

## **The Moment of Meaning: Apperception in the Philosophy of Josiah Royce** *O Momento do Significado: a Apercepção na Filosofia de Josiah Royce*

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**Abstract:** Philosophizing at the turn of the twentieth century, Josiah Royce constructed a systematic idealism that included discussions of all major philosophical topics. Of paramount importance to both Royce's metaphysics and epistemology is the concept of apperception. However, with Roycean studies having been largely neglected until recent years, discussions of his use of this concept are scarce. This paper rides the tide of a recent reemergence of interest in the philosophy of Royce by engaging an exploratory examination of Royce's apperception, and concludes that contemporary psychology would be well-served to review Royce's apperceptive writings. Furthermore, to the degree that inconsistencies with Royce's apperception are identified, those concerned with Roycean philosophy are encouraged to engage the Peircean community for possible solutions.

**Keywords:** Josiah Royce. Apperception. Time-span. Absolute. Triadic. Psychology.

**Resumo:** *Filosofando na virada do século XX, Josiah Royce construiu um idealismo sistemático que incluía a discussão dos principais tópicos filosóficos. De suma importância tanto para a epistemologia e a metafísica de Royce é o conceito de apercepção. No entanto, devido ao fato de que os estudos royceanos vinham sendo negligenciados até recentemente, discussões a respeito de seu uso deste conceito são escassas. Este ensaio aparece reforçado pelo movimento que marca a recente reemergência do interesse na filosofia de Royce engajando-se em um exame exploratório da apercepção de Royce e conclui que a psicologia contemporânea só teria a ganhar se revise os escritos sobre apercepção deste filósofo. Ademais, na medida que certas inconsistências no que tangem à apercepção em Royce forem identificadas, aqueles envolvidos na filosofia royceana são encorajados a engajar a comunidade peirceana em busca de soluções possíveis.*

**Palavras-chave:** Josiah Royce. Apercepção.

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### **I: Introduction**

Philosophizing at the turn of the twentieth century, Josiah Royce constructed a systematic idealism which included discussions of all major philosophical topics. In developing these topics, Royce discourses on the experiences of individuals, communities of individuals, communities of communities, nature itself, and finally *the* community of communities, or the Absolute. At each stage of this discussion, we find Royce's epistemology to hinge on the concept of apperception. The purpose of this paper will be to examine what implications arise from Royce's use of the concept of apperception. Namely, I will seek to draw out the epistemic implications of a world composed of varying apperceptive spans, and to discuss the apperceptive process in terms of Royce's Absolute. However, before engaging these components of apperception, it is necessary to begin by offering a brief description of apperception that will include discussions of its relation to time, as well as its triadic interpretive nature.

In addition, I will trace the concept's connection to current day research in the field of psychology.

Loosely stated, apperception is the limited time span within which an entity can consciously and willfully perceive and understand change in phenomena. In other words, a manifestation of one's apperceptive span constitutes a moment of meaning. In Royce's 1898 work entitled "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature", Royce offers a succinct definition of apperception:

What is meant... by this apperceptive span is the fact that what we call a present moment in our consciousness always has a brief but still by no means infinitesimal length, within which the "pulse" of change, which that moment apperceives, must fall.<sup>1</sup>

That is, when some changing element, some dynamic phenomenon is understood, when it ceases to be mere sense data, when the outward presentation delivered by the senses is distinguished by its constituting parts and the relationships of those parts to one another are held before the mind's eye, one is experiencing a manifestation of one's apperceptive span. In defining apperception as the moment of meaning, we need not think ourselves literary. Inherent to apperception is a counter-intuitive definition of time.

Traditionally, common sense presents a concept of time very nominalistic in nature. We see our lives running through this time medium represented by a clock: human lifetimes comprised of decades, decades of years, years of months.., and so on to hours, minutes, and seconds. However, what quickly becomes apparent in this approach is that such a conceptual temporal definition allows for the further division of moments *ad infinitum*.<sup>2</sup> Within such a framework, the reconciliation of another common-sense conceptual feature becomes problematic: How do we define the present in terms of a conception of time that is forever capable of further division?

Through the invocation of apperception, this nominalistic difficulty is overcome. In apperception, we find the present to be defined in a relativistic fashion. The present, defined within the context of apperception, is, for any form of consciousness, that moment when the comparison of ideas, be they conceptual or perceptual, is mediated by a third idea, an interpreter. Arguing against a dyadic interpretation of comparison, Royce states:

Comparison, in the fuller sense of the word, takes place when one asks or answers the question "What constitutes the difference between A and B?" "Wherein does A resemble B?" "Wherein consists their distinction?"<sup>3</sup>

Hence, apperception presents a triadic process, wherein two distinct ideas are reconciled by a third. This third idea, the interpreter, constitutes a dynamic creative act on behalf of the entity apperceiving. Illustrating the process, Royce, in lecture 12, "The Will to Interpret" of *The Problem of Christianity*, offers several examples of this interpreting, or mediating idea. The first example that Royce calls upon is that of the interpreting idea necessary for reading writing reflected in a mirror.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, there is a written word printed on a piece of paper before you in normal legible print.

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<sup>1</sup> Josiah Royce, "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature," in *The Basic Writings of Josiah Royce*, ed. John McDermott (New York: Fordham University Press 2005), 457.

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Royce, "The Temporal and the Eternal," in *The World and the Individual* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1901), 119, 120.

<sup>3</sup> Josiah Royce, "The Will to Interpret," in *The Problem of Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 299.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 299, 300.

On the other hand, and for the sake of this example, let us suppose that on the same piece of paper there is written an additional word, which is, in fact, the same word as that which was written in normal fashion, but written as though it would appear in a mirror. At first glance, one eyes the two words and is stymied. There is something peculiar in both their similarity, and in their difference. The acknowledgment of this peculiarity leads to a question: How are the two words related? With the purpose of successfully answering this question, an investigation ensues until one visualizes the first letter of the normally written word lifting up off the paper, with the last letter functioning as a pivot point, thereby creating a 180 degree arch, the completion of which establishes that first letter of the normally written word as the last of the mirror script word. Hence, the third mediating idea, which compared the first normally written word and the similar, yet queer, second word, was the creative mental act of envisioning the first, legible word, in an act of motion whereby it came to align itself perfectly with the second similar, yet illegible, word. In this example, though it was actually comprised on many manifestations of one's apperceptive span—remember the successful mediation of the two ideas by the third did not happen without first prompting a *question* of comparison—what we might focus on, for the sake of illustration, is that when the successful mediation did, in fact, take place, that moment constituted an apperceptive present moment.

However, apperception should not be conceived as a process whereby the nominalists are left wholly outside of the forum. Rather, it seems that a rigorous advocate of apperception, while not abolishing the distinction of ever-finer individual temporal elements, will question the nominalist's role as a keynote speaker. That is, the temporal order of events that occurs within the confines of a manifestation of an apperceptive moment must not, in order for the meaning found to be as it is, be otherwise. Addressing this issue in "The Temporal and the Eternal", Royce states:

An elementary consciousness of change without such definite successions we can indeed have; but where we observe clearly what a particular change is, it is a change wherein one fact succeeds another.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the serial ordering of events is a necessary element to apperception for a clear appreciation of change in a phenomenon. Hence, should we return to Royce's mirror script analysis, what is evident is that the mediation between the first word and the second word occurred in a specific fashion, in a specific sequenced order, and had it occurred in another fashion, the meaning of the mediating idea would have been other than it was. Aside from illustrating the two-fold nature of time that apperception gives way to, as well as the basic triadic process of interpretation that characterizes apperception, it is also here made evident that apperception is a purposeful endeavor. The successful mediation between the normally written word and its mirror-script copy was brought about by answering a particularly vexing question: How are the two words related?

Before moving on, it is important to note that Royce most fully developed his discussions of apperception in his pinnacle 1899 and 1901 metaphysical work, *The World and the Individual*. However, the description of the process as 'triadic' is something that Royce only began to formulate in the latter lectures of his 1913 work, *The Problem of Christianity*. This triadic description of apperception is only briefly

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<sup>5</sup> Royce, "The Temporal and the Eternal."., 114.

alluded to in lecture XIII, "The World of Interpretation".<sup>6</sup> However, the triadic process is most fully developed in lecture XII, "The Will to Interpret", in which Royce is overt in crediting this triadic description of interpretation to Charles Peirce. For my purposes in this paper, I have chosen to open in such a fashion as to include the triadic nature of apperception in our working definition owing to the assumption that had Royce been earlier exposed to Peirce's writings, he, himself, would have included the triadic description in his discussions offered in *The World and the Individual*. Furthermore, having thus exposed my reader to the triadic description, we are now in a better position to analyze apperception in the context of the two subtopics that I proposed in opening (entities of varying apperceptive spans, and apperception and the Absolute).

Now, before moving into a discussion of these two subtopics, it behooves us to take a brief glance at the concept's modern-day incarnations in the field of psychology. Current literature indicates that discussions on topics analogous to Royce's apperception are still very much alive. Psychologists Frank H. Durgin, of Swarthmore College, and Saul Sternberg, of the University of Pennsylvania, argue in their 2002 article "The Time of Consciousness and Vice Versa" that "the perceived time of an event may not directly reflect the time at which the event 'entered consciousness'".<sup>7</sup> In surveying the grounds for this conclusion, we may find Royce very much in the background. To arrive at this statement Sternberg and Durgin discourse on the many paradoxical problems involved in adopting too nominalistic a view of time, a view centered on individual mathematical instants of time, and one that does not account for purpose, process, and meaning, a discussion that leads them to claim "that in the very short term, our awareness of an event is specifically an awareness of the event, over time, and not of the separate individual moments that an event might be cut into (e.g., by the frames of a video representation)".<sup>8</sup> What is here important for our own discussion is that contemporary psychologists, such as Sternberg and Durgin, are still involved in a discussion similar to that which Royce involves himself in discussing apperception. In fact, in opening their article, Sternberg and Durgin refer to the "specious present" of William James and E.R. Clay. However, they fail to acknowledge the apperception of Royce. Given the logical skill that Royce brings to the table, contemporary researchers may be well served to analyze the apperceptive writings of Royce.

## II: A World Composed of Varying Apperceptive Spans

The reader may have noticed that in the introductory section of this paper apperceptive spans are attributed to various entities, and not merely to human beings. Furthermore, while many of today's thinkers may have assumed that the apperceptive characteristic referred to in other entities was directed towards those that today's science might describe as conscious beings, Royce's idealism extends the conception of apperception to all entities, including those that modern-day science would never ascribe a conscious life. In outlining those aspects of his idealism that pertain to nature, Royce states:

...we have no right whatever to speak of really unconscious Nature, but only of uncommunicative Nature, or of Nature whose mental processes go on at such different

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<sup>6</sup> Josiah Royce, "The World of Interpretation," in *The Problem of Christianity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 340.

<sup>7</sup> Frank and Saul Sternberg Durgin, "The Time of Consciousness and Vice Versa," *Consciousness and Cognition* 11 (2002), 289.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 285.

time-rates from ours that we cannot adjust ourselves to a live appreciation of their inward fluency, although our consciousness does make us aware of their presence.<sup>9</sup>

The implications that arise from Royce's extension of apperception to all entities are intriguing. In this section, I propose to discuss some of these implications: Namely, why is it that communication among entities endowed with similar apperceptive spans takes place with ease; and, why it is that direct communication between entities of dramatically different spans is impossible. This analysis will be developed with the aid of Royce's discussions of apperception as they appear in the *World and the Individual* and "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature".

Let us begin by noting that William James, in discussing his "specious present," a concept analogous to Royce's apperception, quantified the duration to be no less than 1/500 seconds, and no more than 12 seconds for human beings.<sup>10</sup> What this means is that dynamic processes taking place between those two time limits can be held before the mind's eye in one apperceptive moment, a moment which, technically, could be analyzed by way of the triadic structure mentioned above.

Hence, apperception is concerned with bringing the constituting parts of a process together such that there is an apperceptive moment wherein the process itself is understood all at once. Making a similar point, Diana Monsman, in her article, "Royce's Conception of Experience and of the Self", interprets Royce's idea of thought to mean that "...thought is unific function, an experience of 'linking together'".<sup>11</sup> Thus, it would seem that the apperceptive process is the most fundamental unit of such unification. But, what then of processes occurring outside the range of our own unifying or apperceptive limits?

Addressing this issue in "Self Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature", Royce asks us to imagine processes, the occurrences of which happen either too swiftly or too slowly for our apperceptive spans to be able to engage interpretation. Nevertheless, these processes are facts in the phenomenal world. Royce then goes on to question, "*Why may not just such facts be represented by experience which accompanies our own, and which is just as real as ours, but which is characterized by another apperceptive span?*"<sup>12</sup> In addressing the question, Royce asks us to imagine four beings (1, 2, 3, and 4) who exhibit various apperceptive spans, but who, nonetheless, inhabit the same phenomenal world. Now, further suppose each of these beings to be in the presence of changing phenomena A, B, C, and D. Phenomena 'A' changes at rate  $r$ , 'B' at a slower rate  $r'$ , 'C' at  $r''$ , and 'D' at  $r'''$ . And, each of the four hypothetical beings exhibits an apperceptive span that corresponds to one of the rates of change of the four phenomena (A, B, C, and D). Hence, being 1 is able to hold a change in phenomenon 'A' before its mind's eye in a single moment. However, the changes that are simultaneously taking place in phenomena 'B, C, and D' take place too slowly for being 1 to be able to recognize and understand the processes at stake behind those changes. Should we examine being 4, it is evident that a change in phenomenon 'D', given being 4's apperceptive span, is evident to it. However, the changes taking place in phenomena 'A, B, and C' occur too quickly for being 4 to hold those changes

<sup>9</sup> Josiah Royce, "The Interpretation of Nature," in *The World and the Individual* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1901), 225, 226.

<sup>10</sup> Milic Capek, "Time and Eternity in Royce and Bergson," *Revue internationale de philosophie* 21, no. 79-80 (1967), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Diana Monsman, "Royce's Conception of Experience and the Self," *The Philosophical Review* 49, no. 3 (1940), 331.

<sup>12</sup> Royce, "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness and Nature."., 457.

before its own mind's eye, that is, to understand those changes.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the direct meaning of events occurring outside of one's apperceptive limits is lost. The serial order of events taking place that constitute that meaning is never held before the mind's eye.

One implication that follows from this analysis is that only entities of similar apperceptive breadth are capable of direct communication with one another. The reason for this is found in the fact that the apperceptive span defines the fashion in which we experience the phenomenal world. And, according to Royce, we are aware of ourselves only in so far as we are aware of an "other".<sup>14</sup> The first "other" that we become aware of in our development is a fellow being of the same type. An acknowledgment of similar reactions to external stimuli is observed, and an emulation of like behavior ensues. We apperceive and react. We observe others reacting in similar fashions to those same stimuli that induced an action from ourselves. Through language, we report those apperceptions to our fellows, our fellows reports back, and a comparison of ideas ensues. Thus, in part, communication is facilitated by the sharing of common apperceptive spans.

To further illustrate the fact that direct communication between entities is only possible when those entities share approximately the same apperceptive span, it is helpful to examine the issue by juxtaposing two dramatically different apperceptive spans. Remembering that Royce's idealism presents a system wherein conscious life is attributed to a far greater degree of beings than common sense permits, Royce asks us to imagine an apperceptive span of such considerable breadth that, to it, the erosion of the Niagara gorge is present in a single apperceptive moment.<sup>15</sup> Immediately, one may observe that direct communication with a conscious life exhibiting an apperceptive span of this magnitude would be impossible owing to mere practical considerations (i.e., our own dramatically shorter lifetimes). However, to stop at this observation is to miss the critical point: Even if we were to suppose ourselves not hampered by our own relatively short longevity, we still would not be able to engage in direct communication with this "other" owing to the dramatic disparity between our own inner life and that of the Niagara apperceiver. Our apperceptive experiences, for the Niagara apperceiver would most likely be no experiences at all, if we were to assume a lower apperceptive limit for this Niagara erosion apperceiving consciousness. Therefore, it is not durational time alone that inhibits direct communication, but it is also the dramatically different inner life of those beings whose apperceptive spans differ so profoundly.

In this section, then, we have seen that owing to the similarity in inner experiences between entities of similar apperceptive breadth, a necessary condition for direct communication is met. On the other hand, in the case of entities with dramatically different apperceptive breadth, that inner life is of such different character that direct communication is rendered impossible. However, owing to the continuous nature of experience, which presupposes overlapping apperceptive spans, indirect communication amongst entities is made possible. This overlapping constitutes a widening of the epistemic community. Yet, the increased knowledge that may be gained through indirect communication will never be of the same intimate nature that is presented through direct apperception.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 458, 459.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 424-428.

<sup>15</sup> Royce, "The Interpretation of Nature."., 227, 228.

#### IV: Apperception and the Absolute

A reader of Royce's works is well aware that the Absolute is a key component of his idealism. In this section, we will examine apperception in relation to Royce's Absolute. To do so will necessitate us to invoke the notion of continuity in experience. Overlapping apperceptive spans present a scenario wherein finite beings become indirectly aware of apperceptions had by those entities of differing apperceptive breadth. However, what is often overlooked is that it is possible to speak of the apperceptions of communities. That is, there exists a higher reality to a community than the sum of its constituting members. In lecture XII of *The Problem of Christianity*, entitled, "The World of Interpretation", Royce discusses the community of interpretation and relates the triadic process we observed in the description of apperception to it:

...the real world is the Community of Interpretation which is constituted by the two antithetic ideas, and their mediator or interpreter, whatever or whoever that interpreter may be. If the interpretation is a reality, and if it truly interprets the whole of reality, then the community reaches its goal, and the real world includes its own interpreter. *Unless both the interpreter and the community are real, there is no real world.*<sup>16</sup>

Thus, we see that Royce has found a parallel of the apperceptive process in community, a process that common sense would just assume retain for human individuals with whom we can directly communicate. However, Royce does not make this leap without warrant. The justification for the applicability of apperception to communities is found in the nature of the process itself. When we creatively construct an interpretive idea for the comparison of two other ideas to form an apperceptive moment of understanding, we fall short of our ideal goal of a complete understanding. The new interpreting idea is used as a means for yet another comparison. Problems and questions, whose answers are sought in a purposeful way, often lead to answers that are too big for the apperception of any one individual exhibiting an apperceptive breadth of the variety which we possess. Today, it is common to speak of the scientific community as a *body* which pursues answers to large questions with a certain method. The answers that are found are often of far too great a scope for any one individual to apperceive. Yet, we do view those answers as realities. And thus, we are led to the apperceptions of communities, wherein a higher reality is able to apperceive the actuality of those answers that were pursued in a purposeful fashion by the community in question.

However, even as this higher community presents an apperceptive breadth of a much higher degree than any individual contained therein, the community is still finite. Drawing this point out in, "The Place of the Self in Being", Royce states, "As a fact, any Self except the Absolute is included within the life of a richer Self, and in turn includes the lives of partial Selves within its own".<sup>17</sup> Hence, there is a reality that falls outside of the community's grasp. In, "Universality and Unity", Royce asserts:

The facts which we view as related to one another in space must indeed be viewed by a larger experience than ours, as present and as linked. But our way of interpreting the

<sup>16</sup> Royce, "The World of Interpretation.", 339.

<sup>17</sup> Josiah Royce, "The Place of the Self in Being," in *The World and the Individual* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1901)..., 303, 304.

linkage is obviously human, and is probably only a very special case of the experience of the various aspects of coexistent meaning in the world of the final experience.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, we see that there are various degrees of apperceived linkages in the facts of experience. And that in a community pursuing an ideal in a purposeful fashion, we see apperceptive linkages that are of far greater degree in magnitude than those possible in the human individual. However, they, themselves, are still finite. Nevertheless the continuity of experience links communities to yet other communities until, at last, we are presented with the community of communities, or the Absolute.

In the Absolute, we find an apperception that accounts for the linking of all events and processes contained in the infinite past, as well as those that will constitute the infinite future; and, it is a process that we find evidence for within our own apperceptions. Illustrating this point, Royce states:

For it is precisely the wholeness, and not the mere fragmentariness, the presence, and not the mere absence of unity in our consciousness, the relative attainment, and not the mere postponement of our meanings, which, from this point of view, guide us towards a positive view of how the unity of Being is, in the midst of all the varieties, attained.<sup>19</sup>

This unity of Being is best characterized in the all-encompassing apperception of the Absolute. Furthermore, it is also here evident that it is from an inward examination of our own attainment of meaning that we come to have knowledge of the Absolute. That is, our acknowledgment of the presented continuity gives us evidence of the Absolute. Effectively, the Absolute is the epistemic community *writ large*. The Absolute apperceptive process mirrors that of our own apperceptive process on a much larger scale. Just as Royce holds our own individual meanings to be sought in a purposeful way—whether the purpose manifest itself in terms of an immediate goal, such as arriving safely at a destination, or in the context of an overarching life purpose—, similarly, Royce's idealism views the whole world, the world at large, as engaged in terms of this type of temporal process by which meaning is had in the embodiment of a sequential series, a purposively ordered sequence of events. Hence, the implication is that the ordered sequence of world events, when viewed as an embodiment all at once, constitutes an ever present now, and includes the infinite past, present, and infinite future. And, it is the inner life of the Absolute that apperceives this ever present now. In the "Temporal and the Eternal", Royce declares:

...in the last analysis, the Absolute Will must be viewed as expressed in a well-ordered and discrete series of facts, which from our point of view may indeed appear, as we shall still further see, capable of discrimination *ad infinitum*.<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, this well ordered series of facts contains not only the final determinations of vague ideas alone, but also includes all of the ambiguity, and problems, all of the error, and all of the yearning of the world as well. However, the Absolute also contains all of the solutions and final outcomes of these problems and their resulting yearnings. The Absolute is the sum of all experience, both that which constitutes, from our perspective, the infinite past and the infinite future, as well as our own present.

However, in the notion of the Absolute apperception containing not only all of the yearning and direction associated with an apperception of lesser breadth that is

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<sup>18</sup> Josiah Royce, "Universality and Unity," in *The World and the Individual* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959)..., 420.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 422.

<sup>20</sup> Royce, "The Temporal and the Eternal."., 138.



functioning as a transitory state wherein an ideal is pursued, but also the final solutions to all of those yearnings, there is an ambiguity that Roycean scholarship would be well served to address. Should we turn Milic Capek's "Time and Eternity in Royce and Bergson," we find him pointing to this ambiguity. Having noted that there is always a sense of the beyond directing our apperceptive present moments, that which has led us to characterize them as transitory states, Capek goes on to note that this feature is absent in Royce's Eternity, and hence, absent in that Absolute's apperception:

Yet, precisely this feature of incompleteness, of a not-yet-realized future transcending the present, is absent in the Roycean Eternity. For the Eternal of Royce is a *completed infinite whole* in which there is no "not yet", no "temporal beyond"; the future—to wit, the whole infinite future—is a part *totum simul*, of the eternal "At once". But can then Royce still meaningfully claim that time is not abolished? Is it true that his eternal *totum simul* is *temporally* extended? This is extremely doubtful.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, I, at present, am not in a position to adequately respond to Capek's objection. But, if I were to offer speculation, I would be curious as whether Capek's characterization of Royce's infinite is without flaw. That is, would it be possible to extend to Royce a conception of the Infinite that allows for the introduction of a discussion geared around notions of continual expansion of an infinitely large set, a set that would be conceived to extend into the infinite past, and *continue* to extend into the future without presupposing a current upper limit. While this is but speculation on my part, I would be interested to see if scholarship could address a Roycean Absolute that is *perfecting*, as opposed to *perfect*, thereby finding a way to establish the transitory function of finite apperception to the infinite Absolute apperception.

To conclude this section, we have seen that the Absolute apperception is a necessary outcome of Royce's system of idealism. It is evidenced through a close examination of the continuity of our own experience of apperceptive moments, and the observation of that continuity necessarily extending beyond ourselves to the phenomenal world at large, as well as the reality of apperceived processes which unfold in higher-order Selves than we humans, such as communities. Furthermore, the Absolute apperception, like our own, is founded on a well-ordered sequence of events that could not be other than they are for its meaning to be what it is. However, such a line of thought need not lead us to fatalism. For, the Absolute is not a disconnected puppet-master, but instead, is the medium through which our own expressions and meanings unfold. When we suffer, the Absolute suffers, when we joy, the Absolute joys as well. And, though an ambiguity arises, it seems that Royce's Absolute is purposeful by aiming at its own perfection.

## V: Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to present needed qualifications. Anytime one attempts an expression of an extremely complex topic, such as Royce's apperception, within small confines, inadequacies abound. Here, I have attempted to explain and bring highlight to some of the most notable features of Royce's apperception. In so doing, the reader will recall that we began our investigation with a description of apperception that involved triadic interpretation. As was noted, this aspect of apperception is something that Royce began to explore after exposing himself to the theories of Charles Peirce almost fifteen years after he

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<sup>21</sup> Capek, "Time and Eternity in Royce and Bergson."., 35.

originally discoursed on the concept in the *World and the Individual*. Thus, though there are hints of the triadic process underlying Royce's discussion in *The World and the Individual*, the triadic feature is never directly addressed within that work. Therefore, it seems that with the reemergence of interest in the works of Royce, that it is high time Roycean and Peircean scholars facilitate a meeting of the minds, so to speak, in order to see what further clarification Peirce's works might offer Royce's apperception.

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