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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF WILLIAM
ERNEST HOCKING.

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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY
OF WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

by

George Newland

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Hugh Newland", written over a horizontal line.

PREFACE

William Ernest Hocking was a prolific writer. During the sixty years of his active academic life, he published 258 books and articles. The subjects of these writings range from politics and juvenile delinquency to religious missions and metaphysics. As a philosopher he attracted a popular following in his own lifetime.

A number of Hocking's writings deal with fundamental problems in education. He attempted to solve these problems in his famous Shady Hill School at Cambridge, Massachusetts. In spite of the originality of Hocking's thought, there are few commentaries on his educational philosophy.

The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to show the interrelationship between Hocking's speculative philosophy and his educational thought. From a few basic assumptions about life, Hocking generated both his speculative philosophy of Idealism and his educational philosophy. Fortunately, the genesis of Hocking's educational ideas are available in the form of his unpublished notes, Varieties of Educational Experience. These were deposited by Hocking in the Archives of the Widener Library at Harvard University in 1952 and 1954.

This writer owes many acknowledgments. First, to his professors at The University of Arizona who shared with him their insights into the complexities of educational philosophy. Second, to his family, who patiently bore the vicissitudes of doctoral study; and finally, special gratitude is extended to the writer's adviser, Dr. Stanley Ivie, for his patience and detailed criticism of this work.

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ABSTRACT

William Ernest Hocking, one of the great philosophers of the Golden Age of American philosophy, generated his objective Idealism from an essentially religious orientation. Two fundamental assumptions seem to be the source of his speculative and educational philosophy: (1) that the world as a whole has meaning, and (2) that the knowledge of God is a basic part of human experience.

In his analysis of how men know God, Hocking utilizes two methodologies: (1) negative pragmatism, and (2) introspection. Both are employed to solve the philosophical dilemmas of the present age: solipsism and man's estrangement from God.

The role of religion is essential in remaking human nature and overcoming the dilemmas of the modern age. Only the motivating force of Christianity can bring about the transformation of human instincts through man's spiritual "will-to-power." Transformed, man will zealously seek to improve his social institutions. The institutions of family and state, however, are inadequate objects of the spiritual "will-to-power." Man's self, identified with the "will-to-power," transcends mere natural relations with the world. The self is always engaged in a relationship

with the "Absolute." Hence, from a religious point of view, the "Absolute" is an intimate, personal God, a "Thou," which is to be found in religious experience.

Hocking's basic assumptions concerning God and meaning are also to be found in his educational philosophy. Religion and philosophy underlie his concept of the aim of education. Hocking sees education as having a dual function: (1) to reproduce the cultural type, and (2) to transcend the cultural type, in the hope of generating a better society. For this reason, every school must have a faith, to be taught without dogma. Along with intellectual knowledge and morals, students should be taught how to think. They should learn how to develop logical powers for the critical evaluation of society's goals.

The educational practice at Shady Hill School, founded by Agnes and Ernest Hocking in 1915, came into conflict with the then current doctrines of progressive education. Shady Hill School was characterized by the explicit teaching of religious and moral values, a stress on abstract thinking, and an aversion to textbooks and the methodology of learning by doing.

To criticize Hocking's philosophy, this study has used the five logical canons of any discourse. They are (1) internal consistency, (2) categorical compatibility, (3) uniformity of definitional type, (4) the basic specifications of language usage, (5) and the law of parsimony.

Likewise, the criteria for evaluating Hocking's educational philosophy are the same logical canons.

From a careful appraisal of Hocking's philosophy and educational thought, one can grasp a consistency of principle that is consonant with the assumptions of Idealism; namely, that education should be directed at forming moral character, religious consciousness, and spiritual self-realization. Hence, as an expression of philosophical idealism, Hocking's educational thought is often in conflict with the realist assumptions of American culture, but it is a conflict that enriches one's appreciation of the complexities of the process of education.

CHAPTER I

FORMATIVE YEARS

The distinctive fact about an idealist is not that he has had an extraordinary experience; rather, it is that he can get so much mileage out of one. In this sense, William Ernest Hocking is a good example of the mileage that is possible in idealism. Hocking's powerful and eloquent book, The Meaning of God in Human Experience, gives testimony to this fact.¹ The study of Hocking's writings, however, is not a sufficient basis to gain an appreciation of his complex philosophy; indeed, his philosophical thought is part of his total personality. Thus a knowledge of Hocking's biography is essential to a complete understanding of his thought.

The essence of Hocking's life can be summed up in his own words: "I have enjoyed living. I have found it a wonderful and holy thing."² Hocking's life was very well

1. William Ernest Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience: A Philosophic Study of Religion, 5th ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923).

2. Leroy S. Rouner, "The Making of a Philosopher: Ernest Hocking's Early Years," Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking, ed. by Leroy S. Rouner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 7.

balanced. Born and raised in the rural midwest, his interest and work encompassed a vast spectrum of activities. His many roles in life took him through apprentice carpenter, civil engineer, high school principal, and finally, into the philosophy department at Harvard University. In his years as a professor of philosophy he founded the famous Shady Hill School. During this same period, he also served as Chairman of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Board, a position which made him a world traveller. After his retirement from Harvard in 1943, Hocking lived on his six hundred acre farm near Madison, New Hampshire, thinking, working and writing.

William Ernest Hocking was the first of five children born to Dr. William Francis Hocking and Mary Hocking. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio on August 10, 1873. From his early years, Hocking was nourished on Christian piety. Along with bacon and eggs, breakfast included the offering of morning prayers and a Bible verse recited by each of the five Hocking children. This early religious training had a deep and lasting effect on Hocking's view of life.

An important event occurred in his early years. At the age of twelve, Hocking experienced a spiritual conversion to the Methodist faith. One day, during a Sunday afternoon church gathering, which featured a stirring preacher from Chicago, a certain Harry Date, Hocking experienced a

religious illumination.³ He felt if ". . . growth up to this point had been a subvoluntary occurrence . . . something which happened to one, and after it happened, one could never again be just the same."⁴ After this experience, Hocking saw life in a new light, and he claimed a fresh resolve of will. Hocking now saw himself as a part of ". . . a great procession of humanity in which each man has an immortal soul."⁵ This same theme of immortality was to reoccur many years later in Hocking's The Coming World Civilization. In this volume he envisions mankind as being bound together by its common awareness of God.

True piety, however, is not without its tests. The test for Hocking came the year after his conversion; it took the form of reading the works of Herbert Spencer. This study was done against his father's wishes, and from a Methodist point of view it had disastrous effects.

"Father's fears," says Hocking, "were correct; Spencer

3. Ibid.

4. William Ernest Hocking, "Some Second Principles" in Contemporary American Philosophy: Personal Statements ed. by George Plimpton Adams and William Pepperell Montague. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930), pp. 385-386.

5. loc. cit.

finished me off."⁶ Thus, as a result of reading Spencer, Hocking lost John Wesley and became an entranced follower of Herbert Spencer. This discipleship, however, was an uneasy one, for the intellectual blessing of Spencer came into conflict with his recently acquired religious convictions. While Spencer's views demanded a resignation to mortality, Hocking was permeated with a sense of the uniqueness of human life, and he could hardly bear the thought of personal annihilation.⁷ This irreconcilable tension was to endure for many years, and it was not resolved until Hocking attained a new vision of the supernatural dimension of man.

Hocking's need to transcend his conflict with Spencer became almost a compulsion in the years that followed his graduation from high school.⁸ After high school, he set out to earn enough money to attend college.

6. William Ernest Hocking, Varieties of Educational Experience, Part I, Part II. (Being fragments of a conceivable educational autobiography, serving as a connective tissue, and to some extent as interpretation, for papers on education to be placed in Harvard College Library.) (Madison, New Hampshire, 1952) Part I pp. 10-12. This mimeographed work, deposited in the Archives, Widener Library, Harvard University, is divided into two parts: Part I, (1952, pp. 1-44), and Part II (1954, pp. 1-83).

7. Hocking, "Some Second Principles," p. 387.

8. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 37.

His first position was with the County surveyor of Will County, Illinois. Later he joined the Chief Engineer's Office of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad. Yet, even as he worked, his obsession with Spencer followed him. Finally, during his years with the railroad, a crack appeared in the wall of Spencerian doom, and Hocking was refreshed with a new insight into immortality.

This insight came one day while he was inspecting a seemingly endless line of railroad track. As Hocking looked down the track, he had an intuition into the nature of endless time. In this intuition he looked at his own life in the context of the long sequence of Spencerian evolution, and he saw himself as an infinitesimal speck in the flow of the world's history. At that instant of meditation, Hocking tried to imagine himself as being dead, and he was flooded with the realization " . . . that it was I, as surviving, who looked upon myself as dead, . . . and that because of this, annihilation can be spoken of, but never imagined."⁹ Thus, because annihilation could not be imagined, Hocking felt that man's immortality was assured.

Perhaps it was this small ray of light, although not well focused, that led Hocking to formulate a principle that

9. William Ernest Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 213-214.

was later to guide his entire philosophy:

. . . The long story of my philosophical studies is not here in place; the business of "getting beyond Spencer" is far simpler and was achieved in substance before I entered Harvard. I was prepared to hold -- though not to prove -- one clearcut metaphysical proposition and to deny its opposite. That proposition was that the world as a whole has meaning as against the proposition that we live in a purposeless universe.¹⁰

Thus the founding assertion of Hocking's philosophy is: "The world as a whole has meaning." This conclusion, however, was neither the result of empirical demonstration nor rational deduction. It was, as William James would have it, a "passional decision." Hence the meaning of existence in an a priori value judgment -- a value judgment that becomes a pervasive principle in Hocking's subsequent philosophy.

In spite of his personal conviction that the world has meaning, Hocking's struggle with Spencer was far from over. Hocking felt that unless intuitions can be verified by subsequent experience they cannot be philosophically valid. Thus, throughout his ten years of intellectual wrestling with Spencer, Hocking believed agnosticism to be a moral duty until he found conclusive evidence for the existence of a personal God.

10. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 37.

Hocking's evidence for the existence of God came to him through three simple but important events. These events occurred within a span of five years after he had left the railroad. The first was a casual encounter with a work by J. A. Stallo, Concepts and Theories of Modern Progress. After reading this book, which offered a penetrating analysis and criticism of some basic Spencerian principles, Hocking's thoughts were freed from the hypnotic spell of Spencer.¹¹ Stallo's criticism had devastated the assumptions on which Spencer had constructed his philosophy. The second event in breaking Spencer's spell was the reading of William James's Principles of Psychology. This book fell into Hocking's eager hands while he was studying civil engineering at the State College in Ames, Iowa.¹² In James's discussion of free will, in which he allowed that man's knowledge of causality was limited, Hocking saw that ". . . the possibility of beyond-causal free action of the will kept peering through the arguments."¹³ Thus Hocking took hope that in spite of the physically deterministic universe man can still be a free agent.

11. loc. cit.

12. Hocking studied engineering at the Iowa State College during the 1894-95 academic year.

13. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 37.

The third event that helped dispel Spencer from Hocking's thought was a chance meeting with a stranger. This stranger went out of his way to help Hocking locate a job. In a sense this was the most significant of the three events, for it gave Hocking fresh insight into human nature and spiritual motivation.

In the selfless actions of the stranger, Hocking felt that he had found a mystical insight into the New Testament counsel to love your neighbor. On this point, Hocking says, "It was as if he [the stranger] had made the mystical phrase, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it . . .,' into a practical philosophy."¹⁴ From this intuitive insight into human motivation, a new perception of the "real" opened up to Hocking. This new knowledge helped Hocking transcend his conflict with Spencer; it also helped him substantiate his philosophical first premise: "The world as a whole has meaning."

Hence, at this stage of his philosophical career, Hocking was already inclined toward a religious, subjective type of philosophy. At the core of this philosophy was the conviction that the world has meaning. Yet his philosophical intuitions demanded rational justification; that is, he had to verify his intuitions in terms of sense experience.

14. Ibid., p. 38.

Further, through reflecting on his intellectual struggle with Spencer, Hocking became convinced that experience is both social and metaphysical.

Unlike the Cartesian cogito, the experience of the self in Hocking's philosophy is not that of a monadic subject confined to its own psychological states; rather, man lives in a world of common objects and human communication.¹⁵ In addition, Hocking felt that the self, in and through its knowledge of nature and society, also experiences contact with "Other Mind." This "Other Mind" is both immanent and transcendent in nature. After many years of meditating on this concept of the knowing experience, Hocking developed this notion further in his major work The Meaning of God in Human Experience. In this book, he maintained the thesis that contact with the "Other Mind" or the "Absolute" is a partial comprehension of the concept of God.¹⁶ Thus Hocking came to the conclusion that ". . . the idea of God is a fundamental and constant experience . . . ," which is bound up with a knowledge of the self in nature.¹⁷

15. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 202.

16. Ibid., p. 206.

17. Ibid., p. 278.

Hocking's type of idealism is distinctive because of its attempt to unite sense experience with a knowledge of the "Absolute." In general, idealists tend to separate the immediate qualities of sense experience from any significance in relation to the "Absolute." Examples of this can be seen in the dialectical logic of Hegel and the dichotomized world of F. H. Bradley. The idealism of Hocking, however, rejects this separation of experience from a knowledge of the "Absolute." Indeed, according to Hocking, it is within the realm of sense experience that one encounters the "Absolute." Because of this distinctive feature of his thought, Hocking found it difficult to assign a name to his philosophy. He came to feel that it was, ". . . a supernatural Realism, or a Social Realism, or more truly a Realism of the Absolute -- not far removed from Absolute Idealism."¹⁸

Despite the philosophical peace of mind that Hocking received in breaking free from Spencer, all his metaphysical problems were not yet at an end. Many years of study lay between the resolution of his religious conflict with Spencer and the full development of his philosophy. Through his illuminating contact with William James's Principles of Psychology, Hocking determined that he would go to Harvard to study under the great psychologist. Thus,

18. Ibid., p. 290.

after completing two years of engineering at Ames, he set out to earn money for his expenses at Harvard. He first worked as a teacher in a business school. Later, he served for two years as a principal in the schools of Davenport, Iowa. Then, in 1899, his ambition to enter Harvard University was finally realized. Despite his personal involvement in religious and philosophical questions, he registered in the school of architecture; however, it was not long before he was inexorably drawn to the world of philosophy.

While studying philosophy at Harvard, Hocking gleaned knowledge from many great minds. Josiah Royce, for example, then in a decline of his popularity, had a decided influence on the direction of Hocking's thought. However, it was from William James that Hocking derived the method of "negative pragmatism," which he was to utilize in his Science and the Idea of God.¹⁹

In describing his years at Harvard, Hocking characterized the teaching of some great minds as having ". . . passages of high luminosity against a prevalent atmosphere of low visibility."²⁰ In spite of the academic

19. William Ernest Hocking, Science and the Idea of God (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

20. Hocking, Varieties, Part II, p. 31.

"visibility," Hocking performed well at Harvard. This is shown by the fact that in 1902, following the completion of his A.M., he was given a fellowship by the department of philosophy to study in Germany.

Hocking's year in Germany was spent principally in Gottingen, learning and evaluating the thought of Edmund Husserl. Though he had personal contact with Husserl, the latter's phenomenology made little impact upon Hocking at the time. Indeed, it was not until many years later, in the context of solving the problems of the "passage beyond modernity," that Hocking paid tribute to Husserl's concept of phenomenological reduction as initiating the
 " . . . widened empiricism of a new opening era of thought."²¹

Hocking returned to Harvard in 1903 and began work on his dissertation. He completed his writing on the problem of inter-subjectivity and, in 1904, received his Doctor's Degree. The subject of the dissertation concerned man's knowledge of other minds and served as the original statement of Chapters XVII to XX of The Meaning of God in Human Experience.²² Interestingly, the work examined the

21. William Ernest Hocking, "From the Early Days of the 'Logische Untersuchungen'" in Edmund Husserl 1859-1959: Recueil Commemoratif piblis a l'occasion du Centenaire de la naissance du Philosophe, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), p. 6, cited in Leroy S. Rouner, "The Making of a Philosopher," p. 17.

22. Hocking, Varieties, Part II, p. 15.

same "I-Thou" relationship later made famous by Martin Buber. However, the year after his return from Germany was not all spent in academic pursuits, for it was during this time of dissertation writing that he met his future wife, Agnes Boyle O'Reilly.

Far in advance of today's ecumenism, their wedding fused the daughter of a rigid Roman Catholic family with the son of a strong Methodist background. This union of faiths proved to be fruitful. Agnes was to become the mother of three children, a teacher and co-founder of the Shady Hill School, and the author of over fifty mystery stories. Hocking, on the other hand, was to become a prominent American philosopher. Together they exemplified the life motto which William Hocking took for his own: "Life is to give oneself away, but with effect for the other."²³ To this end, they elected to spend their honeymoon at a youth camp for juvenile delinquents. During the summer following their wedding, working intimately with the founder of the camp, W. R. George, they developed a life-long interest in problems of the correction and education of youth.²⁴ This interest in youth led them to found the Shady Hill School at Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1915.

23. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 2.

24. Ibid., p. 19.

Agnes appears to have been the inspiration for many of Hocking's labors. She, for example, read, criticized, and helped him in the articulation of his philosophy. Hocking admitted that she made him rewrite the first chapter of The Meaning of God in Human Experience thirteen times.²⁵ He often alluded to her in his personal writings as "that truly remarkable woman," who shared with him his loving struggle to gain truth.

Just as Hocking's marriage was fruitful, so, too, were the other episodes in his life. The catalogue of Hocking's two hundred books and articles gives testimony to his creative concern with the human condition. He was dedicated to the teaching profession and to the world of philosophy. From 1906 to 1908 he taught at the University of California; then from 1908 to 1914 he was at Yale University; and finally, from 1914 to 1943 he taught at Harvard University. Although he was a University professor, his philosophical insights were always trained on life and society. His publications on the problems of youth, on soldier's morale, and on the missions stood as proudly on his library shelves as did his works on metaphysics.

25. Rouner, "The Making of a Philosopher," p. 21.

Hocking's philosophy, in other words, is a practical one, fashioned from the stuff of prayer meetings, railroad labor gangs, school teaching, foreign travel, and love for his Irish wife.

From an examination of Hocking's life, two fundamental features of his distinctive idealism begin to appear: (1) that the world as a whole has meaning, and (2) that the "Absolute," which is to be found within man's natural experience, is a partial comprehension of the concept of God. These two themes will be developed in greater detail in the following chapters of this dissertation.

CHAPTER II

HOW MEN KNOW GOD

God and religion are central to Hocking's entire philosophical system. For God gives purpose and value to human life. The issue, therefore, of how man knows God is of great importance if one wishes to understand Hocking's thought.

In his inquiry into religious philosophy, Hocking saw the general movement of twentieth century philosophy as a "passage beyond modernity."¹ The present age, he felt, was dominated by the two contrasting aspects of the philosophy of Descartes: (1) the subjective certitude of one's own existence, and (2) the " . . . objective certitude of a nature whose process lends itself exhaustively to mathematical expression."² On the one hand, the subjective certitude of the Cartesian cogito has led to solipsism; on the other hand, the certitude of objectivity has bred a scientific naturalism which stifles the human spirit by

1. William Ernest Hocking, Types of Philosophy, 3rd ed., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. vi.

2. loc. cit.

excluding God and all enduring values from the universe. Hocking desired to reconcile the philosophical dilemma arising from the clash of Cartesian philosophy with science, and he hoped to lead man beyond this dilemma into a new world civilization.

The first dilemma with which Hocking came to grips was that between the subjectivity and the universality of knowledge. Now, according to Hocking, man cannot reject the subjectivity of knowledge, for it has given modern man his notions of individual integrity and inalienable rights. Yet, without postulating the universality of knowledge, there can be no foundation for communication or meaning. Therefore, the solution to the problem lies in reconciling the subjectivity with the universality of knowledge. Hocking's solution to this dilemma lies in his conception of man's immediate knowledge of God in sense experience. By positing an "Absolute," as "Other-Knower," Hocking offers a guarantee of both subjectivity and universality.

The second dilemma that Hocking considers is the absence of value judgments in science as opposed to the value judgments that are required for a civilized society. The abstract universals of science, being mathematical in structure, are devoid of qualitative purpose. If these abstract universals are accepted as constituting the only "reality," then the universe stands in contradiction to

the purposes of man.³ Although man may find purpose in the universe, science has dispensed with teleology. Science, moreover, aims at objective judgments, disclaiming any responsibility for the moral and social consequences of its discoveries. Because of this split between values and science, man is faced with the dilemma of either accepting the propositions of science and rejecting his personal scale of values or of rejecting the truths which science has disclosed and maintaining a closed system of values. The solution to this dilemma, for Hocking, lies in the reinstatement of the concept of God in the field of science. If this is accomplished, the so-called value-free judgments of objective science will find their proper relationship within the realm of human values.

Hocking's solutions to the two dilemmas of the modern age, solipsism and scientism, hinge on his proofs for the existence of God. He uses three arguments to defend his proofs. Two of these arguments are directly concerned with solving the dilemma, and the third one is a form of the classical ontological argument. Hocking's reasoning about the existence of God will be considered first.

The type of argument which Hocking uses in his first proof he called "negative pragmatism." Through

3. Ibid., p. vi.

his contact with James, Hocking was familiar with the "cash value" criterion of truth: "That which works is true." However, he disagreed with it. Hocking adhered only to the negative form of the pragmatic statement. His formulation was: "That which does not work is not true."⁴ The function of this formula was to become an element in a type of reasoning called the dialectic. This dialectic was a process of the self correction of erroneous ideas.

Hocking's book, Science and the Idea of God, is an extensive application of the method of negative pragmatism.⁵ Hocking felt that if he could show that a Godless science was not philosophically complete he would be able to prove that it was not true. If science can be proven to be false, then the dichotomy between human values and the qualitative purposelessness of science would not exist.

Science and the Idea of God is Hocking's dialectic experiment with science. He insists on an appeal to experience and demands that scientists " . . . try to get along without God and see what happens."⁶ The thesis of this book is that the efforts of the individual sciences to abandon the idea of God entail practical meaninglessness.

4. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. xiii.

5. Hocking, Science and the Idea of God, p. viii.

6. Ibid., p. 11.

Without God meaning is simply a human speciality, leaving the universe devoid of purpose and design.⁷ To prove his point, Hocking cites each of the main sciences. In psychology, an examination of the nature of feeling reveals a restlessness within the psychic life of man, a restlessness which is equivalent to a quest for God.⁸ Similarly, sociology, because it attempts to discard God and ground all norms on man in society, proves itself inadequate, for it degenerates into ethical relativism and political totalitarianism.⁹ In the fields of ethics and politics, respectively, these forms are self-defeating. Ethical relativism, on the one hand, negates ethics, for it denies the existence of norms. Totalitarianism, on the other hand, asserts that might is right, thus abandoning the foundations of political philosophy. Hocking concludes that the criteria of the social sciences must be universal. They must, therefore, stem from a source beyond men and society, and that source is God. Thus, as Hocking sees it, "God is the law of a normal social life."¹⁰

Hocking next analyzes the physical sciences. Biology, chemistry, and physics, which at first abandoned

7. Ibid., p. 19.

8. Ibid., p. 49.

9. Ibid., p. 78.

10. Ibid., p. 83.

the idea of God, have now come to vast areas of inexplicable phenomena -- phenomena that tend to reinstate a belief in God. Paradoxically, the experiment of trying to get along without God has led to a new perception of His presence.¹¹

In short, Hocking concludes that neither the social sciences nor the physical sciences form a coherent explanatory system without God. Indeed, by applying the norm of negative pragmatism, "That which does not work is not true," Hocking asserts that science without God cannot be true. Thus the false dichotomy of scientific judgments versus value judgments is dissolved.

In treating James's version of pragmatism: "That which works is true," Hocking attempts to show that this proposition refutes itself. He applies the principle to theological statements on which religion rests. For example, religion demands the recognition of ultimate, unchanging principles such as the self-identity of God. Theological principles such as this, however, are in direct contradiction to the relativism of pragmatic thought. As Hocking puts it, ". . . accepting fully the pragmatic guide to truth we conclude that the only satisfactory truth must be absolute -- that is, non-pragmatic. Wherewith,

11. Ibid., p. 115.

pragmatism ends in consuming itself; appears as a self-refuting theory."¹²

Thus Hocking felt that only negative pragmatism was valid. In applying his own pragmatic principle to science, he believed that he had refuted Godless science. But he also felt that this dialectic with science furnished a positive conclusion. He concluded that if experience shows us that we cannot get along without the idea of God, then it also teaches us that any idea we do have of God must be found within experience. Hence, says Hocking, "God is to be known in experience if at all."¹³

If knowledge of God is a matter of human experience, then it follows that intellectual meditation on experience is central to Hocking's philosophy. This reflection on personal experience is what Hocking means by "metaphysics." For experience stirs the individual to speculation; it forces him to seek a glimpse of "The Whole" of which he is a part.¹⁴ In spite of the clarity which may arise out of an a priori structuring of events, experience is usually dim and enshrouded in mystery. Eventually, however, all

12. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 206.

13. Ibid., p. 229.

14. Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality, pp. 245 ff.

experience becomes a matter for man's reason.¹⁵ Thus a familiar term in Hocking's works, "the metaphysical structure of experience," refers to the cognitive reflection on "raw" sense experience. Conversely, Hocking uses the term experience to mean ". . . the region of our continuous contact with metaphysical reality."¹⁶ It is in man's own cognitive reflection on human experience that Hocking bases one of his proofs for the existence of God.

Hocking's conception of the metaphysical structure of experience is that of an encounter of the self with the "Absolute." In essence his philosophical method is constituted by a restatement of the Cartesian cogito. However, Hocking's cogito does not retreat into subjectivism; rather, it reveals within its own reflection the self as an objective fact of nature. Hence experience is not a mere summation of private psychological states of a monadic subject. Instead, the experience of the self is within its experience of nature. But Hocking makes an even bolder assertion: experience of the self is also experience of God. It is told in the proposition, "I exist, knowing the Absolute; or I exist knowing God."¹⁷

15. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 155.

16. Ibid., p. 215.

17. Ibid., p. 302.

Throughout his analysis of the cogito, Hocking's reasoning appears to be based on a monistic epistemology of internal relations. For Hocking holds that physical experience " . . . has no very perfect independence of my Self; is not conceived internal to me The objectivity of the physical object is derivative: it shines by reflected light, not by its own."¹⁸ The concept of experience, therefore, forms a single totality that inextricably binds together the self, nature, and God. The psychological whole of the self's experience, in Hocking's philosophy, becomes an ontologically substantive concept, the "Whole-Idea."

Psychologically, the "Whole-Idea" is the framework of thought necessary for man to organize his experience. Ontologically, it is the ultimate and independent being upon which all other beings depend.¹⁹ The "Whole-Idea" is both immanent and transcendent. It is entirely different from the world, yet contains all of reality. The "Whole-Idea" is also conceived of as "Absolute Self."²⁰ For just as the self gives psychological meaning and value to existence, so "Absolute Self" gives the universe objective meaning and value. Thus Hocking's cogito reveals within

18. Hocking, The Meaning of God, pp. 284-285.

19. loc. cit.

20. Ibid., p. 402.

its own experience " . . . the Absolute within in conjunction with the Absolute without."²¹

In general, Hocking's idea of the "Whole" parallels Kant's "Ideas of Reason," for the "Whole" functions as a regulative notion and an organizational principle for other finite ideas. Because finite ideas have precisely definable boundaries, they must be located within an indeterminable context, the "Whole-Idea." The difference between Hocking's and Kant's conceptions, however, lies in the fact that for Hocking the "Whole-Idea" is an object of immediate experience; an "Idea" in Kant's terminology, on the other hand, is the ideal limit of a type of knowledge which is never known in itself.

Hocking specifies, then, that all knowledge must implicitly begin with the "Whole-Idea" and every subsequent idea is a specific determination of it. Besides being the original idea with which consciousness must begin, the "Whole-Idea" is an objective reality. It gives objective meaning to experience. It is the " . . . last goal of all idea meanings."²²

Man's grasp of the "Whole-Idea" is not, however, purely intellectual. Feeling, for Hocking, is an essential

21. Ibid., p. 302.

22. Ibid., p. 119.

ingredient in any idea.²³ Feeling in the human subject is itself an action, a kind of instability of consciousness or form of desire. When feeling possesses the consciousness, the mind conceives some notion of the kind of object which will satisfy the restlessness of desire.²⁴ Thus all positive feeling has its terminus in knowledge. Experience, once considered as a process of awareness of the real in spite of its feeling component, should now be recognized as being awareness of the real because of the feeling component, for knowing and feeling are but different stages of the same awareness.²⁵ This awareness is a "value-consciousness" as well as a "fact-consciousness." In short, experience is passion laden, and passion in experience has a qualitative effect on the nature of the world that is experienced.²⁶ Thus man's grasp of the "Whole-Idea" is a function of his feelings.

Having traced the genesis of the "Whole-Idea" from feeling to idea and then to the notion of the "Whole" as the "Absolute" in knowledge, Hocking differentiates the "Absolute" from that which man calls God. Hocking

23. Ibid., p. 64.

24. Ibid., p. 66.

25. Ibid., p. 68.

26. William Ernest Hocking, The Self: Its Body and Freedom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), p. 161.

recognized that the critics of Idealism " . . . do not find the 'Absolute' of Idealism to be identical with the God of religion; they cannot worship the Absolute."²⁷ Hence it is necessary to correct Idealism in order to discover what the God of religion has meant to mankind and to find the foundation for religion. This is the major task of Hocking's book, The Meaning of God in Human Experience.

The first portion of The Meaning of God in Human Experience²⁸ is an historical analysis of the evolution of religious thinking in society. This historical study sheds little light on man's psychological experience. However, when philosophy analyzes man's personal religious experience, the character of the experience which distinguishes the philosophical knowledge of the "Absolute" from the religious knowledge of God becomes clear. Although the "Absolute" is a constant factor in human experience, knowledge of the "Absolute" carries with it no implication for human experience.²⁹ Mere knowledge of the "Absolute" does not motivate man to action. On the other hand, the religious soul makes a fearless and original valuation of all things,

27. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. vi.

28. Ibid., p. vii.

29. Ibid., pp. 186-189.

and " . . . lives as if in presence of attainment, of knowledge, of immortality."³⁰ The religious man, in other words, is a vital, dynamic man who is inspired to a life of action. Hocking conceives of the vitality of the religious man as motivated by a kind of syllogism of practical reason. Perceiving the "Absolute" as a major premise, the religious man also grasps the "Absolute" under the aspect of a personalized "Other Self." This latter aspect of the "Absolute" serves as the minor premise of the metaphysical syllogism -- the syllogism from which concrete actions and processes flow.³¹

To the religious man, the "Whole-Idea" or "Absolute" is identified with God. The "Absolute," however, is not equivalent to God; rather, it is merely one essential aspect of God.³² Thus the concept of God extends beyond the concept of the "Absolute," for God is provident to human needs, especially the needs of man as he faces pain and evil in the world. This God is not the God of the philosopher, Omnipotent, Supreme Judge, and Creator; rather, he is " . . . God as intimate, infallible associate, present in all experience from the outside."³³ This is to say that the

30. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

31. Ibid., pp. 189-190.

32. Ibid., p. 206.

33. Ibid., p. 224.

religious man, by virtue of his qualitative experience of the "Absolute," will find the God within revealed in conjunction with the God without.³⁴ The religious man, then, intimately associates himself with God. This relationship in knowledge is such that the religious man is able to see all things as if through God's eyes. Thus the religious man can have the certitude of his own experience of God as based on the absolute knowledge which God would have.

Hocking holds that for the religious man God does not merely stand as the guarantor for man's knowledge. God is an intimate associate, a personal God. He is "Other Self," endowed with compassion and will. Consequently, for the religious man, the world stands transformed; it is given ". . . by an active will, which tends to communicate that experience of the world."³⁵ In other words, to the religious man, the impersonal "Absolute" of philosophy is revealed as a personal "Thou."³⁶

Precisely what psychological element differentiates the religious perception of "the world as given by God" from the philosophical perception of the world, Hocking does not say. One might assume, however, that the differentiation is made by the quality of the "feeling-idea" of the

34. Ibid., p. 202.

35. Hocking, Types of Philosophy, p. 246.

36. Ibid., p. 309.

religious man. For Hocking states that all valuing (and so all feeling) is " . . . a way of knowing objects with one's "Whole-Idea."³⁷ Yet this answer still begs the question; for it says nothing more than that feeling is dependent upon "Whole-Idea" and "Whole-Idea" is dependent upon feeling.

A suggestion of what specifically accounts for the religious man's distinctive perception of the world and God is found in Hocking's conception of man's will. "Whatever object comes before the mind of any man," Hocking states, "must inevitably be judged at last by that man's sense of the reality with which he has, in the end, to do."³⁸ Thus man has purposes, and he evaluates all objects in his perception in accord with these purposes. Now man's will is that by which he chooses his goals. These goals, in turn, revolve about man's instincts -- instincts that coalesce in a more fundamental motive or interest -- interests that function as a permanent principle of selection: the will.³⁹ The purposiveness of instincts, to Hocking, indicates the presence of a rudimentary consciousness, since instincts involve a priori expectations of ends to be attained by instinctive responses. This signifies that prior to

37. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 129.

38. Ibid., p. 136.

39. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), p. 92.

reflective experience man has an internal knowledge of the good.⁴⁰ Thus, when confronted with the "Absolute" of knowledge, it would appear that the religious man perceives the "Absolute" as a personal God because of his instinctual orientation toward the good.⁴¹

If the religious man perceives the "Absolute" as a personal God, what is the philosopher's perception of the "Absolute?" According to Hocking, the philosopher perceives the "Absolute" as "Other Mind." For the metaphysical structure of experience reveals that all knowledge presupposes a common world of objects. However, because all knowledge necessitates the positing of the "World-Idea," the concept of the "Other-Knower," as encompassing the world of commonly known objects, is an integral part of the simplest knowledge of nature.⁴² Indeed, to the philosopher the natural object of experience turns out to be given not by a physical world but by the "Other Mind." While "Whole-Idea" is the presupposition of all knowledge, "Other Mind" is the source of all knowledge. As an objective reality, "Other Mind" is the encompassing reality of every

40. Ibid., p. 91.

41. Ibid., p. 96.

42. Hocking, The Meaning of God, pp. 268-269.

being. Hence, for Hocking, the "Absolute" is a
 " . . . fundamental and constant experience, bound up with
 my equally permanent experience of Self and Nature."⁴³
 Though this knowledge is not prior to experience, it is
 found within experience and deserves to be called a type of
a priori knowledge.⁴⁴ To Hocking, this concrete a priori
 serves as a basis for his third proof for the existence of
 God, a matter of great importance in solving the dilemmas
 of the modern age.

Hocking's third proof for the existence of God is
 a version of the classical ontological argument. This
 argument, in Hocking's view, is merely a clarification of
 man's experimental knowledge of God.⁴⁵

The discussion begins with the recognition that the
 concepts of self and nature inadequately encompass our
 experience of reality. Although the traditional arguments
 for the existence of God hold that because the world is,
 God is, Hocking contends that the concept of world is not
 sufficient to serve as a premise from which to deduce the
 existence of God. The world must appear " . . . as a
conclusion from something more substantial . . . God."⁴⁶

43. Ibid., p. 278.

44. loc. cit.

45. Ibid., p. 312.

46. loc. cit.

Hence Hocking prefers to state the ontological argument
 " . . . not thus: I have an idea of God, therefore God
 exists. But rather thus: I have an idea of God, therefore,
 I have an experience of God."⁴⁷

Hocking's reasoning in the ontological argument is
 unique. He disagrees with the Anselmian notion that the
 " . . . idea of 'an all-perfect being' must necessarily be
 real."⁴⁸ Only a form of argument can be valid which finds
 God at both the level of thought as well as of sensation.
 The idea of God must be experienced as real.⁴⁹ The form of
 the argument proceeds: "I think myself, therefore I exist;
 or

I have an idea of Self, Self exists. For
 in thinking myself I find myself in experience
 and thus in living relation to the reality which
 experience presents. So it may be with Nature.

I have an idea of Nature, Nature exists."⁵⁰ Thus Hocking
 has only to conclude: I have an idea of God, God exists.
 The validity of Hocking's argument hinges on his analysis
 of man's experience. Because he posits "Other Mind," God,

47. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 314.

48. Ibid.; p. 313.

49. loc. cit.

50. Ibid., p. 314.

as the first object and presupposition of knowledge of "Self" and "Nature," the "Other Mind," God, must also exist. Thus Hocking concludes: "The object of certain knowledge has this threefold structure, Self, Nature, and Other Mind; and God, the appropriate object of ontological proof, includes these three."⁵¹ Hocking's ontological proof, then, is drawn from the metaphysical implications of man's concrete experience.

The proof for this experience runs as follows: The parts of Nature do not display self-sufficiency. Therefore, I cannot predicate self-sufficiency on the whole of Nature. The only way I can predicate a unity of Nature is by conceiving of it as " . . . dependent on my Self."⁵²

But our argument does not rest here; for I know that I am not the source of the reality of nature. My very ability to judge between the real and the illusory supposes that the concept of reality comes to me from beyond.⁵³

In this conception of reality, I know both nature and my self as partial and dependent existences. However, this grasp of self and nature as incomplete or illusory is at the same time an experience of the real. For this experience offers an absolute vantage point from which to grasp

51. Ibid., p. 315.

52. loc. cit.

53. loc. cit.

the terms of the relation between self and that which is beyond my self.

This experience is an experience of an independent being, the "Absolute."

If then, I discover that my world of nature and self, taken severally or together, falls short of reality, this discovery is due to what I know of reality -- not abstractly, but in experience. . . . When I perceive myself in this curious relation to the world of physical facts . . . that play of unrest is due to, and is defining, a simultaneous perception of the object to which this unrest does not apply. The positive content which I give to that absolute object is a report of experience; whatever idea I make of it is an idea derived nowhere but from that experience.⁵⁴

Hocking's position now becomes clear. What he is saying is this: My experience of self and the world is incomplete, yet real. I know this experience of incompleteness to be an experience of the real. This real incompleteness to which I give positive content is God. Therefore, my idea of God is derived from my experience of the real. Consequently, God is real.

At first reading, this formulation of Hocking's argument appears to suffer from subjectivism. Hocking attempted, however, to deny that his philosophy was subjective; instead, he indicated that his thought led into mysticism. Mysticism, to him, was a higher form of empiricism. "The personal answer -- the mystic's answer -- is the genuine empiricism; to those who find it, sufficient

54. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 311.

and unlosable, and at the same time in its nature valid for all."⁵⁵ For Hocking, God and the world belong together; neither is anything without the other. They form a unity to be pursued together, ever deepening man's penetration of both.⁵⁶ This is obviously a union of God and the world known only to the mystic. God, for the mystic, is immanent in nature and intimate to man's self. God is known in the metaphysical structure of his experience, and the bond of this union is to be maintained through the act of worship.⁵⁷

To speed the "passage beyond modernity," Hocking set out to solve the major philosophical problems of the present age: solipsism and scientism. The solutions to these problems hinge on Hocking's proofs for the existence of God. Hocking's reasoning begins with negative pragmatism and culminates in religious mysticism. Through his analysis of human experience, he comes to feel that he has obviated the dilemma of subjectivity by establishing "Other Mind" within man's experience of nature. At the same time, Hocking establishes universality of knowledge in the experience of the "Other Knower." God is reinstated as an integral part

55. Ibid., p. 532.

56. Ibid., p. 407.

57. Ibid., p. 343.

of the universe, giving purpose, meaning, and value to life. Man, through his mystical union with God, is freed from the bonds of solipsism and meaninglessness, and he can set about remaking a better civilization.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN NATURE AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION

Hocking's efforts in the study of religious philosophy had as their primary purpose the healing of the diseases of modernism, solipsism, and scientism. The remedy for these philosophical illnesses, of course, was to come from man's acceptance of the truth of the existence of God.¹

Thus, according to Hocking, moral relativism, the decay of enduring norms, and the purposelessness of naturalism and experimentalism are the offshoots of modernity.² These distressing conditions of the modern scene are also a " . . . drastic judgment of non-reality upon the pieties of Christendom."³ Religion, in other words, has not been effective in creating a social order that is harmonious with the aspirations and capabilities of man. Perhaps this is because religion tends to place emphasis on feeling to the exclusion of reasoning, and in so doing it contributes

1. William Ernest Hocking, What Man Can Make of Man, (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1942), pp. 6-7.

2. Hocking, Types of Philosophy, pp. vi-vii.

3. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. viii.

to the growing anti-intellectualism of contemporary culture.⁴ This anti-intellectualism, in turn, is merely a symptom of society's illness. It is part of the religious task to transform our society and re-create it in a form that answers the needs and wishes of basic human nature.

Many of Hocking's philosophical writings, works ranging from treatises that seek to define the original material of human nature to articles on international politics, attempt to establish the philosophical principles for a new society. In his book, Human Nature and Its Remaking, Hocking undertakes the study of the aspirations and basic desires of man. In another work, The Self: Its Body and Freedom, he examines the fundamental relationship between man's intellectual nature and his body. Then, in Man and the State, he asserts the primacy of the individual in man's relations to his social institutions. This same theme is also to be found in his The Lasting Elements of Individualism. Finally, in three other works, Morale and Its Enemies, The Spirit of World Politics, and Strength of Men and Nations Hocking directs his attention to empirical studies on the relationship of the individual to the state as well as the relationship between separate

4. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 33.

states. In all of these works, Hocking seeks to establish philosophical and political principles for the transition to a new society.

In Human Nature and Its Remaking, Hocking sets out to determine " . . . the broader principles which govern the process . . . of remaking, of educating, of civilizing, of converting or of saving the human being."⁵ Hocking accepts the assumption that there is such a thing as stable human nature. The very fact that men fail to attain the goals of an ideal is itself a witness to the causative presence of human nature. Man's nature, however, though stable, is not rigidly fixed. For all men have an immediate consciousness of freedom, a consciousness of an almost infinite range of possibilities that lies before them.⁶ Since the possibilities of remaking original human nature are valid considerations, the task of philosophy is to ascertain these possibilities in man and evaluate them.

Hocking viewed human nature as a psychosomatic unity, dynamically orientated through instincts to ends that lead to the survival of the individual or the species. These instincts are purposive and operate for specific goals. They accomplish these goals by responding to

5. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. viii.

6. Ibid., p. 15.

particular stimuli. Therefore, for Hocking, instincts indicate the presence of a rudimentary consciousness. If the organism is conscious, then it must have some vague internal knowledge of what is good for itself, although only experience can teach man what things are good.⁷ This, however, is not to reduce man to a mere bundle of semi-conscious instincts; for human instincts, according to Hocking, differ from those of the rest of the animal kingdom. Man's instincts " . . . have a region of coalescence, being related as the fingers of a hand rather than as separate twigs in a bundle."⁸ The will, a permanent principle of selection,⁹ unifies the instincts and serves as the motive force for their actions. This instinctive center of the human being Hocking calls the "will-to-power."

The "will-to-power," as Hocking conceives it, has little in common with the contemporary Adlerian psychological term. Hocking's "will-to-power" is not merely a desire to survive or to assert oneself over others; rather, it is the active and creative quality of man; his reservoir of spiritual energy which can be identified with the self.

7. Ibid., p. 91.

8. Ibid., p. 87.

9. Ibid., p. 80.

Equating the spiritual essence of man with the "will-to-power," Hocking rejects philosophical materialism and psychological behaviorism. Instead, his philosophy points in the direction of a spiritual monism.¹⁰ This is not to say he denies the existence of the body, for Hocking recognized that man's "will-to-power" is rooted in the biology of instinct. "A self without a body," he says, "would be a self without a will."¹¹ Rather, he stresses the primacy of the mind as the source of conferring meaning and value on the world.¹²

The relation of the body to the spiritual self, in Hocking's philosophy, is that of the part to the whole. The body, in other words, is not a mere appendage or tool of the self; rather, it is an organ of the self through which the spirit of man expresses its meanings and values in the world. Not only does the self have a sense of intimate being with the body, but the very abilities and desires of the self must refer to the body as an indispensable source of their being.¹³ Thus, though asserting that the essence

10. Hocking, The Self: Its Body and Freedom, p. 96.

11. Ibid., p. 84.

12. Ibid., p. 95.

13. Ibid., pp. 78-80.

of the self lies in the spiritual "will-to-power," Hocking equally affirms the reality of the body.

Self, in Hocking's philosophy, has two aspects. Man's self, as mind, is unrestricted to present time and place and is imbued with future meaning and value. Man, then, projects himself always beyond the present. Man's self, as body, is part of nature. Thus the body, as part of the self as well as part of nature, must serve two masters. It must serve as the conjoined instrument or organ of behavior for the self as mind, and at the same time the body must conform in its behavior to the physical causes of nature.

Just as the body plays a dual role, so, too, the self in Hocking's philosophy has a dual aspect. For man is both " . . . the excursive self, which is (relatively) actual, finite, time-limited, time-discontinuous, created," as well as " . . . the reflective self, which is (relatively) potential, infinite, time-inclusive, time-continuous, creative. . . ."14 Thus the finite self, acting through the body, directly participates in nature; while the potentially infinite self, as mind though expressing itself through body, has a direct relation with the world beyond.¹⁵

14. Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality, p. 59.

15. Hocking, The Self: Its Body and Freedom, p. 85.

The foregoing analysis brings into focus Hocking's concept of human freedom. The self, as spiritual "will-to-power," is " . . . a system of purposive behavior emerging from a persistent hope."¹⁶ Hocking means by "hope" the purposive will to strive to realize the goals and ideals of a remade human nature. Concretely, this means an habitual attitude of the will to be of some value to the society of mankind: When the will has the attitude of "hope" in the unlimited possibilities for good in the world, the self, too, as mind, is unrestricted in time and place. The reflective self, then, able to transcend the confines of worldly time and space, exists " . . . as a vinculum between a plurality of space-time order; and thus, the self is free."¹⁷ The truly free man, therefore, has his head in Heaven and his feet on the ground.

Hocking sees the key to freedom in the act of reflection. By reflection man is able to transcend the spatial and temporal limits of a single course of events and contemplate the unlimited possibilities for doing good. In addition, reflection enables man to transcend the limited

16. Ibid., p. 46.

17. Ibid., p. 177.

field of natural events, and it allows him to dwell in the supernatural world of God.¹⁸

There are, however, degrees of reflection. In Hocking's sense, reflection is equivalent to awareness. Some men are capable of perceiving more possibilities of action on willed alternatives than others. The religious man, because his knowledge transcends the temporal world, has the highest degree of reflection.

Just as men possess different degrees of reflection, so, too, they possess different degrees of freedom. Now the degree of freedom of the individual ultimately depends upon the liveliness of his "hope." For the desire to be of value is the nucleus of the self as spiritual "will-to-power."¹⁹ The degree to which we cling to this "hope" or desire to be of value to society is the measure of our freedom. As man's "hope" is also a product of man's will, the essence of freedom, according to Hocking, ". . . lies in the fact that we are free to control the degree of our freedom."²⁰

Thus the basic element in human nature with which Hocking must deal in remaking man and society is that of freedom. Through reflection man can become a self-determining being. This reflection, in turn, is the key to the

18. Hocking, The Meaning of Immortality, pp. 232-235.

19. Hocking, The Self: Its Body and Freedom, p. 169.

20. loc. cit.

freedom of the self. But the self is not without limitations; it bridges two worlds, the world of nature and the world of God. Unifying the divergent aspects of the dual self is the spiritual "will-to-power," where man's instinctive biological forces coalesce. At the same time, the "will-to-power," energized by "hope," seeks to express the self in the transcendent realm of goodness and value.

Although Hocking's analysis of human nature stresses the individuality of the self, he did not neglect the social aspect of selfhood. Indeed, he insisted that any experience of self is ultimately dependent upon a social content.²¹ Man is radically, and by nature, a social being. Because he is dependent on other selves for physical, intellectual, and spiritual sustenance, he forms social institutions. These stable institutions that are formed by conscious, willed effort are natural to man.²² Fundamentally, these institutions are of two kinds: (1) institutions of the private order and, (2) institutions of the public order. The family constitutes the sole institution of the

21. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 282.

22. William Ernest Hocking, Man and the State (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 309.

private order. The institutions of the public domain are economic, religious, and political.

The major human instinct of love gives rise to the institution of the family. It is a product of the spiritual "will-to-power" in which the biological and spiritual forces of man's nature coalesce. Only within the intimacy of the conjugal relationship can this need for love be properly satisfied; anything less than the stable union of two wills and bodies will be incomplete. Thus the family is a natural institution arising from man's instincts.

The public order of economics and politics arises from man's major instinct of ambition. The arena of politics, the state, is the institution which is of particular interest to Hocking. The primary importance of the state lies in the fact that the purpose of the state is to promote the social conditions for the fulfillment of the individual. Although ambition is the instinctive force which gives rise to the state, it is also a product of necessity. The state is a consciously willed organization which man intends as an agent to control the social forces beyond the jurisdiction or abilities of the individual. But the state also has a positive function. Because men learn together, they need a " . . . permanent order, an available storehouse of

acquired wisdom, the conquest of disorder by peace, and of chance by impersonal reason and justice."²³

The history of the modern state, as Hocking sees it, is one of a conflict between totalitarianism and liberalism. Both of these ideals, however, have failed to achieve their purposes. Totalitarianism has failed because it has not recognized the rights of man to exist as an individual. Liberalism has failed because it has trusted the welfare of society to the whims and inclinations of individuals.²⁴ Liberalism has also failed to achieve social unity, to distinguish rights from duties and to maintain a sufficient emotive force in society.²⁵ If both totalitarianism and liberalism have failed as political ideologies, what can replace them as ideal forms of state authority?

Hocking devoted many years to a consideration of the proper relation of the individual to the state. In his early work, Human Nature and Its Remaking, Hocking expresses the hope of sketching out " . . . the valid basis of an individualistic theory of society."²⁶ However, twenty years

23. Ibid., p. 323.

24. William Ernest Hocking, The Lasting Elements of Individualism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), p. 309.

25. Ibid., p. 323.

26. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. xi.

elapsed before this hope was realized with the publication of The Lasting Elements of Individualism.

Hocking envisioned the ideal conditions for individualism in the emergence of a society under what he termed the "Co-Agent State." This ideal state would be an extension of the people who compose it, and it would be based on the unanimous action of free individuals.²⁷ For individuals are the sole creative agents who are responsible for cultural progress. Thus the individual always holds a position of logical priority over the state.

The "Co-Agent State" is meant to be an instrumentality for individual wills. Because in man the will to live takes the form of "will-to-power," he has the innate desire to consciously control the energies of the universe and direct them in reshaping his world.²⁸ For this reason the "Co-Agent State" is obliged to defend the ". . . right of an individual man to generate ideas and get them worked into the social fabric."²⁹ As the individual is the sole agent of cultural change, public purposes must be conceived of as the prolongation of individual purposes. Therefore, because social goals derive their existence from individuals,

27. Hocking, The Lasting Elements of Individualism, p. 151.

28. Hocking, Man and the State, p. 309.

29. Hocking, The Lasting Elements of Individualism, pp. 137-138.

the welfare of the individual must always have precedence over that of the state.

The age-old conflict of the rights of the individual versus the rights of the state appear to be obviated in Hocking's political philosophy. This is possible because the authority of the state itself is derived from the rights of its individual members. Thus the state cannot be considered as a legal person with rights which supersede those of its members. Hocking's theory of rights can be summed up in his term "will-circuit."³⁰

Hocking's "will-circuit" is a concept that is analogous to Rousseau's idea of "general will," provided that this term is interpreted strictly in individualistic terms. While Rousseau saw the norm for social morality in an amorphous "general will," whose desires are carried out by the state, Hocking conceives the actions of the state as coinciding with that which individuals desire. Hence, according to Hocking, ". . . the state is the circuit required by the will to power of each member, coincident for all the people of a defined territory, and including them."³¹

To Hocking, human nature is both radically social and radically individualistic. The individual, in other

30. Hocking, Man and the State, p. 371.

31. loc. cit.

words, relies upon society as a necessary condition for his further development. Because society is a necessary condition for individual growth; the quality of man's social institutions will affect his patterns of behavior. Although the individual is always found in society and circumscribed by its cultural patterns, the individual has a will of his own -- a will that decides its own destiny.³² In addition, the individual has a capacity for judging the goodness of social institutions.³³ Thus, insofar as social institutions are bad, their actions only constitute social meddling. Bad social conditions do not touch the source of individual action, the spiritual "will-to-power."³⁴ If Hocking's assumptions are accepted, it follows that the remaking of human nature is a dual task -- a task of individual transformation and the establishment of social peace and order by the "Co-Agent State."

The remaking of individual human nature, and, hence, the remaking of society, is an interior, spiritual transformation of values. This transformation does not have its

32. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 195.

33. Ibid., p. 191.

34. Ibid., p. 199.

cause outside of human nature, nor is it a Nietzschean denial of human nature; rather, the seeds of transformation lie latent within human nature itself. Because the self is able to interpret and give meaning and value to its experience, it is able to reinterpret and revalue experience, thus transforming it. The remaking of human nature, then, is seen by Hocking as an essential potentiality of human nature. This transformation, however, must take place in and through society.

Although society does furnish the conditions for transforming human nature, its institutions are incapable of completely satisfying the "will-to-power." This is because the "will-to-power" expresses itself through the two major instincts of ambition and love. Ambition gives rise to the public order of economics and politics. Love, on the other hand, gives rise to the private order, the family. Neither the public nor the private order is able to include the satisfaction of the other, for the public order lacks the intimacy of the private order, and the private order lacks the objective scope and stability of the public order. Only two areas of the public order are capable of satisfying man's instinctive desires. They are art and religion; and although they are regarded as social

institutions, they appeal primarily to the creative and individual self.³⁵

Art constitutes a world created by man's "will-to-power." Through art man expresses in representative form his idealized conception of experience. Aesthetic experience, however, fails to completely satisfy man. The "will-to-power" most nearly approaches satisfaction when art represents the reality with which religion deals. If man's instinctive nature is to be satisfied, there must be, according to Hocking, ". . . an adequate and attainable object for the human will to power."³⁶

The only completely satisfying object for the spiritual "will-to-power" is found in religion. For religion bears upon the whole man and reaches to the center of his being. It gives new meaning to his life and transforms his values. Religion infuses man with moral substance; it gives man courage to implement ideals in society. Religion also provides that willingness of spirit to serve the institutions of society which are ordered for the betterment of man. Religion furnishes the spirit of community and love without which no society can exist.³⁷

35. Ibid., p. 315.

36. Ibid., p. 314.

37. Ibid., p. 301.

In the remaking of human nature, according to Hocking, no religion is more radical or effective than Christianity. This is because Christianity addresses itself to the inner emotions and volitions of man. Thus the motive force of Christianity is not one of mere intellectual assent to dogmatic truths; rather, it reaches into the core of man's being, his spiritual "will-to-power." For example, Christianity does not merely counsel love of one's neighbor; but it commands love of a neighbor -- a love that requires nothing less than the complete transformation of human instincts.³⁸

The transformation of human ambition illustrates the point that Christianity is a radical and effective religion. In the early stages of the dialectic of the self, with experience, ambition seeks to gain power over other individuals. Through Christianity, however, the pursuit of "power-over" is transformed into the pursuit of "power-for." Self-seeking gives way to a desire for the welfare of other people. The ultimate goal of this transformation of ambition is defined by the Christian message: the conferring of spiritual life upon one's fellow man.³⁹ By transforming ambition into missionary zeal, love becomes the passion for

38. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 367.

39. Ibid., p. 398.

saving immortal souls. Thus Christian love " . . . becomes the point in which the meaning of all instincts converge. It is the positive meaning given by Christianity to the human will as a whole."⁴⁰

Through the infusion of Christian love which is attained in worship of God, the individual is able to participate in the divine power of saving souls.⁴¹ Likewise, through the transformed will of man, God pursues human souls. This process becomes for Hocking the doctrine of "the Divine Aggression."⁴² This Divine Aggression, in turn, effects the ultimate transformation of instinctive human nature. Because God is an aggressive lover, He is able to invade the will of man and transform his "will-to-power" and direct it to its completely satisfying object: the love of God and man.

This Christian transformation of the individual has a profound effect on society. In its present condition, Hocking sees the state as being impotent to cure the evils of crime, injustice, prejudice, and the decay of family relations. This impotence he ascribes to the separation

40. Ibid., p. 399.

41. Ibid., p. 409.

42. Ibid., pp. 416-425.

of the modern state from religion.⁴³ Religion alone can supply the moral motivation for the proper functioning of the state. If contemporary society is to pass beyond modernity to the coming world civilization, then religion must direct its course.

Although philosophy does play a role in analyzing the problems of society and in drawing the blueprint for change, religion is the force which rebuilds society. It is, then, the task of Christianity to effect the new world civilization. Christianity, whose failings laid the ground for contemporary modernity, contains the resources to transcend its own weaknesses, for it is addressed directly to the instinctive nature of men, remaking human passions and desires and transforming them into higher aspirations. However, the effectiveness of Christianity as an agent for hastening the coming world civilization lies in redefining its essence.

Although Christianity is historically western, it is universal in its essence. Hocking believes that Christianity is capable of including the values of alternative religions without sacrificing its own historicity.⁴⁴ The

43. William Ernest Hocking, The Coming World Civilization (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 1-20.

44. William Ernest Hocking, Living Religions and a World Faith (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), pp. 190-208.

essence of Christianity, in Hocking's opinion, is threefold: (1) the faith that at the center of all being is a suffering, creating, loving mind; (2) the conviction that natural human instincts can be transformed by the motive of love; (3) the identification of Christianity with an active historical force that seeks its realization in time.⁴⁵ These three essential characteristics of Christianity, Hocking feels, allow it to assimilate the basic tenets of all world religions. Thus it is his hope that the world may one day be united in a broad conception of the Christian message, incorporating the religious aspirations of all creeds.

Through a new, "broader Christianity" human nature and society can be transformed. The solution to the conflicts of modernity must have at their core an active relationship of the individual to the God of Christianity. Though Christianity has been an indirect source of the failures of modern society, the Christian message remains the primary hope for mankind's future salvation. Through man's relationship with God, his spiritual "will-to-power" will be transformed. As the transformation of man's self occurs, so will the quality of his social institutions. The family, business, art, church, and school will become positive forces for good in the development of the individual.

45. Hocking, The Coming World Civilization, p. 108.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Educational thought, at least for the most part, is an extension of general philosophical assumptions. These philosophical assumptions, in turn, generate the principles and practices of particular systems of education. Thus, within the context of the school, assumptions appear as goals toward which the curriculum is directed. This inter-relationship between value assumptions and educational practices is particularly clear in the case of William Ernest Hocking.

Hocking's educational philosophy is an extension of his general philosophy. For example, Hocking conceived of human nature as being theocentric: man is destined for mystical union with God. This assumption, in turn, forms the foundation for Hocking's educational thought. Using what he considered to be fundamental elements in human nature, Hocking built his theory of education.

Hocking has an enduring interest in education; his first published work, as a matter of fact, was an article

on education.¹ Education, as Hocking saw it, was one of the primary instruments for the remaking of human nature and society. Far in advance of current educational trends, Hocking held an anthropological view of education. As early as 1915, he termed the educational process as being the initiation of the young into culture -- the beliefs, knowledge, and values of adult society.²

In modern society the formal initiation into culture is accomplished by the school, conceived of as an institution through which society's younger members can learn the academic and social skills of the adult world. This period of education in a child's life, from five through twenty one, according to Hocking, is a time for mental and emotional steeping of the child in the major ideas of his culture. The primary concern of the student should be the acquisition of knowledge. During his years of study and training, this knowledge is to be assimilated, meditated upon, and used as the source for new ideas.³ This period should be the time

1. William Ernest Hocking, "What is Number?" Intelligence: A Journal of Education, 18 (May 15, 1898), pp. 360-362. Cited in Bibliography compiled by Richard C. Gilman as a supplement to Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World Civilization: Essays in Honor of William Ernest Hocking, Leroy S. Rouner, ed..

2. William Ernest Hocking, "What is College For? The Place of Preparation," Education, 35, (January 1915), p. 292.

3. loc. cit.

for the putting behind of the given self of nature and for developing an orientation of the spiritual "will-to-power" toward goals beyond nature. It is a time for remaking the self for the new age.⁴

Thus education, in Hocking's view, has two cultural functions: ". . . It must communicate the type, and it must provide for growth beyond the type. It is not a mere matter of spiritual reproduction . . . the locus not alone of heredity, but of variation and of the origin of new species."⁵ By communication of the type, Hocking means that education must transmit the ideas, mores, and values of its culture. On these the child will be nurtured and the cultural type reproduced. By "growth beyond the type," Hocking refers to giving the child the intellectual, moral and spiritual tools to transcend the goals of his society.

To accomplish the first end of education, ". . . communicate the type, . . ." Hocking felt that every child should be given moral instruction in the beliefs of his culture. Hocking called this instruction the giving of "moral hypotheses."⁶ Despite this seeming indoctrination,

4. William Ernest Hocking, "The Culture Worth Getting in College," School and Society, 3 (January 15, 1916), p. 82.

5. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 257.

6. William Ernest Hocking, "Philosophy and Religion in Undergraduate Education," Association of American Colleges Bulletin, 23, (March, 1937), p. 47.

the child must be allowed the freedom to test these hypotheses in his own experience. Through reflecting on his experiences, the child will actively assimilate his culture. Through meditation he will gain a self-concept, new insight, and according to Hocking, ". . . the revelation of himself to the universe."⁷ Thus education attains its end in society through the enculturation of the young. At the same time, it opens up to the young a view of themselves as meaningful parts of society and the universe.

Because of this theocentric conception of man and society, Hocking placed a great emphasis on the roles of philosophy and religion. Both of these areas of education are necessary for the formation of the intellectual and moral character of the individual. As the individual is the unit of all of society's institutions, the quality of society's institutions ultimately depends on philosophy and religion.

The function of philosophy, according to Hocking is to bring the essentials of culture into an intelligent unity.⁸ The transmitted core of beliefs, factual knowledge, and values are to be held together by a philosophical

7. William Ernest Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," Progressive Education, 3 (July-August-September, 1926), p. 206.

8. William Ernest Hocking, Experiment in Education, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), p. 159.

perspective. Philosophy, therefore, is not a discipline restricted to academic study; rather, it is a pervasive framework of thought in the total life of the person who is being educated.

In the latter years of education, the role of philosophy changes. After a firm foundation of cultural views and values has been laid, philosophy becomes the instrument for a critical evaluation of the culture that the child has assimilated. Although philosophy continues to serve as a framework for viewing the cultural world, the disciplines of metaphysics and logic become tools for the intelligent investigation of cultural norms. At this stage, philosophy becomes a formal part of a college education.

In higher education philosophy conveys an understanding of our civilization. This knowledge is best transmitted through an historical orientation, containing all of man's struggles with nature and society. This historical study is to include economics, mathematics, and philosophy. These disciplines, however, are not to be taught merely as factual knowledge, but, in Hocking's view, ". . . as receipes for our civilization."⁹ Thus the historical development of these studies reveals to the student the conflicts, struggles, and the compromises through which his civilization

9. Hocking, Experiment in Education, pp. 265-266.

has evolved. Through the study of logic, ethics, esthetics, and metaphysics the student will be able to unify his knowledge and evaluate his culture. Philosophy will give him an awareness of himself within the context of his civilization. Philosophy will provide him with the potential energy and ideas for coping with and improving his society.¹⁰

In addition to conveying culture, Hocking sees philosophy as performing a second major function: intelligent criticism. Hence the primary obligation of any department of philosophy is to teach students how to think; indeed, this is a duty of philosophy to the entire college as well as the whole of society.¹¹ Through logic and metaphysics, the student should learn the standards of criticism that unite him to his community and all mankind.¹² Through the discipline of axiology, the student should be able to evaluate intelligently the standards and principles he has assimilated from his culture.¹³

10. Hocking, "What is College For? The Place of Preparation," p. 291.

11. Hocking, "Philosophy and Religion in Undergraduate Education," p. 48.

12. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 267.

13. Hocking, "Philosophy and Religion in Undergraduate Education," p. 48.

Ultimately, the student of philosophy will find that the disorders of the world are at root metaphysical.¹⁴ Thus, in spite of the social orientation of modern education, the words "society," "community," and "humanity" are hollow and without meaning; that is, they are without meaning unless they are rooted in a metaphysics that transcends the pragmatic interests of the community.¹⁵ According to Hocking, the humanitarian terms of present day education " . . . cannot be taught with moral fiber unless as derived from God."¹⁶ Thus philosophy leads man to religion. For though philosophy can serve as an academic blueprint for the solution to society's problems, yet it remains for religion to furnish the driving force for the accomplishment of society's ends.

In his educational theory Hocking specified that the school " . . . must have a belief, or if you like, a faith, and convey it in some way, though not through formal instruction."¹⁷ Hocking agreed with the teaching of the concepts of "community" and "humanity" as well as with the ends of social pragmatism, but he felt that the pragmatic movement was philosophically inadequate. Because pragmatists have

14. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 159.

15. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 14.

16. Ibid., p. 34.

17. Ibid., p. 33.

ignored the metaphysical dimension of society, Hocking felt that their teaching trimmed the mental horizons of the child to the pragmatic norms of the actual. Consequently, the pragmatists did not concern themselves with the potentialities of men for remaking themselves and society. By ignoring metaphysics and religion, pragmatists were also ignoring the fact that " . . . the mind of the growing child . . . can find its way to a better human tomorrow only by way of the eternal."¹⁸

With respect to teaching religion in the schools, Hocking seems at times to contradict himself. In his early writings on the role of religion in college life, Hocking states that higher education "commits the falsehood of omission" by not showing religion as the ultimate ground of our belief in the dignity of man.¹⁹ Colleges, therefore, should furnish campus chapels and religious instruction, and students should be requested to make declarations of intent to attend Sunday services.²⁰ Yet, in his memoirs, he insisted that no formalized instruction in religion should be given. Perhaps the mellowing effect of over forty years of

18. Ibid., p. 36.

19. Hocking, "Philosophy and Religion in Undergraduate Education," p. 52.

20. Hocking, "What is College For? The Place of Preparation," pp. 296-297.

teaching experience between these two writings resolves the contradiction in Hocking's thoughts.

Religion, for Hocking, plays a social as well as a private function in education. Its positive social function is to promote a feeling of unity with the human race under God.²¹ In addition, the observance of religion will lead the individual to a salutary "humility of intellect" before the vastness of unknown truths. Religion also cultivates a "humility of will," for it helps us to realize that mortal men are capable of understanding only part of the goods of a sensible world.

In asserting the primacy of philosophy and religion as necessary elements for the transformation of society, Hocking's educational philosophy can be seen as flowing from his speculative thought. His lengthy analysis of the cogito leads him to assert the "Absolute" or God as that which has the logical priority in all knowledge. God is the essential motivating agent in man's transformation of self and society. Thus it follows that the study of philosophy and religion is essential to Hocking's conception of the aims of education.

Just as Hocking based the cultural aims of education on the nature of man and his relation to God, so, too, he viewed the specific goals of education as being based on the

21. Hocking, "Philosophy and Religion in Undergraduate Education," p. 54.

psychology of the student. Hocking saw the specific goals of education as those objectives directed toward fulfilling the intellectual, moral, and spiritual capacities of the child. His educational philosophy has, therefore, a strong similarity to the child-centered school of educational thought. Hocking's analysis of the stages of development of the child, his interest in the psychology of learning, his concern for student interest and motivation, and his attention to the psychology of character formation place him with the educational tradition of Comenius, Rousseau, and Froebel. Hocking's educational philosophy differed, however, in one important respect. Although the psychological development of the child was of prime importance for teaching methodology, Hocking felt that specific skills and content must be developed in orderly fashion. Thus, though innovative in methodology, Hocking was an essentialist in his concept of curriculum content.

Since the time of Comenius, educators have believed that the stages of child growth and development had some great relevance for education. Hocking accepts this assumption. According to him, there are three general stages in the child's development. The first stage comes between the ages of seven and ten. This is primarily the stage of inquiry into nature. At this age the child has scientific inclinations and takes delight in analyzing objects in nature. The second stage of development comes between the

ages of ten and the early teens. During this time, more specialized interests occupy the child. For example, he begins to develop a particular interest in religion. In the third stage, from the later teens until adulthood, the youngster is concerned with the struggle to adjust to the mores of adult society.²³ Hocking noted that during the last years of high school and the early years of college the interests of the student turn toward a concern for his community and society. He attributed this concern to the biological and mental impulses of the spiritual "will-to-power." Because of the "will-to-power" students are always centers of unrest.²⁴

Thus Hocking views the child not only as a biologically developmental being, but also as a dynamic, spiritual and creative "will-to-power" who is engaged in reflective, metaphysical intercourse with the universe around him. The child is continuously confronted with the need to discover and construct meaning in his world. In virtue of his reflective nature, the child is able to transcend the intellectual boundaries of his specific age level. For Hocking held that ". . . every child's mind . . . is always thinking about his life as a whole, his place in the world, his meaning, or lack

23. Hocking, "The Culture Worth Getting in College," p. 82.

24. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 235.

of meaning in the whole of things. . . . The point is, the child is a philosopher, a metaphysician, by necessity."²⁵

Because the child is by nature a metaphysician, trying to discover meaning in the whole of experience, Hocking felt that the child had a natural inclination for abstract learning.²⁶ Thus "learning by doing," which other educators were stressing during the early years of Shady Hill School, appeared to Hocking to be of extremely limited value.²⁷ The method could be useful in some instances, for example, when imagination is faltering and student interest is low; yet, on the whole, Hocking saw the doctrine of "learning by doing" as a clumsy, inefficient method that should be dispensed with whenever possible.²⁸

Hocking placed the blame for the failure of American education on the "Deweyan" concept of experimental learning. "Where our American schools now chiefly fail," says Hocking, "is not in conveying useful information and skills, but in developing the power to think; and one large cause of this failure is the prevalence of learning by doing."²⁹ In only

25. Ibid., p. 34.

26. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 202.

27. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 32.

28. loc. cit.

29. loc. cit.

one sense did Hocking seem to give approval to the method he attributed to John Dewey, and in this single instance he was being facetious: "There is no honest escape from learning to think by thinking. If we 'learn by doing,' we should do thinking to learn thinking."³⁰

Although he was critical of the doctrine of "learning by doing" Hocking did not reject all experimental learning. He found an important role for "learning by doing" in the teaching of moral values. For example, the elementary spiritual and ethical values of a civilization cannot be taught directly; they can only be named. In other words, moral values, because they cannot be taught verbally, must be exemplified. In this way the exemplified moral values are learned through imitation.³¹ Students learn moral values by imitating their parents and teachers.³² Yet in the final analysis it is the individual child who, in adopting moral values from the examples of his elders, must prove their validity in terms of his own personal experience.

Moral values must be tested by individual experience, but this does not imply moral relativism. On the contrary, Hocking is adamant in proposing that objective moral

30. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 286.

31. Ibid., pp. 224-225.

32. William Ernest Hocking, "Can Values Be Taught?" Article in The Obligation of Universities to the Social Order, Henry Pratt Fairchild, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1933), p. 342.

principles do exist. These moral principles provide a rational basis for social behavior.³³ Thus it is not the principle itself that must be proven by individual experience; rather, it is the value of the principle that must be proven to the individual.³⁴ Though the child must be indoctrinated with moral hypotheses, he must be allowed sufficient freedom to find out the results of these hypotheses for himself.³⁵

Hocking's justification for indoctrinating the child with moral hypotheses as a means of enculturation lies in his concept of the nature of the will and the nature of freedom. He was convinced that freedom of the will was an accomplishment arising from personal effort and a proper learning environment. "If this task of developing free will can be brought into being, it is first necessary to bring into being a will. . . . The first task of education is to bring his [the child's] full will into existence."³⁶ It is through the development of the will, then, that Hocking

33. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 227.

34. Hocking, "Can Values Be Taught?," p. 339.

35. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," pp. 203-204.

36. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 258.

intends to accomplish the aim of education: to ". . . communicate the type and . . . provide for growth beyond the type."³⁷

Exposing the child to the values of the culture is the first duty of all education.³⁸ However, educators must be selective. The child should be exposed to what is noble, generous, and faith provoking. For without the challenge to greatness the will does not attain either its fullness or its freedom.³⁹ Hocking speaks of "exposure" in this context, not merely as having education provide an intellectual delicatessen for the child but as presenting the child with alternatives for action. The will needs to be developed by having tasks set for the child which include some degree of difficulty as well as some degree of success. Hocking sees the type of stimulus which corresponds to the action of the will as "difficulty" and the type of good which it seeks as "success."⁴⁰ Thus, for Hocking, character formation is not accomplished merely through proposing moral hypotheses to the child, for his will must be developed and trained to attain its own freedom.

37. Ibid., p. 257.

38. Ibid., p. 259.

39. Ibid., p. 260.

40. Ibid., p. 269.

Throughout his life, Hocking placed great emphasis on the feeling component of knowledge. This is because ideas do not exist independent of feeling.⁴¹ Moreover, Hocking asserts that feeling is an essential ingredient in all vital intelligence;⁴² and because it is, it plays a vital role for the child whose intellectual capacities are undergoing formation. This feeling component of knowledge is so important to Hocking that he insists that emotions must be accounted for in any effective pedagogy.⁴³

The primary role of any pedagogue, then, is to guide the feelings and instincts of the young toward rationality. For, following the laws of man's development, the instincts and their associated emotions, under proper direction, are destined to be transformed into active, rational habits.⁴⁴ This transformation will only be accomplished by the teacher who loves his subject.⁴⁵ If the teacher loves his subject, he will teach with feeling. Through feeling, the teacher will be able to communicate the true value of his subject, presenting to the student an object proportionate to his

41. Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience, p. 64.

42. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 36.

43. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 225.

44. William Ernest Hocking, Review of Count Hermann Keyserling (ed.), The Book of Marriage, Yale Review, 17, (October, 1927), p. 168.

45. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 31.

instinct for knowledge. Not only will the intellect and the emotions of the child be ordered to inspiring and motivating knowledge, but the teacher will also communicate the desire to learn for learning's sake. Feeling, then, is the starting point as well as an integral part of intelligence and interest.

The stimulus of feeling and emotional involvement in a subject is that which defines learning interest. Yet, the undirected interest of the child, says Hocking, is not the proper starting point of a balanced education. Interest should be a natural response to the value of the object presented, not falsely stimulated by extrinsic rewards.⁴⁶ For example, the beauty of a greek statue should be presented in such a way that the student becomes interested in the object because of its esthetic value or its historical context, not because the student will get extra credit for drawing a scale model of Pallas Athena. Motivation in the form of grades, competition, appreciation, or even in the form of stimulating the practical application of ideas distracts the child from the joy of knowledge for its own sake.⁴⁷ Only when a child begins to find interest in knowledge as an end in itself is he at the threshold of learning how to think.

46. loc. cit.

47. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 204.

Interest, as Hocking uses the term, is closely related to his concept of will. A pedagogical principle all good teachers utilize, according to Hocking, is that " . . . interest accompanies any task in which a mental momentum is established."⁴⁸ But how to gain the momentum? Hocking's answer is

. . . momentum can be gained only when difficulty can be indefinitely increased, so that the very conditions which may discourage, drive away interest, and even introduce loathing in a subject, are conditions which make interest possible when the will to power is called into lively action. We may put it down as a maxim of education, so far as interest is concerned, -- without difficulty, no lasting interest.⁴⁹

Thus, in Hocking's doctrine of interest, feeling and emotional involvement are essential ingredients to cognitive stimulation. By channeling the emotions, the instincts are directed toward forming rational habits. Basing his theory of interest on what he considers basic human nature, Hocking observes that the human will is brought into action in the face of moderate difficulty. Interest and will, then, are two sides of the same coin.

By developing intrinsic interest in the subject, the teacher can, according to Hocking, obviate disciplinary problems: That is, order can be maintained in the classroom if each child is occupied with materials that are suited to

48. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 271.

49. Ibid., p. 271.

his interests. In this way orderly classroom activity develops from the learning situation itself.⁵⁰

The only type of discipline worthy of being taught, then, is self-discipline. For the object of lower education is to develop a constructive imagination, a love for perfection, and a habit of creativity.⁵¹ To accomplish these goals, the child needs freedom; however, proper freedom can only develop within a structured situation.⁵² The teacher, therefore, must lead the children, not merely guide them. The role of the teacher as a leader is consistent with human nature. In Hocking's view this is true for two reasons. First, young minds, faced with the complexities of the universe, need a structured environment. Second, the spiritual "will-to-power" of man always seeks its own perfection. This is why all men have a tendency to prefer strong leaders " . . . hoping our habits will be corrected under their direction."⁵³ Thus, through the leadership of the teacher, students are to be led into freedom through self-discipline.

50. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 227.

51. Agnes and Ernest Hocking, "Creating a School," Atlantic Monthly, 196 (December, 1955), p. 66.

52. Hocking, Varieties, Part II, p. 42.

53. William Ernest Hocking, "Leaders and Led," Yale Review, 13, (July, 1924), pp. 629-630.

Underlying the pedagogical practices at Shady Hill School was Hocking's distinctive view of the learning process as an esthetic response. True learning, in other words, brought with it a concomitant to intellectual pleasure which could only be termed an esthetic response. A phrase borrowed from the writings of Jerome S. Bruner seems to express Hocking's thought very well. Delight, according to Bruner, is the intellectual pleasure derived from an act of "reduction of surprise and complexity to predictability and simplicity."⁵⁴ Hocking appears to have constructed his curriculum and pedagogy on the principle that true learning involves esthetic joy.

Hocking's careful attention to the qualitative nature of the learning process and the conditions which promote original thinking places him as a forerunner to much of the interest today in the nature of creative thinking. The flurry of publications in the past ten years by philosophers and psychologists such as Lowenfield, Stein, Maslow, Rogers, Arnold, Guilford and others on the conditions for creative thinking are mirrored in Hocking's earlier approach to the study of creative thought.⁵⁵

54. Jerome S. Bruner, On Knowing, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 110.

55. An interesting collection of these writings is to be found in Sidney J. Parnes and Harold F. Harding, eds., A Sourcebook for Creative Thinking, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962).

Hocking's formal interest in the esthetic response involved in the learning process is shown by his demand that the teachers of Shady Hill School be able to knowingly reproduce the intellectual and emotional circumstances which tended to develop original, creative responses in students.⁵⁶ His first concern was for the psychological environment of learning rather than for subject matter.

Hocking's pedagogy was concerned with producing the esthetic response of delight or intellectual pleasure in learning. Consequently, much of his thought parallels that of modern educators who are directing their studies to creative thinking. True education, in Hocking's view, is to understand and be able to invent new problems.⁵⁷ This idea of learning is similar to the descriptive elements of the creative process as envisioned by Rogers and Torrance. The former holds creativity to be the "emergence of action of a novel relational product."⁵⁸ Torrance specifies creativity as the "process of forming ideas or hypotheses, testing hypotheses, and communicating the results."⁵⁹

56. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 30.

57. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 203.

58. Carl Rogers, "Toward a Theory of Creativity," in A Sourcebook for Creative Thinking, ed. by Sidney J. Parnes and Harold F. Harding, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 65.

59. E. Paul Torrance, "Creative Thinking through School Experiences," in A Sourcebook, p. 32.

Hocking's notion of learning seems to encompass these ideas.

Hocking's interest in creative thinking is further highlighted by his philosophical premise that man has the need to fulfill himself through symbolic expression.⁶⁰ Perhaps it is for this reason that he stressed the development of the constructive imagination as a requisite for learning how to think. Learning, then, is an active process of seeing relationships within the whole of knowledge.

Creative thinking, although essentially a symbolic process of the imagination, requires certain psychological conditions for it to flourish.⁶¹ Much of the present-day literature on creativity is concerned with defining these conditions. Some of these conditions have been identified. Psychological safety and freedom, as Carl Rogers phrases it, are necessary for creative thinking. That is, a climate in which external evaluation and psychological threat are absent, and the freedom of symbolic expression is enhanced are required.⁶² A "felt difficulty" or "thorn

60. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 315.

61. E. Paul Torrance, op. cit., p. 46.

62. Carl Rogers, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

in the flesh" must be present to stimulate the learner.⁶³ Total immersion and concentration of psychic energies is also commonly seen as a condition for creativity.⁶⁴ A period of quiet for the "incubation" of new ideas is also stipulated.⁶⁵ All of these conditions were effectively carried out in Hocking's pedagogical practices.

Hocking seems to be aware of the psychological freedom needed for creativity. He stressed the importance of interpersonal relationships. Adventurous, spirited teachers, laboring with infectious enthusiasm was Hocking's concept of an ideal learning climate.⁶⁶ Further, the teacher's personal role in accepting the individuality of the student's ideas was made explicit. No external sanctions such as grades, adult or peer group approval, rewards or punishments inhibited the aura of freedom and permissiveness at Shady Hill School.⁶⁷ Hocking wanted nothing to detract from the esthetic delight of learning.

63. E. Paul Torrance, op. cit., p. 42.

64. Morris I. Stein, "Creativity as an Intra- and Inter-personal Process," in A Sourcebook, p. 91.

65. E. Paul Torrance, op. cit., p. 46. Also, L. L. Thurston, "The Scientific Study of Inventive Talent," in A Sourcebook, p. 62.

66. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 30.

67. May Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix: Sketches for an Autobiography, (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 1959), p. 3.

Freedom of symbolic expression was allowed at Shady Hill School, but in Hocking's terms. Freedom has significance only within the context of self-discipline. In art classes children were first schooled in the painting of simple, controlled, geometric design before being permitted to paint self-conceived patterns. In this way it was felt that the self-discipline of the creative life would be instilled. Moreover, Hocking believed that control releases rather than cramps the creative energies of the child. Thus freedom was something that had to be developed within the child.⁶⁸

The presence of a "felt difficulty," a term usually associated with John Dewey's famous analysis of the method of critical intelligence, is seen as an important stimulus to creative thinking. The enthusiasm and concentration of energies which are usually associated with creative activity, Hocking called "mental momentum."⁶⁹ Paradoxically, he related this "mental momentum" to the concept of interest and difficulty. "We may put it down as a maxim of education, so far as lasting interest is concerned, -- without difficulty, no lasting interest."⁷⁰ Hocking perceived "felt difficulty,"

68. loc. cit.

69. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 204.

70. Ibid., p. 271.

however, not merely as an external condition of the environment, but as a type of stimulus which corresponds to the natural activity of the will.⁷¹ Only in the presence of difficulty can "mental momentum" be established, for only then is the will called into lively action and creative energies unleashed.⁷²

The teaching methods at Shady Hill School, as it has already been noted, demanded total involvement of the children's energies. This involvement, as Thurston has shown, is the key to discovery and insight.⁷³ Music, art, and drama were utilized at Shady Hill for developing creative expression as well as for sources of insight. Hocking held, moreover, that feeling is an essential ingredient in all vital intelligence.⁷⁴ This feeling component of knowledge was so important to Hocking that he insisted that emotions be taken into account for an effective pedagogy.⁷⁵ Thus Hocking's pedagogy called for the active involvement in the affective and cognitive energies of the child in harmonious, integrated action.

71. Ibid., p. 206

72. Ibid., p. 271.

73. L. L. Thurston, "The Scientific Study of Inventive Talent," in A Sourcebook, p. 62.

74. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 31.

75. Hocking, Experiment in Education, p. 225.

In creative thinking it seems that all original thought must undergo subconscious incubation. Hocking's educational practices confirmed to this theoretical concept. Although he stressed a daily period of quiet and meditation in a religious context, it is clear that he felt the period was valuable for the integration of knowledge and the development of ideas.⁷⁶

Although the principles from which Hocking developed his ideas on creative thinking were primarily philosophical rather than psychological, he did include the major conditions in the classroom. Thus one may conclude that Hocking was one of the educational forerunners of the present emphasis on the qualitative structure of creative thought.

Hocking's educational philosophy, like that of many Idealists, embodies many of the common elements of that philosophical system. Yet Hocking's educational thought bears the stamp of a man who has rooted himself in the practical world of the school. His curriculum and pedagogy were wrought first in experience and only later into firm positions of educational theory.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the speculative insights from his own distinctive Idealism became the integrating principles of his educational thought.

76. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 43.

77. Ibid., p. 23.

Hocking sees the school as a cultural institution for the initiation of the young into the knowledge, values, and beliefs of the community. The school is to provide the facilities, teachers, and methods for the transmission of man's cultural inheritance. The object of education is to reproduce a likeness of cultural type; yet it is also to provide for an improvement of that cultural type. The foundations of knowledge and values which the school teaches, in order to be effective in molding a better society, must be rooted deeply in a metaphysics of the human person, society, and the eternal values of religion.

Hocking sees the child as a rational, theocentric creature. Thus he is capable of intellectual, moral and spiritual development. Education must provide for these capacities in the child. In fulfilling them, both the child and society will find their regeneration. Consequently, with proper knowledge, a desire for learning, and a moral sensibility gained through self-discipline, the young will manifest a "growth beyond the type" of their culture, and they will bring their society to the threshold of the "passage beyond modernity."

CHAPTER V

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

This chapter will examine the ramifications of Hocking's educational philosophy as it was implemented at Shady Hill School. Although its founders were active in the school for only five years, it still appears to function in accordance with the principles laid down by Hocking. Over the years, of course, some educational innovations have been made.¹ This description, however, is concerned only with the period of its active administration by Hocking, from 1917 until 1922. Although recapitulating many of the principles already outlined, the following pages will emphasize the curriculum and the teaching methods that were enunciated by Hocking in his personal memoirs.² Fortunately, an account by a former pupil of Shady Hill School, who attended during the administration of Hocking, allows us to reconstruct the spirit and atmosphere that prevailed in the school's early history.³

1. Shady Hill School, an advertising brochure received by the author in private correspondence. passim.

2. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 20.

3. May Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix.

Shady Hill School began almost by force of circumstance. Though the interest in experimental education was high in the Hocking family in the year 1912, a series of influenza and whooping cough epidemics served as a catalyst for the actual founding of the school. With the approval of local doctors and the cautious consent of the local school board, Agnes and Ernest Hocking began their open air school in a backyard tent, while Ernest Hocking was teaching at Yale in the Fall of 1912.⁴ This modest beginning was carried on for two years at their New Haven home, until Hocking's transfer to Harvard in 1914.

At Cambridge, Hocking's son, a transfer student from an over-crowded school, began to fall behind in his school-work. Home tutoring began, and by the Spring of 1915 some half a dozen refugees from the crowded schools were attending lessons on the Hocking's back porch. Agnes Hocking, a former Boston school teacher, conducted all the classes.⁵

By the Fall of 1915, the enthusiasm of the students' parents (many of whom were Harvard University professors) insisted that the school must continue. By the end of that year, the number of pupils had grown to forty. Soon the

4. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 20.

5. Ibid., pp. 20-21.

school had overflowed into the Hockings' dining room, garage, and under the back porch. It was time to move.⁶

Through the assistance of an interested local banker, a corporation of parents was organized to form "The Co-operative Open-Air School." Money was raised, and classes began in October of 1916. The site of the new school was the former Charles Edward Norton estate, known among the townspeople as Shady Hill.⁷ May Sarton, a pupil at the school from 1917 until 1925, gives an apt description of the open air aspects of the school:

The buildings themselves were unorthodox. Built of wood and looking from the street side like low brown barracks, they were one large expanse of windows on the inner side facing the willows. These windows were kept open, even in zero weather. Only one room had a fireplace, the Bit Room, where the school gathered each day for opening exercises. There was, it is true, a small potbellied stove at the teacher's end of each classroom, where frozen fingers might, in extremity, be painfully thawed, but this illusion of warmth made the polar regions at the back of the room seem even colder.⁸

Thus the name "Open-Air School" seems to have been taken quite literally by its founders.

The founding principles of the school, Hocking asserted, were not those of an a priori educational theory;

6. Ibid., p. 22.

7. Ibid., p. 25.

8. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 1.

rather, they were, " . . . a group of insights growing out of the interaction of the spirit and experience of years of teaching."⁹ Yet, to a great extent, the principles of the school reflected a reaction against contemporary experimental education. For Hocking admits that the name, Shady Hill School, gradually came to connote certain points of departure from the doctrines of progressive education, which were at that time very much in vogue in the public schools.¹⁰

The first essential point of departure at Shady Hill School was an aversion to textbook history. To the founders of Shady Hill School history was of value to the human spirit only if it were able to recover the living feeling of an age. It must be concerned with original documents and the most vivid literary expressions of historical movements.¹¹ Through reproducing in class the drama, the art, and the music of an age, the student was expected to be motivated to seek out and explore the factual data that were not covered in class.

This approach to the study of history became one of the distinguishing characteristics of the curriculum. Today, this cultural approach to history is known as the "Central

9. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, pp. 25-26.

10. Ibid., p. 28.

11. loc. cit.

Subject."¹² In the fourth grade, for example, students make a year-long study of early Greek civilization. Greek art is imitated, the music of the lyre is recreated, and the students re-enact the plays of Sophocles. Also, just as in the time of Hocking, no textbook is used in the teaching of history.¹³

In her autobiography, May Sarton gives a delightful account of her year as a student in the "Central Subject." This account conveys clearly the enthusiasm with which the children entered the spirit of the course. The year was spent in making chiltons from stencilled white sheets, carving the Acropolis from Ivory soap, and learning Greek songs and poetry. One day, she recalls, she and a schoolmate were inspired to kneel down on the lawns near the Harvard Divinity School. There they stopped a passing student and, incanting the words of Sophocles, informed him that ". . . he would have sixty children and that from the mouths of thirty of them frogs would be spewed out, and from the mouths of the other thirty, pieces of gold."¹⁴ What more appropriate application of learning could a teacher desire?

12. Shady Hill School, a brochure. Looseleaf insert; no pagination.

13. Ibid.

14. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, pp. 5-6.

The aversion to textbooks at Shady Hill School was not restricted to the study of history. This was because Hocking felt that textbooks were written for children of specific ages, and to use these texts was a mistake because ". . . the mentality of a child is a continuous reaching beyond its 'age group' and is in permanent touch with the universally human."¹⁵ Thus teachers at Shady Hill School were constantly searching for new source materials, and when they found them, they returned to class to exhibit their new educational possessions with an eagerness that stimulated learning.¹⁶

The demands placed on the teacher to find his own sources of material implied dedication and love for his subject matter. Hence, according to Hocking, only through teachers who love their subjects can the true value of an idea be shown.¹⁷ To implement this principle, Shady Hill School employed only teachers above the fourth grade with academic degrees in history, botany, mathematics, and the academic disciplines.

Hocking's opposition to "learning by doing" appears to pertain primarily to academic subjects, especially those

15. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 29.

16. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 9.

17. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 30.

requiring a knowledge of abstract principles.¹⁸ He felt the method of "learning by doing" was inefficient and clumsy.¹⁹ Moreover, it was frequently misapplied. For example, before the child can benefit from laboratory work in learning science, Hocking was convinced the child needed to learn first the basic principles involved.²⁰ Thus, instead of "learning by doing" in such subjects as mathematics and science, the child should first know the abstract principles of the subject. This is not as difficult as it may appear, for according to Hocking, children have a natural taste for abstractions.²¹

Hocking's conviction that children have a natural love of abstraction led him into a controversy with the Harvard School of Education, which at that time was dedicated to the teaching of number concepts through the Dewey-McClellan method.²² This method was based on teaching number concepts through concrete applications. Hocking deliberately set out to refute the Dewey-McClellan approach.

18. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 202.

19. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, pp. 32-33.

20. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 203.

21. Ibid., p. 202.

22. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 23.

To accomplish this end, he conducted exercises in mental arithmetic for fifteen minutes a day. He insisted that his approach enabled the children to overcome their acquired fear of numbers, to develop sharp and exact mental self-control, and to appreciate the beauty of numbers as an abstraction.²³

Hocking's penchant for abstractions, however, did not force him to overlook the need for physical development and the acquisition of manual skills. Perhaps Hocking's own experience in the building trades taught him the value of manual labor.²⁴ Thus elementary carpentry was begun in the third grade. The children were forced to maintain a high standard of craftsmanship, no work being accepted until it was perfect. Hocking felt this effort in the manual arts had spiritual benefits. Not only was productive labor of benefit to the body, but it also stimulated a constructive imagination. Moreover, the making of one's own possessions promoted a sense of spiritual proprietorship and a love for perfection.²⁵ Today, this program of manual arts is being continued in all grades at Shady Hill School. Students learn the use of power-driven tools, and they

23. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

24. Hocking, Varieties, Part II, p. 23.

25. Agnes and Ernest Hocking, "Creating a School," p. 66.

contribute their products to school science projects or to serve as props for the teaching of the "Central Subject."²⁶

The development of a constructive imagination through learning to do physical tasks was not the only means for promoting creativity at Shady Hill School. Developing originality and creativity was an integral part of the schools' objectives.²⁷ For this reason all children studied art and applied design. Yet, even in promoting creativity, the principle of freedom with self-control was always emphasized. The methods of teaching applied design, for example, embodied principles which stood in direct opposition to the Progressivist's concept of creativity. Rather than a bedlam of paint-smearred children splashing water colors in finger painting exercises, the children at Shady Hill School were directed in the painting of simple, controlled geometric designs. In this way a taste for style and form was instilled in the pupil.²⁸ It was the conviction of the school that children long for form and that form releases rather than cramps creative energy.²⁹

Giving esthetics and the Three-R's a due place in the center of the curriculum, the Hockings felt that the

26. Shady Hill School, a brochure. No pagination.

27. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 34.

28. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 3.

29. loc. cit.

most important lesson the school had to teach " . . . was a faith about the universe we live in."³⁰ This obligation of the school was second to none. Hocking was convinced that the child's mind is always thinking about life as a whole. Hence an education which does not attempt to feed the metaphysical spirit of inquiry is starving the child spiritually.³¹ Moreover, the moral virtues of justice and the respect for the dignity of man, both rooted in a belief in God, must be taught by the school.³² Yet Hocking proposed to teach this faith without dogmatism.

To accomplish this end, poetry became the primary vehicle for conveying moral and spiritual ideas. Hocking says:

Poetry assumes, rather than presents, a philosophy, wholly without argument. It assumes, as a rule, a living not a dead universe, a purposeful not a purposeless universe, an organic, not a mechanical universe, a universe indeed of odd, concrete particulars, homely as well as heroic, fit grist for a Robert Frost [a frequent visitor at Shady Hill, and at moments a teacher there] as well as for a Dante or Shakespeare, but for every queer detail bathed in the transfiguring light of love and symbol. . . . It was for this reason that at Shady Hill poetry, interpreted by Agnes Hocking, became a major means of conveying what every child's soul needed.³³

30. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 33.

31. Ibid., p. 34.

32. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

33. Ibid., p. 35.

Agnes Hocking, teacher of poetry, creative, dynamic, and bursting with energy, dominated the entire atmosphere of the school.³⁴ At her command noise became peaceful silence; at her nod quiet gave way to spontaneous laughter.³⁵ She transmitted through poetry the inspiration of faith into the life of the school. May Sarton recalls the vitality with which Mrs. Hocking carried out her mission: "Agnes Hocking taught the subject -- if what she did can be called teaching -- to the whole school. She did it all day long, by bursting into spontaneous prayer when the spirit moved her. . . . and more normally, by meeting with each class for a scheduled hour."³⁶

Along with the poetic insights of Agnes Hocking to open the hearts of the children to know religious awe, the daily student assemblies were also sources of inspiration. Each day the students were invited to gather together to express their feelings about the eternal verities. By communal singing, music, individual recitations of Biblical psalms and spontaneous poems, the community of students was always made aware of its common unity with God.³⁷ In his later

34. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 2.

35. Ibid., p. 6.

36. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 7.

37. Ibid., p. 8.

years, Hocking proposed a fifteen minute period of meditation each day for children, a practice fashioned after Tagore's school for boys in Santineketan, India.³⁸ In comparison with Indian children, Hocking feared that the outward-going American child would sooner or later discover that his education had left him empty inside.³⁹

The success of this school was as much due to the co-operative nature of the undertaking as to the spirit of its founders. The excellent staff was made possible by the parents pooling their skills as teachers, as business managers, as secretaries, and as helpers.⁴⁰ With this spirit, Shady Hill School was able to fulfill its promise: "To keep childhood alive to open-mindedness and a love of learning; to provide life with all possible richness and fullness; to secure freedom with self-control."⁴¹

38. Hocking, "The Creative Use of the Curriculum," p. 206.

39. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 43.

40. Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 3.

41. From the original Shady Hill brochure advertising its establishment. Cited in Sarton, I Knew a Phoenix, p. 3.

CHAPTER VI

CRITICISMS OF HOCKING'S SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

Before entering into a critical evaluation of Professor Hocking's speculative philosophy, it is first necessary to examine some of the standards of criticism for evaluating philosophy in general. Philosophical criticism is usually made from the vantage point of a particular, systematic philosophy. For example, criticisms of Kantian philosophy are made from such various philosophical positions as Realism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and many others. These philosophies, in turn, engage in debate with each other in their search for truth.

All philosophical systems involve certain assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the nature of the universe. These assumptions, as Stephen C. Pepper, the California metaphysician has shown, constitute basic "world hypotheses," or conceptual systems from which systematic philosophies are developed.¹ Because of the differing assumptions between

1. Stephen C. Pepper, World Hypothesis: A Study in Evidence (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1942), pp. 91-92. Pepper's hypothesis on the generation of philosophical systems appears quite similar to that of Max Black's notion of the "root metaphor."

philosophical systems, the great debate goes on and it almost always ends in frustrated stalemate. Therefore, in order to present a viable criticism of Hocking's philosophy, it is first necessary to establish certain universally valid canons of evaluation -- canons that are free from the value assumptions of particular philosophical systems.

In accepting Pepper's hypothesis, it is obvious that universal canons for the evaluation of philosophy cannot stem from any particular philosophical system. The canons must be generated from elements that are common to all schools of philosophical discourse. What is common to all philosophical systems, or any area of discourse, is the use of language. As an instrument of communication, language embodies certain stabilized contexts and definitions that lead to particular logical and linguistic standards. These norms, or criteria, are implicit in any area of discourse. Although it may be argued that there exists no unified linguistic theory and that canons for criticism generated from a linguistic viewpoint will not be universal, it should be pointed out that the argument would then devolve to one of agreeing on a meta-language, et cetera, ad infinitum. To avoid this infinite regression, it seems wise to accept the advice of Aristotle that all philosophy begins with a "first known."

The norms or criteria which are implicit in any area of discourse are five in number: (1) internal consistency, (2) categorical compatibility, (3) uniformity of definitional type, (4) the basic specifications of language usage, (5) and the law of parsimony. These canons of criticism will be used as the criteria for the evaluation of Hocking's speculative philosophy.²

A brief explanation of these canons of criticism will clarify their meaning. The first canon of internal consistency refers to the maintaining of logical coherence. Any violation of syllogistic reasoning in formal logic is a violation of this canon.

The second canon of categorical compatibility implies the necessity of maintaining the same context when using particular terminology. For example, to state that a table is made of atoms and molecules is to mix categories which are incompatible. For "atom" and "molecule" are terms that belong to the realm of theoretical physics, while "table" is concerned with an object of perception in classical physics. The referents of the terms belong to different epistemological categories.

2. T. Frank Saunders, "The Inquiry Cube and Legislative Meaning," Philosophy of Education, 1968: Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the Far Western Philosophy of Education Society, ed. by James J. Jelenick. (Tempe, Arizona: Bureau of Educational Research and Services, Arizona State University, 1968), p. 57.

The third canon, maintaining uniformity of definitional type, refers to the consistent usage of any of the four major definitional types: formal, descriptive, stipulative, and persuasive definitions. Formal definition is the classification of a referrent by genus and specific difference, as in the use of Aristotelian categories. A descriptive definition, on the other hand, seeks only to characterize the referrent by naming salient qualities of the object. A stipulative definition is a nominal description of a referrent to be tentatively utilized for the sake of argument. The last type, "the persuasive definition, is the use of an unclear term for which the author is attempting to establish a meaning." For example, defining education as the "formation of character" is probably a persuasive definition. (Although any definition of education is open to controversy.) Should the author of a seemingly persuasive definition use it as an accepted definition, he violates the third canon of maintaining consistency of definitional type.

The fourth canon needs little explanation. Maintaining the basic specifications of language usage means to keep the common, ordinary language distinctions between metaphorical and real denotation, the copulative and the existential use of the verb to be, and other accepted distinctions. For example, if one uses a spatial metaphor, "I am in the room of thy soul," one cannot employ the same terminology in

such a way as to assume a real spatial relation, at least not without notifying the reader.

The fifth criterion for the evaluation of any universe of discourse is the law of parsimony. This is a translation of the scholastic dictum: Entia non multiplicanda sunt. (Entities should not be multiplied beyond what is absolutely necessary.) Depending on its philosophical context, the dictum may be interpreted as not to give more reasons than are necessary to explain an event or to maintain a simplicity of assumptions in an explanatory hypothesis.

The five canons of criticism outlined above are applicable to any universe of discourse at any level of communication. For example, the ethics of Aristotle is based on his conception of the nature of man. These criteria for evaluation could be applied to both Aristotle's ethical precepts as well as to his assumptions about man. Moreover, they are relevant to an examination of his "first principles," insofar as they are philosophically meaningful statements.

In applying these canons of criticism to Hocking's speculative philosophy, his basic "world hypotheses" will be examined first. Later, particular tenets which flow, at least indirectly, from Hocking's first premises will be evaluated.

The beginning premise of Hocking's philosophy, as he freely admits, is not capable of demonstration.³ His philosophical starting point was the position that "The world as a whole has meaning." Although this dictum would appear to have the force of a Leibnitzian "principle of sufficient reason," a closer examination of the statement discloses ambiguities which make the proposition philosophically untenable.

First, the statement is given without any specific context or definition. Even if the statement is justified as part of the "language game" of philosophy, the meaning of the subject term, "the world as a whole," is extremely ambiguous. Does it mean the sum of significant experiences of individual men? Is it the "sameness of facts" that Stephen Pepper would rely on as the common premise of philosophy?⁴ Because the statement has not been given any context, the terms cannot be defined and the meaning of the statement remains obscure. This is obviously a definitional failure and is covered by the third canon of criticism.

The problem of ambiguity also concerns the use of the term "meaning" in the statement that "The world as a whole has meaning." According to the philosophical discussions of

3. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 33.

4. Stephen C. Pepper, World Hypothesis, pp. 91-92.

language analysis, the term "meaning" in this context could be used to signify (1) intelligibility, (2) the fulfillment of man's hopes and desires, and (3) the purpose of life.⁵ From analyzing the scope and focus of Hocking's philosophical efforts, it is clear that he intends "meaning" to have the force of "purpose of life." From his work, Science and the Idea of God, Hocking specifically intends to show that science cannot do without a teleological explanation of life. Teleology, purpose, and meaning appear to be inextricably linked in Hocking's use of the word "meaning."

Yet, as Professor Baier has shown in his essay, "The Meaning of Life," there is much linguistic confusion among those who feel that science militates against a conception of life as meaningful. According to Baier, these philosophers are caught in the dilemma of rejecting the discoveries of science or of taking the view that life is meaningless.⁶ These philosophers presuppose the extrinsic purpose or goal of life to be the absolute condition of intelligibility in the world. This assumption places them in the position of not seeing that life can be intrinsically intelligible. They mistakenly believe that because science has not shown

5. Kurt Baier, "The Meaning of Life," in Twentieth Century Philosophy: The Analytical Tradition, ed. by Morris Weitz (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 367.

6. Ibid., p. 379.

the extrinsic purpose of life that there cannot be any intrinsic purpose in life.⁷ Baier's analysis seems to reflect Hocking's position. The latter's tenacious hold on his first premise that "The world as a whole is meaningful" appears to be an ambiguous synthetic a priori, a voluntaristic starting point, which cannot be justified by the canons of philosophical discourse.

It is important to note that this criticism is not aimed at the fact that Hocking's basic premise is an unproven assumption. Many philosophical systems begin with unexamined assumptions. Hocking's error is that his statement is philosophically ambiguous and, therefore, unacceptable.

A second fundamental premise in Hocking's philosophy is his negative pragmatism. While a student at Harvard, Hocking was strongly influenced by William James. The latter's philosophy led Hocking to feel that the concepts and propositions of metaphysics, like the empirical hypotheses of the experimentalist, must be tested by their consequences. However, rather than accepting the "cash value" standard for truth as conceived by James, Hocking modified James's norms and termed his own criterion for truth "negative pragmatism." Thus, instead of accepting the

7. Ibid., p. 379.

dictum, "That which works is true," Hocking adopted the rule, "That which does not work cannot be true."

Hocking incorporated "negative pragmatism" into his dialectic in Science and the Idea of God. He applied his principle in the following way: If God exists, a Godless science will be unable to explain the world fully. Science cannot explain the world fully; therefore, God exists.

The major premise of the syllogism is of prime concern in this analysis, for it appears to violate a fundamental canon of formal logic. The norms of traditional logic hold that the consequent of a conditional statement is true if the antecedent is verified. The converse, i.e., the antecedent is true if the consequent is verified, is invalid reasoning. This can be seen in the following syllogism:

If it has rained, the grass will be wet.

The grass is wet.

Therefore, it has rained.

The reasoning is obviously invalid in the above syllogism. Perhaps, de facto, the rain did cause the grass to be wet. But then again, it may have been water from a garden hose or the morning dew. Affirming the consequent of a conditional statement allows us to say nothing about the antecedent.

Now if the canons of formal logic are applied to the basic premise underlying Hocking's Science and the Idea of God, it is seen that the form of argument which Hocking establishes is invalid. Note the similarity to the above invalid form of reasoning: If God exists, (antecedent) a Godless science will not be able to explain the world fully (consequent). Godless science is unable to explain the world fully (affirming the consequent). Therefore, God exists (invalid conclusion). Hocking goes to great lengths to prove the consequent of the proposition; then he affirms the antecedent. The first canon of logical consistency is obviously violated. Surprisingly, this criticism is not found in any reviews of his Science and the Idea of God.

Hocking's reasoning, according to the canons of criticism adopted here, also lacks categorical consistency. Hocking attempts to use the context of science with its many theoretical concepts and definitions and apply them to the area of metaphysics. The two categories are as compatible as oil and water. This categorical inconsistency, as Nagel has pointed out, is a common failing of the scientist-philosopher or of the philosopher-scientist.⁸ Hocking, it appears, has fallen into the same error when he tries to mix science with metaphysics. Science deals

8. Ernest Nagel, The Structure of Science: Problems in the Logic of Scientific Explanation, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1961), pp. 337-338.

with epistemological constructs and quantifiable objects. The proofs for the existence of God, on the other hand, pertain to metaphysics.

On strictly logical ground, Hocking's principle of "negative pragmatism" also falls by the philosophical wayside. For if the principle of "negative pragmatism" is logically consistent, then the converse of the proposition must also be true, as James clearly saw. Consequently, Aristotle's logical "square of opposition" would be valid. Yet, Hocking denied the validity of James's converse proposition: "That which works is true." Thus, in denying James's proposition, Hocking did not maintain logical consistency, a violation of the first canon of the universe of discourse.

The meaning of truth in Hocking's philosophy presents another problem. It is a problem common to all idealism. Historically, Idealists have had the difficulty of resolving the reality of sense experience with the "spiritual reality" gained through philosophical insight. R. F. Bradley, for example, concluded that the immediate sense world was a tissue of lies and contradictions. Hocking's Idealism, however, sought to establish the truth and the reality of the spiritual within the realm of sense experience. This was done, it appears, at the cost of abolishing any distinction between subjective idea and objective experience. With this

distinction obliterated, Hocking appears to deny the possibility of knowing what part of life's experience can be called real and what can be called illusion. Hocking's position can be seen in the following passage: "The real is taken to include the whole system of experience and objects. The usage renders a valid insight that experience cannot be unreal."⁹ Now if experience, the chameleon of the philosophical world, is taken to include the experience of sense objects as well as the experience of subjective ideas and hallucinations, the terms "real" and "unreal" make no sense at all. On the other hand, if Hocking intends "reality" as a definition for "that which we experience," he is merely stating a tautology.

In essence, Hocking's position is a negative form of the Berkelian tenet of classical Idealism Esse est percipi. For if the term "experience" is substituted for percipi, the meaning is equivalent. Now without engaging in all of the logical lucubrations of G. E. Moore's famous "Refutation of Idealism," it should be sufficient to point out that the

9. William Ernest Hocking, "Metaphysics: Its Function, Consequences and Criteria," Journal of Philosophy, 43 (July, 1946), p. 373.

valid entailments of Esse est percipi are few, if any.¹⁰

The crux of the problem, according to Moore, is that

" . . . esse is held to be percipi solely because what is experienced is held to be identical with the experience of it.¹¹ For example, this confusion would theoretically prevent the Idealist from distinguishing the existence of blue objects for the consciousness of blue objects.

If Moore's analysis of Idealism is applied to Hocking's dictum that " . . . experience cannot be unreal," a problem of meaning arises. If the dictum is transposed to a positive statement in metaphysical terminology, the proposition would read "Experience is, and necessarily so, the real." Now Moore would hold that this statement says at least one of two things: (1) there is such a thing as experience, and there is such a thing as reality, and they are names for the same identical phenomena; or (2) that experience is the same as the term experience with a consciousness of reality. A third interpretation, one which Moore did not consider, would be a solipsistic rendering, "My conscious experience is, and necessarily is, real."

The context of Hocking's efforts to establish an objective metaphysics eliminates the third interpretation. Thus, only the first and second remain to be considered. The

10. G. E. Moore, "The Refutation of Idealism," in Twentieth Century Philosophy, p. 26.

11. Ibid., p. 27.

first interpretation reduces Hocking's statement to a tautology. It is doubtful that this was his intention. The second alternative, however, contradicts Hocking's statement that " . . . experience cannot be unreal." For if the consciousness of reality is a factor to be added to the concept of experience, then experience can be conceived of as being unreal as well. Thus Hocking is involved in a contradiction.

Hocking's confusion is one that is common to all Idealists, as Moore sees it. The psychological fact is that men must include the notion of experience when talking of reality. The converse, however, is not true. Men need not include the notion of reality when talking of experience. Dream and reality are two aspects of experience which all men undergo.

The tenacity with which Hocking clings to this principle that " . . . experience cannot be unreal" is seen in his answer to critics who accuse him of subjectivism in his ontological proof of the existence of God. Hocking counters with the argument that the essence of God must be real " . . . because it is an essence inseparable from my continuous consciousness of my experience of reality."¹² But this reply is obviously a petitio principii, a begging

12. William Ernest Hocking, "The Ontological Argument in Royce and Others," in Contemporary Idealism in America, ed. by Clifford Barrett (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1932), p. 65.

of the question. For the problem remains: how do we differentiate subjective illusion or projection of inner mental states from the objective reality of nature?

Hocking's ontological argument is open to other objections which indirectly follow from his methodology. By appealing to subjective experience in order to prove the objective existence of God, he fails to "bridge the gap" between the subjective and the objective orders. The gist of Hocking's ontological proof for the existence of God is this: Man experiences the self and the world as being incomplete. This feeling of incompleteness is an experience of the real, for it is grasped within man's experience of the self and the world, both of which are real. This "real incompleteness" to which men give positive content is an experience of the reality of God.

Now this line of argument has many difficulties. First, there is the traditional problem of the knowledge of other minds over which philosophy has wrangled for many years. The problem is doubly difficult when we are dealing with communication and common agreement on the labeling of subjective mental states. However, when we are dealing with a subjective experience of a condition about which no verbal predicates can be appended, a feeling of incompleteness, it seems impossible that we would be able to agree to call this feeling God. Hypothetically, even if we were all to agree to call this feeling of incompleteness God, we

would merely have a conventional agreement and definition of a word. We have not yet made reference to any ontological entity such as Hocking proposes.

Hocking's position is similar to Wittgenstein's famous analogy of the "beetle in the box."¹³ Although Wittgenstein's analogy argues against private mental states, the analogy has a point applicable to Hocking's predicament. Wittgenstein supposes that everyone had a box with something in it and told that the object within it is a beetle. No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is by looking into his own box. He goes on to say, "But suppose the word 'beetle' had a use in these people's language? If so, it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all . . . for the box might even be empty."¹⁴

Wittgenstein's analogy applied to Hocking's argument in this way: "~~By definition, "incompleteness" as an experience is a subjective state. Hocking is actually beginning his argument with a "beetle," "incompleteness," in everyone's box. Even to assign a positive content to the experience would not allow men to use it as the name of a thing -- particularly God -- and still have meaningful~~

13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, trans. by G. W. M. Anscombe (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), p. 100.

14. loc. cit.

communication. Thus, the basis of Hocking's ontological argument is fallacious and violates logical consistency of the "depth grammar" he is using.

The apparent subjectivism of Hocking's ontological argument leads the reader to an intellectual impasse. If one interprets his statement that the essence of God must be real (existent) " . . . because it is an essence inseparable from my continuous consciousness of my experience with reality," as subjectivism, one is met with Hocking's specific denial that experience is composed only of internal relations within the mind.¹⁵ On the other hand, if the statement is to be construed as meaning that the essence of God is to exist, the reader finds that Hocking repudiates this position also.¹⁶ Thus Hocking appears to be guilty of either logical inconsistency in accepting two irreconcilable positions or of merely engaging in a bit of playful mysticism.

Thus far, the criticism of Hocking's speculative philosophy have been based solely upon the application of the canons for a universe of discourse. Hocking's writings, however, did not escape the critical thrusts of his contemporaries who were concerned with similar philosophical problems. Among these critics, two men, D. C. MacIntosh, once

¹⁵ Charles Hartshorne, "Idealism and Our Experience of Nature," in Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World Civilization, ed. by Leroy S. Rouner (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 72.

¹⁶ Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 313.

head of the Yale Divinity School, and Y. K. Krikorian, a naturalistic humanist, stand out as consistent critics of Hocking's philosophy.

D. C. MacIntosh specifically attacks Hocking's use of metaphorical language as being misleading and imprecise.¹⁷ In explicating his notions on inter-subjectivity, Hocking seems to imply that two minds can coalesce in nature:

I am in thy soul. These things around me are in thy experience. They are thy own; when I touch them and move them, I change thee. When I look on them, I see what thou seest; when I listen I hear what thou hearest. I am in the great Room of thy soul; and I experience thy very experience.¹⁸

There is little wonder that MacIntosh finds difficulty with Hocking's language. For if objects, as ideas, are part of my mind, and I perceive an object which another mind perceives, then we perceive a part of the mind of the other.¹⁹ Hocking fails to maintain consistency or, at the very least, he uses the metaphor, ". . . great Room of thy soul . . ." as a substitute for the real.²⁰

17. D. C. MacIntosh, "Hocking's Philosophy of Religion," Philosophical Review, 23 (July, 1914), p. 37.

18. Hocking, The Meaning of God, pp. 265-266.

19. D. C. MacIntosh, "Hocking's Philosophy of Religion," p. 36.

20. Hocking, loc. cit.

In addition, there is also a subtle definitional failure in Hocking's reference to objects in his lengthy metaphor. He uses object referents in two senses: (1) the object in the realist sense of being a physical object of sense experience, and (2) the object in the idealist sense of "object-as-perceived." When he states, in the above quotation, ". . . when I touch them and move them (objects) I change thee," he is referring to physical objects. But, when he draws his conclusion that ". . . I am in the great Room of thy soul; . . ." he implies a spiritual reality. Consequently, he is referring to "objects-as-perceived." This is a violation of the canon of consistency in definition. Though Hocking later admitted that his use of spatial language was inadequate and misleading, he did not allude to the definitional failure.

Most of the criticisms of Y. H. Krikorian, on the other hand, seem to be based on the principle of parsimony. Krikorian feels that Hocking utilizes the concept of "Other Mind" as a deus ex machina; the objectified "Absolute" or "Other Mind" merely serves as a guarantor for universality in our personal judgments about reality. Although Krikorian would grant the possibility of using the "Whole Idea" as a regulative notion or methodological limit for explaining man's knowledge, he objects to the reification of this

notion in Hocking's philosophy.²¹ In other words, to reify a function of the mind is to violate the principle of parsimony.

Much of his philosophy, Hocking would be quick to admit, cannot be subject to the strict canons of philosophical analysis.²² Philosophy, as Hocking conceived it, involves the whole man; it is not merely an intellectual exercise. The overwhelming desire for truth will inevitably lead man to a personal confrontation with a personal God. The logic of philosophy, therefore, will naturally lead to the ineffable language of mysticism.

In his mysticism Hocking was influenced by both Josiah Royce and William James. Against the naturalistic limitations which Royce placed on mysticism, Hocking sided with James's more liberal views. However, rather than grant the truth of an experience because it has consequences that are psychologically satisfying, as James did, Hocking insisted that the mysticism in his philosophy was the mysticism of realism; that is, the union of the human person with God was an objective reality, just as real as the physical objects of the sense world.

21. Y. H. Krikorian, "Hocking and the Dilemmas of Modernity," in Philosophy, Religion, and the Coming World Civilization, p. 57.

22. Hocking, The Meaning of God, p. 311.

A major problem in dealing with mysticism, however, is that the truth reports of mystics cannot be taken on their own testimony. For if they are, this is a capitulation to solipsism. The truth of the mystic's statements must be critically examined in the light of other contexts and in relation to verifiable evidence. Hocking, of course, was well aware of this need for verification of truth reports in mysticism. He acknowledges that " . . . There is a wide difference between saying 'My experience of reality is ineffable' (passing my present powers of expression) and saying 'Reality is ineffable' (without predicates)."²³ Hocking sees the real danger in accepting truth reports from a mystic to be " . . . the mystic in reporting what he has experienced, has attributed to the objects of his experience some of the qualities which belong to his inner state. . . ." ²⁴

Hocking's own quotation cites the point of objection to his differentiation of the "Absolute" as an impersonal experience and of "God" as a personal experience. A philosophical argument can be made for positing some manner of absolute in knowledge, but the positing of a unique personal relationship with an "Absolute" lies beyond the scope of philosophical verification. Even should one grant the

23. Ibid., p. 54.

24. loc. cit.

validity of Hocking's proof for the existence of an "Absolute," which is grasped as an objectified entity in the knowing experience, Hocking's transition to a personal God takes him into the realm of mysticism.

If mysticism is a unique way of grasping reality, even though it is eminently subjective, one is thereby asserting the categorical autonomy of philosophy and mysticism. Thus each would be a distinct universe of discourse. This would make the transition in Hocking's philosophy from the impersonal "Absolute" to a personal God an unwarranted illation, for it is precisely in this transition from the objective universe of discourse called philosophy that the mystic attributes " . . . to the objects of his experience some qualities which belong to his inner state."²⁵

The same problem of transition from philosophy to mysticism is found in Hocking's metaphysical system. Although Hocking's metaphysical system was foreshadowed in The Meaning of God in Human Experience, it was not fully developed until his Gifford Lectures in 1938 and 1939. In these lectures Hocking expounded on three metaphysical categories -- categories corresponding to the primary triadic relations that the self experiences; Other Mind, Nature, and Self. To the experience of all knowing selves corresponds the objective metaphysical category of "Destiny." But just as

25. loc. cit.

distinction was previously made between "Absolute" and God, depending on the philosophical or religious perspective of the observer, Hocking makes clear that "Destiny" is a religious perspective of God's Providence. He defines the "Destiny" of the human self as

. . . a Destiny for free souls, not a Fate -- a Destiny without predestination. It is a call to the finite creator, not to carry out a set of statutes, preordained, not to realize an ideal type, but to fill a need which is a world need, that meaning to be realized in his unique and factual situation, a contribution to the life of God, as the hidden meaning of creation ex nihilo.²⁶

"Destiny" refers then to the mystical call of God for his creatures to participate in the refashioning of his world. Just as the impersonal "Absolute" of philosophy is revealed as a personal "Thou" to the religious man, so the "Fate" of the philosopher is revealed as personal "Destiny" to the religious man. Thus the criticism of categorical inconsistency, which was applied to Hocking's use of the terms "Absolute" and God in the transition from philosophy to mysticism, can also be applied in this instance.

Hocking's replies to the various criticism leveled against his philosophy manifests a patience and candor rarely seen in the philosophical arena.²⁷ He often admitted his

26. William Ernest Hocking, "Fact, Field and Destiny": The Inductive Element in Metaphysics, "Review of Metaphysics", XI, 1958, p. 542.

27. D. S. Robinson, "Metaphysical Idealism," in Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World, p. 69.

inability to articulate what he terms mystical insights. Nevertheless, Hocking shows great skill as a dialectician. In his reply to the Krikorian criticism concerning the positing of a realm of super-nature and a reified "Whole Idea," Hocking parries the thrust of his critic by distinguishing different dimensions in man's concept of nature.²⁸ He appeared always ready to admit his errors with humility, seeming to consider his admissions to be a step toward truth rather than a failure to convince.

In sum, the criticism advanced against Hocking's philosophy in his work have been rather sharp; at times they appear to undercut the basic philosophical framework that Hocking constructed. However, in spite of the attempt at objectivity and the effort to use bias-free evaluative criteria, Professor Hocking would no doubt have had rejoinders to the criticisms. Also, many of the objections herein have their foundation in language analysis, and it is doubtful that Hocking would agree that words or even thought can contain the reality that lies open to the mind of man.

28. William Ernest Hocking, "Response to Professor Krikorian's Discussion," Journal of Philosophy, IV (March 19, 1958), pp. 275-280.

CHAPTER VII

AN EVALUATION OF HOCKING'S EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

The definition of educational philosophy has been a matter of controversy among educators for many years. This debate over the meaning of educational philosophy, however, is not at issue in this study. What is at issue here is the fact that philosophy and education are mutually reconstructive. They are, as Bruner and Burns note, ". . . means to one another, and ends; they are process and product."¹ Thus a philosophy of education is both the process and the product of posing meaningful questions and seeking intelligent answers to questions that deal primarily with the nature of reality, the criteria of knowledge, and the problems of value.²

Because of differing responses to these perennial questions, the various schools of educational philosophy such as realism, pragmatism, positivism, existentialism, and idealism come into being. How these individual schools of educational philosophy answer the key questions of

1. Charles J. Brauner and Herbert W. Burns, Problems in Education and Philosophy, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 20.

2. Ibid., p. 21.

philosophy is well documented in the literature.³ Moreover, the immediate relevancy of these schools of philosophy to education has also been well documented.⁴ However, in spite of the close connection between pure philosophy and educational practice, care must be taken that one does not draw immediate implications concerning educational practices totally from philosophical principles. The practical exigencies of classroom practice, as in the thought of Hocking, often generate educational principles that may not have a direct root in a specific systematic philosophy.

The various schools of education, which incorporate knowledge and principles garnered from the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology, continually strive to maintain an internal consistency with the general synthesizing principles of their respective philosophies. Yet, because of different philosophical assumptions, these schools of education remain incompatible with one another.

The mutual incompatibility of various educational philosophies poses a difficulty in forming criteria for evaluating any particular philosophy of education. This is because the criteria for knowledge or truth may differ

3. cf. George F. Kneller, Introduction to the Philosophy of Education, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), Chapter II.

4. For a detailed analysis of the ramifications of differing epistemologies, cf. June T. Fox, "Epistemology, Psychology, and Their Relevance for Education in Bruner and Dewey," in Educational Theory XIX (Winter, 1960), pp. 58-70.

from one system to another. The result, therefore, is often a struggle of philosophical assumptions and criteria vying for superiority. One of the intentions in this study is to obviate such ineffectual critical evaluation.

The task of this chapter is to analyze Hocking's answers to the basic questions of the nature of man, of mind, and of knowledge. This analysis, in turn, will be viewed in the context of Hocking's philosophical assumptions. The criteria for this evaluation will be the same universal norms that were used in the previous chapter. It should be noted, however, that these criteria are so general that only the more obvious of Hocking's logical inconsistencies and definitional failures can be examined here. These errors pertain to educational principles which flow primarily from his speculative thought. Some of Hocking's educational principles, however, such as his stress on manual training do not appear to be rooted in any specific philosophical assumptions. They are, therefore, to be considered as arising from classroom practice and, consequently, not incompatible with his ultimate educational goals. These educational principles cannot be considered logically inconsistent merely because they do not appear in his speculative philosophy.

The first criterion of evaluation to be applied to Hocking's educational thought is logical consistency. In

most areas of his educational philosophy, Hocking's ideas appear to be consistent with the assumptions of idealism. His philosophical premise that man is essentially a spiritual being, a dynamic, developing "will-to-power," is reflected in his general stress on moral education, religious training, and the development of character. The priority he gives to individuality rather than group activity, his emphasis on originality of thought rather than the mastering of factual knowledge, all tend to reflect his idealistic bias. Hocking's curriculum emphasis on the noble and the uplifting in history also reflects this same idealism. Further, Hocking's concept of the role of the teacher as an example to the child is consistent with his fundamental view of the latent capacities of the child that must be awakened by example and training.

In one instance, however, Hocking appears to violate the first canon of logical consistency. This seems to be in the case of his principle that the school is obliged to teach some religious belief or faith, but without dogma.⁵ This precept appears to be self-contradictory. For, if the term "dogma" is defined as a categorical assertion of a fact which cannot be subject to objective verification, then it is difficult to see how any religious faith could be taught in Hocking's sense of the term. Religion, as Hocking

5. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 33.

emphasized, has to have a strong cognitive element in order to survive. For example, in order for man to love God, he must know Him as Provident and Merciful. Consequently, in teaching a faith, specific qualities are attributed to God's nature. These are qualities which cannot be objectively verified. Thus to teach a religion without dogma appears to be a contradiction in terms and, therefore, logically inconsistent.

The second canon of evaluation, categorical compatibility, is difficult to apply to educational philosophy. The reason for this difficulty is that educational philosophy, as a discipline, incorporates judgments from speculative philosophy as synthesizing principles for other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology. For example, Hocking's stress on creativity assumes that creativity is a good in education. At first this may appear as a mixing of categories, the psychological and the axiological. However, this is not true, for educational philosophy is, by definition, a normative discipline which incorporates value judgments into its scope.

The canon of categorical compatibility is also difficult to apply to Hocking's educational thought because of his style of writing. Because he rarely bothered to define his terms, it is difficult to determine the frame of reference for the discourse he is using. Yet, in spite

of the problem of analyzing Hocking's categories, he clearly violates one rule of logic, reification.

The concept of reification is illustrated clearly in Gilbert Ryle's classical treatise, "The Ghost in the Machine." Ryle points out the temptation of conceiving mind as a substantial entity has led many philosophers into error. He shows how the concept of mind as a substantive is basically a fault of linguistic usage, a "category mistake."⁶ A particular type of behavior manifested in a specific circumstance may lead us to call this "intelligent behavior." It does not, however, allow us to infer the presence of a substantial entity from which this behavior emanates and to call that entity a "mind." Although Ryle's analysis has not found unanimous acceptance in philosophical circles, it might be sufficient to criticize Hocking under the title of the canon of categorical compatibility, specifically, the error of reification.

Nowhere in his writings does Hocking set out to prove the existence of a substantial entity called "mind." It may be directly inferred, however, from his writings on religion and the context of his education principles. First, Hocking's doctrine of will training seems to presuppose a substantial spiritual entity which somehow implicitly contains the will. For, ". . . the first

6. Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of the Mind, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), pp. 280-318.

task of education is to bring his [the child's] full will into existence."⁷ Secondly, Hocking's principles of mental discipline and "exercising the intellect" parallel the idea of the classical realist school of conceiving of mental discipline as both the process of logical inquiry and the product of that knowledge.⁸ Thus we may conclude that Hocking is an advocate of the substantial theory of the mind.

The third major criterion which can be critically applied to Hocking's educational thought is uniformity of definitional failure such as lack of clarity and failure to provide a specific reference in a generic, formal definition. These two infractions of the third canon of a discourse apply to Hocking's concepts of "basic human nature" and "thinking."

Hocking held that the essence of human nature was a "spiritual will-to-power." Although this concept belongs primarily to the realm of speculative philosophy, nevertheless, it does have certain implications for education. Hocking holds that education, if it is to effect the transformation of society by providing for "growth beyond the type," must provide an environment in which the spiritual

7. Hocking, Human Nature and Its Remaking, p. 258.

8. Robert M. Hutchins, The Higher Learning in America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 69.

nature of man can express itself in socially beneficial deeds. This need for expression, in turn, is basic to Hocking's concept of man.

There are two difficulties in Hocking's notion of "basic human nature." First, from the viewpoint of modern psychology, it is almost impossible to identify those characteristics of behavior which can be called "basic" or essential. At the least, modern psychology affirms the proposition that man's nature is plastic, subject to cultural conditioning. Hocking fails to clarify the meaning of "basic human nature," even if it is possible to do so. Secondly, at best his conception of man as a "spiritual will-to-power" might be taken as a persuasive definition. However, if this is the case, the rules of definition necessitate that specific criteria should be established by which "spirituality" and "will-to-power" can be identified. Consequently, both in failing to define "basic human nature" and in failing to establish criteria for identifying "spirituality" and "will-to-power," Hocking violates the second canon of definition.

Hocking fails to give specific criteria by which the objectives of his educational philosophy can be identified. For example, Hocking writes of the "spiritual will-to-power," finding its satisfaction in performing "socially beneficial deeds." Yet Hocking offers no criteria to distinguish beneficial deeds from non-beneficial ones. Rudolph Eichmann might have thought his work at Auschwitz was

socially beneficial to the German people. How are we to know otherwise? Without criteria, definitions are meaningless.

The same lack of clarity in definition, mainly due to an absence of identifying criteria, is found in Hocking's treatment of cognitive concepts. Formal education, in other words, is intended to teach children "how to think." Yet Hocking fails to state the criteria by which "thinking" can be identified. In the various contexts in which he used the term, it is sometimes synonymous with "learning" on an affective level; at other times, it seems to connote an abstractive process that might be gained through the study of mathematics. The precise meaning of "learning" and "abstract thinking" remain obscure. Hocking, or so it seems, made a point of defining the obscure by the more obscure.

The fourth canon of evaluation, conformity to ordinary specifications for language usage, is not a very meaningful category when applied to Hocking's educational thought. This is an interesting contrast to his speculative writings where the use of analogy and metaphor characterize his style. This change of style in his educational thought may be due to the fact that his educational theory was born out of the concrete situation of the classroom. Only on one occasion does he appear to construe the use of a technical

term, "learning by doing." And as was noted in a previous chapter, this use appears to be facetious.

The fifth canon, parsimony, is more relevant to a criticism of Hocking's educational thought. This is particularly true with respect to his theoretical model of the child's stages of interest. Although Hocking developed this model in detail, he did not make any practical use of it; consequently, it is superfluous. In elucidating his principle of "interest momentum," Hocking did not indicate any use of his model. Further, he at times appears to contradict himself. For example, he states that the ". . . mentality of a child is a continuous reaching beyond its 'age group'. . . ."9 This would suggest that the stages of interest are irrelevant. Hence Hocking appears to violate the law of parsimony in elaborating the elements of his educational theory.

In summary, it can be seen that the major area for criticism of Hocking's educational thought lies in his failure to define clearly the meaning of his terms. Although Hocking violates all of the canons of logic, nevertheless, much of his thought is actually very consistent. His educational principles are in fundamental harmony with his basic assumptions concerning the issues of nature, the world, and man. Moreover, Hocking's experiment at Shady

9. Hocking, Varieties, Part I, p. 29.

Hill School became a paradigm for innovative education. His essentialist notions on education in a creative atmosphere stand out in brilliant contrast to the progressive educational currents of his time. Finally, Hocking's concern for the esthetics of learning was an original and important contribution to educational thought. Although Hocking's educational philosophy was not written with the rigors of logical analysis, nevertheless, it is a brilliant product of an intuitive mind, a practical philosophy concerned with creating a better world through education.

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