only possible value, obviating a whole world of other kinds of value), it was also a rebuttal of the German idealism which still controlled much of philosophical discourse within the academy, wherein men were understood to be in *all* senses idealists, without, that is, any access to the noumenal "thing in itself."

What does Royce mean by his self-questioning of whether the title "New Phenomenology" would be "sacrilegious"? In the light of his later writing, it is clear

[35] William Ernest Hocking, "On Royce's Empiricism," in *The Journal of Philosophy* 53.3 (1956): 60.

that Royce is an idealist, but that he sees that the earlier, purely epistemological, phenomenology abdicated its responsibility to describe the relations, successful and failed, between the ideal and the real. In the light of his argument in the *Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, his worry is that the predominant association in philosophy with "phenomenology" was of a purely assertive idealism without a reality to which ideas stand in true and false relation.

Next, we may attend to the rejoinder to the Faustian phenomenology, and by extension, to the earlier German phenomenology, to which Goethe gave poetic voice. Rather than giving place of honor to the activity of the present moment for the sake of eternal striving, Royce gives place of honor to the entirety of phenomenal time consciousness in its union of past, present and future, for the sake of life, knowledge, and meaning. Indeed it is the case that a single-sided activist or effective phenomenology, as had occurred in the earlier Romantic phenomenology, occludes being, but, by way of contrast, looked at it the spirit of the love of wisdom, that is, philosophically, the apparent at-hand is neither exhaustive nor occlusive but a gateway: to the *eidos from* and *through* the phenomena.

There follows a key set of passages in the *Diary*, where Royce explores the way in which important mappings of the phenomena of consciousness, having been undertaken for the sake of orientation, can easily be idolized because of the practical advantages that follow from them. To counteract this, Royce's first philosophy (as a critical questioning, as opposed to as the first act of consciousness, akin to Husserl's later bracketing), focuses on the formal aspect of consciousness as it objectively organizes *any* phenomenal region. It advances from pre-reflective attention to already-organized objectivities in order to focus on the lawful intention that inspires and permits all objectivities. By such a recurrence to first philosophy, thinking can guard against this idolatry of its own first results, even while making note of the genuine importance of that phenomenon that is only rendered false when it is absolutized, e.g., in the emotions of Rousseau, the activism of Faust, the empirical data of empiricism, or the rational mechanism of modernity.

We may read this insight as to the necessity but irreducibility of logical organization and the ongoing appearances in dialogue with Royce's keynote address to the World Congress of Philosophy in Heidelberg three decades later in 1908, as he sought to reconcile an audience of two opposed camps engaged in a fierce duel—the emergent *a posteriori* empirical pragmatists, with their focus on the future-oriented practical motives of truth, versus the old guard of the *a priori* idealists, with their focus on the eternal conditions of truth. For Royce, both presented complementary aspects of truth, and were only false when they were each imagined to be the whole truth and to be in competition with the other—for the attainment of truth required both the will to truth, inclusive of its various motives and objects, and the conditions for that will and for any truth whatsoever, together amounting to what Royce termed "Absolute Pragmatism,"[36] a mode of pragmatism in continuity with his phenomenology. This pragmatism made place for the

[36] "The Problem of Truth in the Light of Recent Discussion," in *The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce* vol. 2. Ed. John J. McDermott. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005) 681–708.

contemplation of eternal validities (such as in logical relations involved in meaningful temporal ordering, in which various acts must be performed in sequential order in order to be successful, and in which deeds, once done, are irrevocable, and the specific practical acts required for intelligent action in the present moment.

Next, we witness that time consciousness, as the point of interaction between the real given world and ideal understanding of its parts, is at the center of Royce's phenomenology—time is, as Royce later argued in *The World and the Individual*, the way in which finite beings are both limited within and yet participate through these limits in the eternal life of truth. It is not then that appearance is opposed to being, but rightly ordered appearance is our approach to being. This may find phenomenological support in the mythology of Plato's portrait of the cave, where appearances inspire the philosopher into inquiry about their source, leading, then, to the departure from the cave of *mere* appearances; but then the philosopher eventually returns to the cave (and then, we can imagine, departs again, and returns, in a perpetual turning and returning)—indicating the perpetual dialogue between phenomenal appearance and logical essence.

The metaphysical, and not merely subjective (even as it is *also* subjective), role of time is also clear for Royce's phenomenological project. As Royce writes, for Kant, time is wholly ideal, and in no part real, it is "mere phenomenon in us," as Royce wrote in his *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*;[37] as for Goethe, the phenomenal appearance in time is merely the passive antithesis of eternal activity; and, Royce continues, "not even Hegel could really get into the charmed circle of the empirical sciences, and construct the facts of nature upon the postulates of idealism . . . . the first onslaught of idealism upon the central mysteries of reality failed; and it became necessary to consider what next to do."[38] How, then, to reach the real through the ideal, without obviating the ideal in empiricism, or obviating the real through subjectivism?

The difficulty for phenomenology as a realistic idealism is to reconcile modern science's undeniable *a posteriori* successes in the description of the real nature of objects in space and time, with the eternal insight of *a priori* idealism, that, as Royce writes, "*except* for the world of ideas, except for the phenomena that appear as outer to beings with minds, or that have their place in the inner life of such beings, there is *no* reality at all?"[39] It is clear that the phenomenological project here is not of a single-sided realism, nor a single-sided idealism, nor a dualism of discrete substances. Ideas are, instead, our access to the *meaningfully* real, and the eternal conditions by which the real is revealed in time. Phenomenology (like Royce's pragmatism) is the creative synthesis of received and created, of processive time and the eternal, and of practical motivation and restful contemplation in relation to achieved knowledge of reality.

[37] Josiah Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1892), 124.
[38] Ibid., 268–9.
[39] Ibid., 270–1.

As Bell wrote in his dissertation on Royce and Husserl, the theory of knowledge alone would not suffice for an adequate idealism, as ethics and metaphysics were required as well. For Royce, a strictly analytic idealism (identifying the tautology that all our ideas, including of reality, are our ideas) is true, but insufficient; ideas also aim to synthesize the phenomena in a satisfactory account of real objectivities, and in a growing knowledge of being as such. Bell's observation about the systematic nature of Royce's phenomenology, including but transcending the theory of knowledge, may have been a surprise and an inspiration to Husserl, who had requested a dissertation on Royce's *Erkenntnistheorie* alone: but the theory of knowledge was not possible without an ethical motivation to know the real, and without an ideal relation to the real. Husserl himself made the turn from a narrower logic to a systematic phenomenological idealism in his composition of the *Ideas*, much of which he wrote at the very time he was reading Royce. In believing that we *ought* to believe truth and disbelieve falsity, our ethical impulse to veracity is not content with incomplete and mistaken beliefs, but aims to know things as they actually are. Royce does not let go of this personal fact, that everything that we meet in our investigations responds to personality, a fact with implications for *Erkenntnistheorie*, logic, metaphysics, and ethics. As Bell's dissertation translated from Royce's *The Philosophy of Loyalty*:

> . . . I can only define my real world by conceiving it in terms of experience . . . For what I mean by a fact is something that somebody finds. Even a merely possible fact is something only in so far as somebody actually *could* find it. And the sense in which it *is* an actual fact that somebody *could* find in his experience a determinate fact, is a sense which again can only be defined in terms of a concrete, living, and not merely possible experience, and in terms of some will or purpose expressed in a conscious life. Even possible facts, then, are *really* possible only in so far as something is actually experienced, or is found by somebody…In all my common sense, then, in all my science, in all my social life, I am trying to discover what the universal conscious life which constitutes the world contains as its contents, and views as its own.[40]

Bell's dissertation likewise cites Royce's phenomenology of loyalty from his 1908 *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. Here, for Royce, philosophy, science, and truth seeking are each alike modes of loyalty, seeking for real being through autonomous individuals united in a beloved social purpose, one irreducible either to the mere heap of individual perspectives of any present moment, or to the mere form of relation. Even as this relation to the sum total of reality is never fully given to us as individuals, or even as members of communities of investigation, it is suggested to us as ideal search for any knowledge, as we move away from ignorance and closer to truth.

[40] Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* 43: *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (Nashville, Vanderbilt University Press, 1995) 170–1.

In this respect, there are many points of similarity between Royce's concept of loyalty to science, broadly understood, and Husserl's understanding of *theoria* from *The Crisis of European Sciences;* and in Husserl's revisions of Descartes' solitary *cogito* to a phenomenological vision of an interrelated *cogito and cogitamus* (the "I think" and the "we think" that investigates being in an infinite project through the first-person and social theoretical community of investigation) in the *Cartesian Meditations*; and contemporary pragmatic and phenomenological studies of empathy and the reciprocal relation of ego and alterity.

4. Further Reflections on the *New Phenomenology*

In Royce's next three *Diary* entries following his proposal for the *New Phenomenology*, he proceeds with phenomenological investigations on the relation of reality and ideality in time, witnessing, first, the temporal process by which the given real becomes idealized in time consciousness; second, the process by which the ideal becomes real; and third, the process by which complex novelty emerges through the interaction of individual phenomenal perspectives in communal life.

In the first of these entries, on April 9, Royce writes that: "*This day may be noticed as one wherein a new experience, of emotional character, has so entered consciousness that much result for thought may be in future expected*." Royce tells us nothing here of the content of this emotional experience, but in form, we see a rhyming with his discovery of April 3, of the fluid fittingness between the real given—in this case, the emotional experience—and time, as the ideal anticipation about its future meaning, within the synthetic wholeness of the phenomenon as the same temporally extended meaning in different moments of time. Thereby the passively received emotion may become, by virtue of a person's expectation and intention towards the future, relatively active, then resulting in a new received state of reality. This is a dose of the Romantic phenomenology, that does not, however, totalize the activity, but reads it in dialogue with receptivity.

Similarly, as Royce explored in his later writing, the intention of truth-seeking in its first stages is a meaningful, attentive orientation towards the future achievement of the truth, in which the reality and its truthful correlation is already given as the will to know, precedes the possibility of "data" as the phenomenally organized evidence, such that reality is never merely substantially separate from inquiry. In the terms of the history of philosophy, we may see this as a phenomenological version of Anselm's "faith seeking understanding," with essential meaning, as a timeless validity, seeking truth as soundness in temporally directed directions (with *logos* determining appearances as the same *meant* aspects of the investigated objectivity), and a link with Husserl's understanding, from the *Ideas*, of phenomenology's foundation upon "faithful description" in the light of meaningful intuition and unfolding step-by-step investigations of the phenomena, essentially and logically organized.

The direction is not merely from the real as given *to* the ideal intention to know its aspects, but also from ideality to reality. Royce writes, in his next *Diary*

entry, on April 17, "*Yet a new phase, wherein the abstract becomes concrete*." Here is the corresponding principle to the previous one—as intentions take up and recharacterize the given real as a part of living meanings, we also, by attending to the progress of our intentions in real time, witness how what once were future-oriented plans, that is, what once appeared as merely ideal, become new parts of the present real given. It is in a similar sense that Royce later wrote on the interplay of real and ideal, in a passage that Bell translated in his dissertation: "Ideas can be quite as stubborn as any particular facts, can outlast them, and often, in the end, abolish them."[41]

This understanding of the mutually transformative relation of the real and ideal in time leads Royce in his next *Thought Diary* entry to meditate upon the way in which intentionality brings individuals and communities into creative relation. Royce writes, on May 9, 1879:

> *The difficulty in the explanation of complex phenomena may be said to have its foundation herein, that the combined effect of the individuals is more than the sum of the individuals operating. This surplus it is that makes the phenomenon in question complex rather than compound, an organism instead of an aggregate; and this surplus is the problem for explanation.*

In a way analogous to that in which life and meaning is found at the phenomenal synthesis of real and ideal, the real individual and the social combination of individuals is also organic, and not merely mechanistic, and it too is productive of living meanings, intersubjective perspectives that are contributions to being. Royce's subsequent published writings from the first to the last consider this "problem for explanation," a subject which he treated, for instance, in *The World and the Individiual* and *The Philosophy of Loyalty*.

Further, we witness in Royce's consideration of the complex phenomena of social consciousness an important origin of his study of empathy, whose later developments were approvingly cited, as we have seen, by Stein and Marcel, and which may have had an impact on Husserl by way of Bell's dissertation. Royce's phenomenology of empathy discovers that the union of individual and social phenomena results in a creative *surplus*, requiring but irreducible either to an individual alone or to a state of relation--previous versions of the modern theory of knowledge, Stein suggests, had been tempted to reduce to one side or the other, to the atomistic liberal individual or to the duty-binding state. This union requires, as its perpetual necessary condition, the genuine individual and the genuine community, as in Jacquelyn Kegley's apt description of Royce's thought, or the first-person perspective and the hermeneutics of context, with both sides irreducible to the other. Royce's position thus appears as distinct from Hegel's understanding of the social-universal as higher than the individual, or of Kierkegaard's response that the individual is higher than the universal. It is by means of the continuing relation

41 Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* 11, *The World and the Individual* vol. 1*,* 287.

of individual and social that the higher achievement of knowledge is possible and actual.

This relation is described in Stein's dissertation study of empathy, directed by Husserl, which approvingly cites Royce's article "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness, and Nature." In this article, Royce writes:

> . . . A reality, external to my finite Ego, means a world of other experience with which my experience is contrasted. This world is concretely defined, in the first place, as the world of other human experiences than my own. What these experiences actually are, I learn only by myself repeating the expressive deeds of my fellows, and by attributing to these deeds, when performed by my fellows, an inner meaning similar to the one which I more directly observe in the deeds when I myself repeat them . . . Of course, no such interpretation of any human meaning is infallible; but . . . at every step, this social process does really bring me into relation with experience which, until I performed the deeds of social imitativeness, *was not mine.*[42]

Here the supposed mechanism of modernity as describing the state of the external world, and the search for the freely ruling subjective inner principle by which to govern the outer machine, is replaced by Royce with the investigative model appropriate to collaborative theoretical communities of inquiry and to the human being as a living member of the world of life.

The phenomenological inquiry into empathy thus understands that the genuine *Alter* is needed for the growth of knowledge and indeed for the continuation and empowerment of our own individual being. The *Alter* is both present as condition of the *Ich*, and yet it remains genuinely *Alter*. Likewise, as Bell translated Royce in an analogous sense, describing Royce's theory of knowledge in relation to his metaphysics:

> This Individual Determination itself remains, so far, the principal character of the Real; and is, as an ideal, the Limit towards which we endlessly aim . . . Being is not an object that we men come *near at will* to finally observing, so that while we never get it wholly present in our internal meanings, we can come as near as we like to telling all that it is. But the Real, as our judgments and empirical investigations seek it, is that determinate object which all our ideas and experiences try to decide upon, and to bring within the range of our internal meanings; while, by the very nature of our fragmentary hypotheses and of our particular experiences, it always lies Beyond.[43]

Here again is Royce's recollection and revision of Kant's doctrine of the unknowability of the thing-in-itself. Rather than the whole of reality as the thing-in-

[42] Josiah Royce. "Self-consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature, Part II." *Philosophical Review* 4 (1895).
[43] Bell, *Erkenntnistheorie,* 255, *World and the Individual* vol. 1, 297–8.

itself being given timelessly to the rational inquirer, as in pre-Kantian rationalist philosophy, or given only negatively as the inability to know metaphysical reality, as in Kant's negative noumenon, the thing is, instead, given in a continuum of practical inquiry in time, as *meaning* proceeds towards *meant*.

The social terms under which inquiry were undertaken had indeed shifted between Kant's and Royce's day, which may help to explain Royce's sallying forth into the realm of the noumenon upon the horse of communities of inquiry. What could not be adequately explained by the individual inquirer operating in isolation could be gained through the comparison of perspectives on the same meant objects, a reality of intersubjective investigation that was made increasingly evident in late 19th century scientific communities, and that would be evident in the kinds of communities assembled among pragmatists and phenomenologists in the late 19th and early 20th century, and continuing to the present day. For Peirce as for Royce and Husserl, the emergent communities of inquiry were helping to bring to an end the era of private subjectivistic rationalism, in which a fully detailed metaphysics was thought to be presentable in final form to the merely single inquirer. This is the substance of Royce's objection to James, that investigations are never fully reducible to concrete verifications in individual instances. Nor even is it a social possession, but it is rather won (and being won) through the loyal commitment of individuals to the shared purposes of the community of inquiry.

Husserl's post-*Logical Investigations* writings closely resemble Royce's account of the meliorism possible to loyal communities of investigation, in contrast to Heidegger's later account which pessimistically labels being as that which withdraws. The latter appears to more closely track the historical development of optimism leading to pessimism that unfolded in the earlier Romantic phenomenology, and in the movement from logic to misology diagnosed by Socrates and Plato in the *Phaedo*.

5. Possibilities for Future Inquiry

While our understanding of the importance of Royce's phenomenology cannot be completed with a consideration of his first writings on the subject, we may still evaluate these first writings in line with Aristotle's dictum, that the beginning is more than half of the whole.

I do not think it will be strange if we will eventually be able to describe Husserlian phenomenology as pragmatic, and American pragmatism as phenomenological, and particularly in its Peircean and Roycean orientation (while not forgetting James's key role, by Husserl's own acknowledgment, in helping to overcome the fallacy of psychologism, as the reduction of logic to subjectivism). The idea has indeed seemed a strange one in the Anglophone world, despite the efforts of several scholars, like Herbert Spiegelberg, Jacquelyn Kegley, and David Goicoechea to link these worlds of thought through Royce. The Italian philosophical community, inspired by Carlo Sini (for instance in his *Pragmatismo americano*, *Semiotica e filosofia*, and *Passare il segno*) has had an easier time interpreting between pragmatism and phenomenology. We may also look elsewhere in the

history of philosophy for inspirations to Royce's pragmatic phenomenology, as to Aristotle, as we have briefly seen, and to Aquinas, who appears to have been an important influence on Royce's philosophy of the essence of individuation.[44]

The consideration of Royce's *New Phenomenology* can be foundational to this historical project. But beyond the history of philosophy, and in the light of first philosophy and the infinitely ongoing project of phenomenological description, the *New Phenomenology* writings can be of aid to philosophizing, showing pragmatic and phenomenological resources for a practical "post-modernism," both contemplative and activite, that weds classical Greek contemplation and the active life of Romanticism, comprehending rest and action for the sake of the best life, but one that is also a humble but genuine creative contribution to the world of life.

There is a well-known quotation that doubles as a joke. A tourist asks a New Yorker, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The answer: "practice." A pragmatic notion of "practice" involves both senses of practice, as a destination and as the habitual repetition needed to create something beautiful. Royce's phenomenology of practice shows how to account for what is eternal, evolutionary, and creative. As individuals and individual communities of inquiry, we are given a lot, and can create a little. But that creation is a genuine moment in the universe.

[44] For a discussion of relations between Royce and Aristotle, see "Loyalty, Friendship, and Truth" by Mathew A. Foust and Melissa Shew, in *The Relevance of Royce*, eds. Kelly A. Parker and Jason Bell, Fordham University Press, 2014; for a discussion of relations between phenomenology and Thomas Aquinas, see Jason M. Bell, "Thomas von Aquin und die Anfänge der Phänomenologie," in the *Edith Stein Jahrbuch,* Internationale Edith Stein Institut Würzburg, Germany, 2012.