TWO

ROYCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND WANDERING

A Job Description

Josiah Royce is more often than not at the margins of contemporary discussions of American philosophy. His idealism, carefully organized and deductively neat, has not fared well in an age whose foci are plurality, diversity, and novelty. There is no getting around the systematic and, often, deductive nature of Royce's worldview. Nevertheless, if we look at his life, his historical writings, and his long friendship with William James, we see some existential tempering of the hardheaded Royce we often portray in discussions of American thought. The insularity of the systematic result of much of Royce's thought is at odds with the attitude he seemed to bring to his philosophical thinking. This is clearly evidenced in a letter Royce wrote to G. Stanley Hall in February 1898, concerning the teaching of philosophy to philosophically minded students:

> No dogma should to them be taught as dogma. Their sole philosophical problem, *while* they study philosophy, should be, not: What ought I to believe? (that is often a problem in the practical

> world of business, of friendship, and of faith, but *never* in the world of philosophy) but rather: What can I clearly see as to the deepest issues of my life? No philosopher cares, as such, what you say that he merely believes. He cares only to be sure that what he teaches as insight he has seen, and hopes to get others to see. The true born student of philosophy, *while* he studies philosophy, should act only as philosopher,—freely, fearlessly, unsparingly,—questioning as Job or as Plato, as Hamlet or as Kant questioned,—and questioning solely for the sake of insight. The teacher will guide his properly chosen student in this spirit, and would scorn to tolerate in the philosophical lecture-room and seminary, any but this absolutely tolerant spirit itself.[1]

Several interesting points present themselves here. First, the "absolutely tolerant spirit" suggests not deductive closure but existential openness. Royce also points out in his emphatic "whiles" that philosophical study is a dimension of life, but it is not life itself. Attitudinally and existentially Royce is a much freer thinker than many who simply endorse freedom propositionally, and it was in part this trait that sustained his long friendships with James and with his own students. The free, fearless, and unsparing questioner is not a salesperson of idealism but one committed to the development of one's own ideas. Thus, we might characterize a philosophical life as an intellectual wandering of sorts. Such a description seems appropriate to Royce's own philosophical career. As a philosophical point, however, it took a number of years for the correlation between philosophy and wandering to take full hold in Royce's work. It is to this that I now turn.

The territory I cover in what follows is not new. John Smith and Frank Oppenheim, among others, have closely tracked the development of Royce's thought and interest. As Smith puts it:

> Speaking generally, the all-important change in Royce's conception of the Absolute consists in the shift from the idea that the Infinite thought is an all-embracing consciousness apprehending *at a glance* all truth and harmonizing at once all conflicts between the multiplicity of finite wills in existence, to the idea that the Infinite is actual as a well-ordered system (or ultimately, commu-

> nity) having a general triadic form and involving a type of cognition called interpretation.[2]

Nevertheless, what I have to say does, I think, constitute a new passage through the territory—one that offers some different vantage points and enables me to suggest what I think remains significant about Josiah Royce. Royce was an *American* philosopher—one who mined deeply his own American inheritance and one who tried to establish his own route to the hopes and possibilities that are constitutive of American culture. I begin by noting that Royce took all persons at face value, as living possibilities; his was a frontier attitude. He spoke of philosophy as if we all have some philosophical interest and aptitude. The story of philosophy as wandering that he tells thus serves both as a guide for our own philosophical endeavor and as an allegory for the hope for an American and, ultimately, a human community.

On December 29, 1915, after a dinner in his honor, Royce spoke of his life to some friends. In his remarks he noted an important tension. Reviewing his life and work, he said, "I strongly feel that my deepest motives and problems have centered about the idea of Community, although this idea has only come gradually to my clear consciousness."[3] He also noted his own isolation from community:

> So much of the spirit that opposes the community I have and always have had in me, simply, elementally, deeply. Over against this natural ineffectiveness in serving the community, and over against this rebellion, there has always stood the interest which has taught me what I nowadays try to express by teaching that we are saved through community.[4]

Royce's emphasis on his individuality and his acknowledgment of the salvific capacity of community are revealed in the trajectory of his thinking in a number of ways, one of which is his curious linking of philosophy and wandering. The trail of this linkage is too thin a strand to wrap up Royce's whole philosophical outlook, the complexity of which is sometimes overlooked, but it is enough to disclose a sketch of what philosophy is for Royce—a sketch that I think might be useful for our contemporary culture of philosophy.

The Possibility of Error

Royce first brought philosophy and wandering together in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885). He did so in the most notable chapter of the book, "The Possibility of Error." Interestingly, the relevant passage caused Charles Peirce to see himself as the object of Royce's description and criticism, and elicited a response from him. In the passage, Royce argued that the possibility of error requires an actual absolute judge who can decide for or against the truth of a belief: "Our thought needs the Infinite Thought in order that it may get, through this Infinite judge, the privilege of being so much as even an error."[5] He then remarked that some contemporary Thrasymachus might maintain that only a "possible judge" is required for the possibility of error. Peirce had maintained that "the real is that which any man would believe in, and be ready to act upon, if his investigations were to be pushed sufficiently far" (W, 5:222). His adjournment of the judgment of truth to a "would be" future could be construed to mean that a "would be" or possible judge is all that is necessary for a conception of truth and error. Thus, Peirce took himself to be Royce's Thrasymachus character:

> Upon the luckless putter-forth of this opinion Dr. Royce is extremely severe. He will not even name him (perhaps to spare the family), but refers to him by various satirical nick-names, especially as "*Thrasymachus*,"—a foolish character introduced into the *Republic*. . . . But I must with shame confess that if I understand what the opinion of this poor, Royce-forsaken Thrasymachus is, I coincide with it exactly. (W, 5:222)

Royce argued that without the actual certainty of an absolute judge, no heading can be established; he saw no middle ground between an absolute judge and sheer uncertainty.

> In fact, the separate judgments, waiting for the possible judge to test them, are like a foolish man wandering in a wood, who is asked whether he has lost his way. "I may have lost it," he answers. "But whither are you going?" "That I cannot tell." "Have you no goal?" "I may have, but I have no notion what it is."[6]

The philosopher as wanderer here, for Royce, is thoroughly lost and makes arbitrary assertions in the way of Thrasymachus. There can be no mediation between the absolute judge and the philosopher, nor can there be any place between being at home with the truth and being lost in the wilderness. For Royce, the logical situation controls the existential conditions. And since his emphasis is on deduction, no existential middle ground seems possible; all middles are excluded. The Peirce–like Thrasymachus philosopher is a wanderer in a fully pejorative sense—lost, homeless, aimless, and arbitrary. Peirce, of course, thought otherwise, but his influence on Royce took some years to develop.

In 1888 Royce was sent world-wandering by his doctors to cure the exhaustion and depression that had set in as a result of his first years of work at Harvard. As Oppenheim points out, Royce reaffirmed the soul-cleansing effects of nature. But he also began to rethink the relationship between God and finite individuals. "Royce," says Oppenheim, "interestingly altered what he then came to view as 'the dry bones of my Universal Thought' into an enlivening concrete Personal Self in communion with all finite selves."[7] The upshot was that, as knowers, finite selves had some direct access to insight through this communion. The "voyage Down Under" thus seems to have provided the initial step in Royce's movement toward the centrality of community. This step altered his conception of the role that wandering played in philosophy.

The Problem of Job

Royce's second linkage of philosophy and wandering occurred in 1897, in his interpretation of the story of Job. There an inversion in Royce's thinking emerged. In the concluding lines of the essay, he remarked that wise persons are wanderers of a sort:

> For the triumph of the wise is no easy thing. Their lives are not light, but sorrowful. Yet they rejoice in their sorrow, not, to be sure, because it is mere experience, but because, for them, it be-

> comes part of a strenuous whole of life. They wander and find their home even in wandering.[8]

Royce used the finite wise person as an analogue for God to try to suggest why God himself would undergo suffering.[9] This new wandering wise person—or philosopher—appeared to have some sense of direction, but he/she remained a loner; indeed, wisdom here had a Socratic flavor and seemed to entail the status of social marginality and aloneness. Royce's conception of wandering appeared to be in transition from a simple and clear pejorative sense to a more complex and, in some ways, honorific sense.

The Peirce–Thrasymachus philosopher wandered in an intellectual wilderness with apparently no grounds for belief or judgment. Judgment was, for the early Royce, a deductive endeavor. The wandering wise person of Royce's reflections on Job is both a social and an intellectual wanderer. That is, this wanderer has already directly and immediately encountered some truth concerning the absolute judge. This was the result of Royce's new notion of God's communion with finite selves, and it served as the basis of an individual's wisdom. However, no mediated way *toward* this truth is available; in our finitude we are left as frustrated, yearning wanderers. The yawning gap between us and the absolute judge is simply unbridgeable through discourse among finite beings. The wise person can, on his or her own, gain some direct insight into God or the Whole, but it will always be a private, limited vision: "God's experience in its wholeness cannot now be yours, for you just as you—this individual—are now but a fragment, and see his truth as through a glass darkly."[10] The wise person's status is thus that of one caught between a life among fragments, who cannot discern the whole, and an engagement with the whole that is, at this juncture, incomplete and unconsummated. Even if one achieves insight into the Absolute as a kind of wisdom, philosophical practice amounts to the articulation of our incompleteness. As for Emerson, language is inadequate to experience, so that what we are, as fragments, seems essentially incommunicable to others. This incommunicability estranges the wise person from others

and provides no basis or ground for a community of hope. The philosophical wanderers are left to "rejoice in their sorrow," and in the absence of community become social wanderers as well as intellectual wanderers. In this instance, the wanderers are loners and mystics, Tiresian outlaws.

The rejoicing–sorrow is generated not only by this inability to communicate but also by a second feature of the philosopher's finitude—her or his fragmented status. The sorrow is disclosed as a function of his or her finitude and incompleteness; the vivid awareness of finitude creates a longing for wholeness: the wise persons "long, and attain through their very love of longing."[11] They turn inward and are at home only in wandering. The ineffability of wisdom effects both an internal and an external isolation; no one wants a knower around who seems either unwilling or unable to reveal her secrets. Thus Royce developed a neat parallel between the philosopher's epistemic inadequacy and her or his social alienation.

In *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* the necessity of an unmediated access to absolute judgment made the finite inquirer who was not acquainted with this judgment an aimless, intellectual wanderer. Royce there seemed to take for granted that those acquainted with the absolute judgment stand in good stead; those with no insight into the actual absolute judge's view of things are lost, mere wanderers. Those with insight are redeemed. But Royce did not then focus closely enough on the fact that we are all, in our finitude, at least partly lost. In the reflections on Job, however, his angle of vision was altered. There the ascertainment of an unmediated insight leads not to final salvation but to an acknowledgment of the limitation of our vision and to the status of social exile—the wise person finds a home in wandering, moving to wherever "welcome" has not been worn out. The dilemma Royce established, one that pervaded his work and is paralleled in the tension between his own individuality and his recognition of community's importance, is that the philosopher either is simply lost or, in establishing a direct though incomplete relation with God or the Absolute, becomes isolated from other individuals in the world.

The World and the Individual

The dilemma came to a head for Royce in *The World and the Individual* (1901), and its presence was keyed by the dyadic relation in the title. In standard idealist terms, if we are not taken up into the World, we remain isolated cosmic flotsam. In his description of the wise wanderer, however, Royce had hinted at, and made a first move toward, a third possibility: a philosopher who is at home in his or her wandering but who is "in the world" and worldly, not merged into the World. However, the only "at-homeness" he could envision in his reflections on Job was that of the romanticized melancholic who somehow enjoyed loneliness.

In *The World and the Individual* the linkage of philosophy and wandering again arose in Royce's focus on human finitude. The philosopher's quest was still truth or absolute judgment, and the temporal requirement was still immediacy. The graduated mode of learning offered by the Peirce–Thrasymachus wanderer remained infeasible to Royce's deductive sensibilities. Thus, the gap between our fragmentariness and the Absolute's wholeness remained fixed in place.

Royce began by picking up on the individual's isolation in a social wilderness with which he left us in his commentary on Job: "The wiser religions have always told us that we cannot be saved through the piety of our neighbors, but have to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling."[12] We are in our own dyadic, unmediated relations to God, and there appears to be no chance of redemption in a lateral commerce with others who are also fragments. As Royce put it, what will make us philosophers and wanderers is an "intimacy" with the issues of life themselves. There is an affective as well as an intellectual dimension to the philosophical life, but the conversation seems always to be directly between the World and the individual.

In pursuing the significance of our finitude and individuality, Royce reestablished the grounds that led to his description of the wandering philosopher as a longing and lonesome wise person. In thinking, we are trying to establish *our* place and reality; we endeavor to find our homes. At the same time, his focus on our *action* and

development gave this "thinking toward the truth" more dynamism than was present in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*. For Royce, "to be real is *to* dwell; or again the real is the *results* of principles, it is what *has grown*. It is the *outcome* and *goal* of processes."[13] Royce, having read and digested Peirce's cosmological essays of the early 1890s, here clearly evidenced the growing influence of Peirce on his work inasmuch as the real is the outcome and goal of a process. However, he had not yet developed the nature and import of these processes.

In local cases, we can feel the at-homeness produced by inquiry's success. Sometimes "we may succeed in recognizing and interpreting the immediate data in terms of our own ideas. In such cases we feel at home in our world."[14] The more prevalent case, however, is that in which our ideals and ideas do not fit with the brute actualities of life. For Peirce, this unfittingness of our ideas bred doubt and, consequently, initiated inquiry. For Royce, it primarily reestablished the fact of our finitude. When the ideal and the actual resist one another, we "then know our finitude, and we are inwardly disquieted thereby. Such disquietude is our almost natural experience as finite wanderers."[15] Apart from the insertion of a Peircean outlook on the nature of the real, not much had changed for Royce. But the Peircean moment is crucial precisely because in identifying the Real as the outcome of a process of inquiry and in establishing the resistance of the actual to the Ideal as the human condition, Royce had, from the perspective of Peirce's "The Fixation of Belief," placed us at the initiation of inquiry. Instead of this being merely the end of the road for the sorrowful wanderer, it now could be claimed as the beginning of the road for the hopeful wanderer. This small dose of Peirce stands as a watershed in Royce's conception of the philosopher as wanderer; he opened himself to the possibility of reconsidering the lostness of the modern Thrasymachus. To do so, however, he needed to find his way beyond the dyad of World and individual; he needed to find a community among finite creatures.

One avenue of hope Royce acknowledged for overcoming our disquietude is that of the mystic. The mystic attempts to overcome our status not by reasoning but by direct and immediate submission to

the Absolute. Here one reaches an incommunicable melding of World and individual that moves a step beyond the dim vision of the wandering wise person; the dyad resolves into a monad. But Royce, perhaps sensing some sleight of hand in thus joining the fragment to the Whole while it is still a fragment, ultimately rejected this avenue of hope. The mystic must reject the value of the finitude of our individuality altogether. He or she is not merely socially isolated, but must stand beyond any community because his or her worldedness *is* thoroughly incommunicable:

> For the mystic abode of being is the silent land. They come not back who wander thither. For they, as mere finite thinkers, as seekers, are not at all, when once they have awakened to the truth. How should they return?[16]

As Royce saw it, mystics are not philosophers—they neither seek nor inquire. They achieve completeness only through absolute rejection of finitude.

Royce, bred of the bruteness of California frontier life, was not ready to relinquish the significance of our finite existence. His own route of resistance to the disquietude needed to be one that honored, for example, his mother's work and action in establishing and cultivating a family in the wilderness. In rejecting the mystic's route, however, Royce implicitly committed himself to finding a mediation between the individual and the World. The *process* of inquiry of finite seekers emerged for Royce as the locus of this mediation; it stood between the mystic's loss of self to the World and the mere intellectual and social lostness of his earlier philosophical wanderers. "Primarily," Royce said, "in seeking Being, we seek what is to end our disquietude."[17] In *The World and the Individual*, the philosopher, as inquirer, began to take on a crucial role in establishing a community of finite beings.

Within this mediation between mysticism and lostness, moreover, Royce began to see another point of transition. That is, strictly speaking, his sorrowful, lonesome wise person stood somewhere between the mystic and the intellectually lost wanderer. However, this figure

was characterized by stasis; the wise person was not completely intellectually lost, but had nowhere to go. One place was, pragmatically speaking, as good as another, because all relations were with the Absolute, not with finite, situated beings. Too, like the mystic, the sorrowful wise person was a stranger to community, not fully assimilated to the World but nevertheless relatively alone among his or her peers. Royce's shift to a focus on inquiry suggested the need for something more than this. It suggested a heading for movement, if only away from the source of doubt. The philosopher–wanderer, as seeker of being, had somewhere to go. Perhaps more important, the question of social alienation was directly addressed by the focus on inquiry as an experientially public, communal process in which we as fragments are not merely isolated but are able to work in concert. Royce, struggling with the Cartesian–Faustian (and perhaps Californian) image of the lone wise person, finally arrived at the Peircean community of inquirers. Hampered, I think, by his commitment to the dyad of World and individual, Royce struggled in the rest of his Gifford Lectures to make a transition from the sorrowful wise person to the philosopher as hopeful inquirer. The latter was still a wanderer, a revised and resituated version of the Thrasymachus character. This figure was not like the sad, roving singular sage, but was a kind of traveling experimenter, an almost Whitmanesque character.

Traces of hope and community are scattered throughout the later portions of *The World and the Individual*. First, Royce reasserts his fundamental pragmatism: beliefs constitute, affect, and are convertible into action. "That all beliefs about truth of any grade," he says, "and that all theories have a practical meaning, I do explicitly teach. That, in fact, as my reader will see, is my whole philosophy."[18] In short, the inquirer's actions will make a difference; this is more than acquiescence to longing. The inquirer has become an active agent in creation and is no longer a bystander.

One of the differences inquiring can make is to provide our wandering with a direction. It may not bring us directly to the absolute judge, as does the mystic's relinquishing of self, but it may bring a heading to our finitude. This, of course, is the hope found in Peirce's

notion of the self-correction of scientific inquiry. Under this Peircean influence, Royce began his final redemption of the philosopher as wanderer:

> The way of reflection is long. The forest of our human ignorance is dark and tangled. Happy indeed are those who are content to live and to work only in regions where the practical labors of civilization have cleared the land, and where the task of life is to till the fertile fields and to walk in the established ways. The philosopher, in the world of thought, is by destiny forever a frontiersman [or woman]. To others he must often seem a wanderer. He knows best himself how far he wanders, and how often he seems to be discovering only new barrenness in the lonely wilderness.[19]

The philosopher here plays a role for the community at large, opening avenues of thought in the search for Being. The humility of the fragmentariness of human fallibility is not lost, but neither is it converted into a rejection of philosophy of the sort that positivism developed. In *The World and the Individual,* the philosopher as wanderer finds a social use in the maintenance of this humility: ''We must obey in order to triumph. And such obedience for the student of philosophy, takes the form of cool reflection and a patient wandering in the wilderness of ignorance until he sees the road home.''[20] The shift in Royce's rhetoric reveals a direct and important shift in attitude. No longer does the philosopher take joy in the sorrow of acknowledging finitude. Instead, ''Part of the business of life, and no small part of it, is to learn to live with our inevitable defects, and to make the best of them.''[21]

As wandering ''frontiersman,'' Royce's philosopher has moved from social isolation to an integral role in the community. The philosopher is at work for his or her community, and not merely for his or her own ultimate merger with the Absolute or for some set of local, personal interests. For Royce, ''The justification of the pursuit of philosophy as one of the tasks to which a man's life may honestly be devoted, requires a recognition of the common interests of all men. The frontiersman may wander; but he must some day win what shall belong to the united empire of human thought.''[22] Just as in Tho-

reau's essay "Walking," where wilderness is that which allows us to recivilize ourselves, so the "living truth" Royce's frontier philosopher apprehends in the wilderness must come back to the community: "The God of the wilderness, if he indeed be the true God, shall show himself also as the keeper of the city."[23] Thus, unlike the sorrowful wise person, the philosopher–wanderer is not merely at home in wandering; the wandering is simply a way of finding a road home: "None prize the home-coming more than those who wander farthest."[24]

In *The World and the Individual* Royce also began to break down the central dyad. Whereas earlier the World or the Absolute simply enclosed and dominated its fragmentary individuals, now a reciprocity develops in which we can make something of our own finitude. We, in effect, as does Royce in rejecting mysticism, *choose* our active status as wanderers. As Royce put it:

> Our rational purpose in living as we human beings now do, is essentially and always the wanderer's purpose. We seek our home, our city out of sight, our lost truth. But in the very search itself lies the partial embodiment of what we ourselves will. . . . It is we ourselves who demand our object as Beyond. . . . The very attitude of any questioner illustrates this truth. To question is to be active, to express an interest; and it is so to seek, as the relative fulfillment of one present purpose, a state of mind which also involves the dissatisfaction and instability of viewing something as still unknown and foreign.[25]

The individual here is certainly more than either one who accepts fate in ignorance or one who takes joy in the sorrow of her or his impotence. But the mediation of World and individual is not completed in *The World and the Individual*. Especially in the "Supplementary Essay," Royce's "well-ordered" system calls back its wanderers. We, as finite wanderers, of necessity "freely" come home: "We, too, however we wander, come in eternity freely to our home."[26] The risk, the autonomy, the work of our wandering—as philosophers and seekers—seem ultimately to be withdrawn; the reciprocity established above appears to dissolve into the old domination. Our task still seems to be merely to fit ourselves, as puzzle pieces, into the Whole.

The Problem of Christianity

The fuller mediation of the dyad required, for Royce, another book, *The Problem of Christianity*. The nascent sense of community found in *The World and the Individual* took hold of Royce, though he was not able to develop it there. As many commentators have noted, it was his dialogue with Peirce, together with his own conception of "loyalty," that set Royce in the direction of *The Problem of Christianity*. Peirce's conception of a community of inquirers who were also interpreters became the framework within which Royce's philosopher could work. Loyalty was his way of describing the nature of the philosopher's relation to this community. As John Smith puts it, loyalty "sustains the community of those who seek knowledge, since the pursuit of truth demands that every inquirer put aside his personal interests and predilections and devote himself to the discovery of an objective truth that is the creation of no man and no nation."[27]

It is community, then, that finally dissolves the dyad; the community, itself triadic, stands between the individual and the Absolute. The philosopher as wanderer is able now to commit herself not directly to an immediate grasp of the Absolute, but to the process of inquiry constituted by the community of interpreters. Instead of being isolated or assimilated, the philosopher finds a home in the developing career of the community. "Loyalty," Royce says, "in the individual, is his love for an united community, expressed in a life of devotion to that community."[28]

Roycean philosophers thus come to constitute a community of wanderers. There is risk, autonomy, and experiment in the wilderness. But these are underwritten not by the absolute judge's immediate decree, but by the philosopher's chosen commitment to the community. Thus, the Thrasymachus wanderer is rehabilitated not by the redemption or romanticization of mere lostness, but by seeing that he takes his bearings within a history and community of inquiry and interpretation. As philosophers we wander together and, in virtue of our commitment to this community, we find ourselves also committed to the larger community of finite beings. The frontier work of

the wilderness has its own home in the human community. It was here, finally, in the early years of the new century that Royce found himself more at home; he recognized his own work as a wandering quest for a community that gives purpose and purchase to his finitude. His own ideas found their work to do. Even if he did not come to a full existential recognition of the fact, he now described a philosophical job in which the burden to solve or resolve all questions was no longer on Royce alone. He could take his place, in his finitude, within a developing community and history of philosophical thought.

Concluding Thoughts

In an age whose gaze is riveted on difference, Royce's focus on community sounds a bit awkward—to some it may simply sound obsolete. But human difficulties seem to have their own insistence. Royce faced a culture on the verge of social fragmentation; the avenue to his philosophical outlook was through a landscape littered with radically isolated and fragmented individuals adrift in a wilderness of finitude. Though we may whistle well in the dark, I don't see that we are in a much improved state. This is true, I think, of American culture at large and also, more specifically, of philosophers in America. As philosophers we are not so much a "community" as an aggregate of folks collected under the title of a profession.

In some ways, I think, we have created an even more entangling and bewildering wilderness than the American pioneers faced. This is not to say that we live with the same physical stress and precariousness. Our wilderness is one in which we may find our own social and soulful identities seriously adrift. We have a wealth of life options, but little on which to take our bearings. We have, with remarkable success, unsettled our social fabric and displaced and misplaced our "selves"; such displacement is not new in philosophy nor, certainly, in the American philosophical tradition, as is evidenced by the emphasis both Emerson and Thoreau placed on the need for a practice of self-aversive thinking. The difference seems to be that we now take the displacement as final, not as instrumental to a better understand-

ing of and acquaintance with our home in the world. The irony is that we seem to have underwritten twentieth-century liberalism and its surface interest in community with a subjectivism that on its moral and political side is little more than a disguised rugged individualism. This, in part at least, is what makes the so-called postmodern turn both interesting and frightening. This irony would not have been lost on Royce.

As Smith notes, Royce understood that "increasing social cultivation" and maintaining a simplistic focus on community as social salvation easily "results in individualism."[29] Royce's story of us as cowanderers in a wilderness offers us at least a minimal anchor in the community of interpreters. We can draw on our conversation and experience for direction and for the maintenance of a stability amid the destabilizing surprises of history. However, for Royce, this cowandering has conditions. Central among these is a loyalty to the community and its development. We must again recognize that our "case" is not merely our own. It also concerns the social orders and traditions to which we belong. From a Roycean perspective, the ease with which we try, from an individualistic stance, to compartmentalize our being into private and public spheres seems naïve. In more concrete terms, despite a strong dogma of "liberalism" in the contemporary liberal arts academy, what we seem to have achieved for ourselves is a professionalism rooted in the entrepreneurship of writing and speaking. We live very well for critics; unlike Socrates and Margaret Fuller, we are marginalized by lack of interest, not *because* we make a difference. Too often deans no longer try to build communities; they collect individuals to enhance the outward appearances of their programs. In many ways, philosophers, like the rest of American professionals, have achieved the very status of capitalist–aristocrat they so often claim to detest and reject; in reflecting on our present condition, it is difficult not to think of Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*.

But cynicism is bought too cheaply and has no payoff. Royce fought his way from a philosophy of totality and immediacy to one of community, temporality, and interpretation. In the present setting,

where most philosophical work can without too much difficulty be construed as mercenary, self-engrossed, entrepreneurial, or self-negating, Royce's struggle offers a refreshing outlook as to what our work might be about. He openly rejected "the view that estimates the value of life as an accountant estimates a man's assets, viz., by summation and balancing"; for him, the "only useful speculations on the worth of life are those that regard life with reference to some accepted goal, itself a state of consciousness in some animate being."[30] Royce's wandering philosophers share an attitude and orientation; they are committed to the possibility of community itself and to the ameliorative possibilities for humanity that such community projects. It is a job description worth considering.