The Social Dimension of Mysticism: A Study of the Meaning and Structure of Religious Experience in the Philosophy of William Ernest Hocking

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THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF MYSTICISM:
A STUDY OF THE MEANING AND STRUCTURE
OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

by
Richard J. Woods, O.P.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

May 1978
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To attempt to comprehend even a single theme in the thought of a philosopher, especially one whose interests were as extensive as his career was long, approaches the bounds of presumption. This study represents an effort to delineate the major outlines of Hocking's position regarding the meaning and structure of mystical experience as he slowly and carefully formulated it in his numerous writings and addresses. As such, and despite its deficiencies, it is a tribute to a man who stood at the crossroads of philosophical and theological controversies surrounding mysticism and who, despite strong opposition, succeeded in resolving several major difficulties raised by the tension between mysticism and social concern.

Hocking himself has passed from the world scene. But I hope and believe that his contributions to the study of religion will become more widely known. It is to that end that I dedicate this study to his memory. I wish to express my deep gratitude to my director, Dr. Robert Barry, and to my advisors, Dr. Francis Catania and Rev. Robert Harvanek, S.J., for their patient guidance and inspiration despite demands on them from several quarters. I would like to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to Sir Alister Hardy, founder and first director of the Religious Experience Re-
search Unit at Oxford, and to Mr. Edward Robinson, its present director, for their interest and co-operation in my studies of religious experience. Finally, I wish to express profound thanks to my family and friends, who have so long borne with my projects and without whose support I would have long since wearied of the task: Rev. Jerome O'Leary, O.P., Rev. Daniel McGuire, O.P., Sr. Laurian Pieterek, F.S.P.A., Mr. Daniel O'Meara, Bro. Denny Broussard, O.F.M., Miss Melissa Siebert, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hutt, and especially my parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Woods, and my brother, Dr. James Woods, Jr.
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of Love (1977) and two anthologies, Heterodoxy (1974) and
The Pastoral Dimension (1977), co-edited with Rev. Jerome
O'Leary, O.P.
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vi
INTRODUCTION

I. HOCKING AND THE PROBLEM OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

If few philosophers have so continuously and thoroughly addressed themselves to the meaning and structure of mysticism as did William Ernest Hocking, philosophical concern with mysticism is nevertheless common and even traditional. The mere volume of literature on the subject testifies adequately to its availability for philosophical investigation.\(^1\) This should not be surprising if philosophy can

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be described as the interpretation of the whole of human experience and once mysticism is granted a place in the full range of experience. Moreover, mysticism is an appropriate subject for philosophical exploration in so far as the mystics themselves can be considered philosophers since they, too, as Hocking maintained, interpret the meaning of human experience as a whole. 

Hocking's particular importance regarding the philosophical study of mysticism lies first, I believe, in his articulation of the fundamental structure of all human experience as a triadic, theistically-grounded relation, "I-It-Thou," which is brought to full awareness in mystical experience. Further, his perception of the necessary con-


nection between authentic mysticism and social action constituted a distinctive and original contribution to the study of religion. For although noted by Underhill and others as a function of heightened compassion, Hocking was first to account for the mystic's activity as a structurally integral phase completing a social process involving his withdrawal from the world, a systematic re-evaluation of the beliefs, goals and values of his society, and his return to the world better equipped to contribute significantly to social development.

Like James, Underhill and others, Hocking described the mystic's motivation in terms of compassion, which resulted from a deep realization of the unity of all human beings. But by articulating the meaning and structure of mystical experience in terms of both social process and individual psychology as complementary aspects of a unified system of development, Hocking went far beyond his contemporaries and even later commentators such as Marcel, Buber, Harts-horne and more recent authors.

Hocking's account, while largely an original achievement, also incorporated the major elements of classical mystical theology -- particularly the interplay of action and contemplation and the progressive development of mystical experience through successive stages. Here, too, Hocking went beyond contemporary accounts first, by refusing to sub-
ordinate either action or contemplation to each other and, second, by showing that progressive development was no less characteristic of the emergence of mysticism in historical religions than it is of its manifestation in individual instances.

In accomplishing this agenda, Hocking had to struggle against a conception of mysticism as a subjective cultivation of emotion and a form of social escapism which had gained it the opprobrium of Protestant orthodoxy for over a century. He also opposed the notion common to much Catholic opinion which divorced the mystical element of religion from the ordinary course of spiritual development. Against these views, Hocking argued that mysticism and social (i.e., prophetic) action are not opposed in principle but are, rather, successive stages of a single process in time. He likewise maintained that the mystical experience of union with God completed the course of spiritual development as the full expression of religious experience. Hocking further upheld the metaphysical validity of accounts of mystical experience against psychologistic and other interpretations which attempted to reduce such experience to "interior" mental or emotional events devoid of objective referential value.

1. Fundamental Issues

In this study I shall argue that despite recent objections, Hocking's account of the meaning and structure of
mystical experience was fundamentally cogent and correct. The principal elements of his case as I shall present it can be summarized as follows:

1. All experience is radically intersubjective as well as objective in origin. That is, the fundamental structure of experience can be adequately described as a reciprocal triadic relationship of "I, It and Thou" -- the Self, the natural and social World, and Other Selves. Further, this "nuclear experience," as the basis of all further experience, is itself grounded in a unifying theistic field.¹

2. Thus, all experience is fundamentally and at least implicitly religious; reciprocally, all explicit religious experience is intrinsically social, a further development of both the intersubjective and objective relations of nuclear experience as perceived in the context of the bond between the self and God.² This is to say that for Hocking

¹Hocking did not use the term "intersubjective" to describe the "I-Thou" dimension of nuclear or explicit experience before 1920. As used in this dissertation, intersubjective as opposed to social refers to the qualitatively distinct "I-Thou" relationship between human selves or between the human self and God in which the "other" is addressed directly, that is, vocatively. Intersubjectivity also includes the "consubjective" we-consciousness of true communal experience, which may in fact embody the most profound form of personal union and is certainly an essential moment in the experience of sharing a common world. Cf. "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 14 (June, 1954), pp. 58 - 9; hereafter referred to as "MGIM."

²By implicit I mean inherent or contained within the nature of something, to be involved in something but not in
religious experience is the explicit development of the theistic relationship grounding all human experience.

3. Mysticism, as the practice of union with God in direct and immediate experience, represents the full development of religious experience. As such it is the explicit manifestation of the "deep" theistic and social structure underpinning all experience, eventuating not only in a heightened awareness of God's presence, but also in more effective social action. Thus mystical experience, epitomizing all experience, is social in expression as well as in origin.

These fundamental themes will be addressed in chapters I through III below. In the concluding chapter, I shall compare Hocking's account of mystical experience with those of his contemporaries as well as those of more recent writers in order to evaluate his interpretation of the social dimension of mysticism.

an open or manifest way. By explicit I mean precisely expressed, clear and evident. By explicitation I mean the process by which that which is implicit is made explicit or manifest, i.e., clearly apparent, obvious. In terms of actual process, development means approximately the same thing. The terms "latent" or "virtual" will be used in approximately the same sense as implicit, i.e., to mean something present as a potential but not manifest, and, with regard to virtual, something existing in essence or effect but not in actual fact or form. This usage is based on The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 1971, compact ed.) and The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Dell Pub. Co., 1970). Hereafter the former will be referred to as OED. For instances of this usage, cf. Hocking, The Meaning of God in Human Experience (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963 ed.), pp. 16, 303; hereafter referred to as MGHE.
Recently, several objections have been brought against Hocking's conception of mysticism concerning its character both as an experience of the presence of God and as the full development of the "nuclear experience" grounding all actual experiences. To begin with, Hocking consistently maintained that in religious experience and especially in its mystical expression God is not only directly but also immediately apprehended.¹ But it has been strenuously argued, for instance by John E. Smith, that all experience must be mediated, that is, interpreted, to be meaningful at all. This seemingly precludes immediacy, especially absolute immediacy, as a quality of an experience of God or anything else if it is to be meaningful.² Hocking's understanding of mystical experience, immediacy, or both, is thereby called

¹ In his magnum opus, Hocking wrote, for instance, "God has a presponsiveness of his own, and herein lies the immediate experience of the personality of God." (HGHE 336.) In an essay from his "middle period," he similarly contended that "Man has (or can have) an immediate awareness of God, from which fact he perceives that he is under obligation and must live his life in careful listening to the voice of duty." ("The Mystical Spirit," Protestantism: A Symposium, William K. Anderson, ed. [Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969], p. 190; hereafter referred to as "MS.") In one of his last works, he likewise maintained that "If we ask him how he can be certain, the mystic refers us to that which is always better than proof, immediate experience." (The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience [Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973], pp. 213 – 14; hereafter referred to as MIHE.)

into question.¹

I shall argue in this study that Hocking's claim that mysticism involves an immediate as well as direct experience of God is not only intrinsic to his doctrine but is defensible in light of Smith's critique and fully consonant with the traditional understanding of mystical experience. I shall attempt to show, moreover, how Hocking in fact not only anticipated but surpassed Smith's critique of absolute immediacy.

It has also been claimed by Hocking's major commentator, Leroy Rouner, that mystical experience is essentially "extraordinary," an "esoteric, specialized vision,"² and since "the whole point of Hocking's 'mysticism' is precisely its ordinariness,"³ Hocking himself "remains an outsider to the mystic vision,"⁴ and mysticism "remains an illustra-

¹In her dissertation on Hocking, Sr. Mary E. Giegen-gack thus maintains that "God can be experienced, not immediately, but directly, in experiences of nature, of duty and of human love, and can be known to exist as the condition for the possibility of such experiences." (Mary Elizabeth Giegen-gack, O.S.U., Can God Be Experienced? A Study in the Philosophy of Religion of William Ernest Hocking [Dissertation, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1971], "Abstract," p. 4.


³Rouner, WHE 241.

⁴Rouner, WHE 242.
tion of Hocking's point, not the substance. ¹

Against this position, I shall argue that mystical experience, as Hocking himself expressly taught, is the natural extension and fullest expression of ordinary experience, differing in degree rather than in kind, and is thus a common element in everyman's experience. Further, because of the common and ordinary character of mystical experience, Hocking himself can and should be considered a mystic, inasmuch as his religious experience as he reported it adequately fulfills the requirements he established for authentic mysticism. These requirements are, moreover, fully in accord with the classical Western tradition of Christian mysticism. Hocking, I contend, can also be shown to have admitted being a mystic, if somewhat indirectly.

Hocking's status as a mystic is not peripheral to the present study. For, first, if Rouner's position is correct, then Hocking's understanding of mysticism as a common and ordinary aspect of experience must be in error, for the two views are directly contradictory. Second, if Hocking was not a mystic, then in so far as his understanding of mysticism was, as I shall show, based on his own experi-

ence, he was to that extent mistaken. Third, in so far as Hocking also based his case for the common and ordinary character of mystical experience on the classical tradition of Western and Eastern mysticism, either his reading of these traditions or Rouner's claims must be considered suspect.¹

Whether being a mystic is a necessary condition for philosophizing about mystical experience is a moot point. William James philosophized eloquently about mysticism but more or less denied that he was a mystic.² Similarly, in his study of mysticism, Bertrand Russell discouraged any conjecture as to possible mystical leanings.³ Walter Stace


²James, op. cit., p. 292.

³Russell, op. cit., p. 16.
also disclaims any mystical pretensions in his study. 1

Fritz Staal, a recent commentator on the philosophical study of mysticism, holds, conversely, that some mystical experience is probably necessary for a proper understanding of the meaning of mysticism. 2 Ben-Ami Scharfstein makes a similar if softer case for understanding mysticism from within. 3 Asher Moore, writing in a recent issue of The Monist, likewise comments, "Mysticism is indeed ineffable to a degree that is not true of most philosophies. To an extent, it cannot be judged without entering its world." 4

In view of such conflicting opinions, my position is that any genuine understanding of a phenomenon requires some experience of it, that is, in James' terms, "knowledge of," not merely "knowledge about." To understand mysticism fully, one would need to be a mystic. To understand mysti-

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1 Stace, op. cit., p. 6.

2 Fritz Staal, Exploring Mysticism (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 125. But see p. 126: "... one need not be a mystic in order to study mysticism; but one might have to become one...."

3 "...mystical experience, or something quite close to it, characterizes every intense effort to create, including that of the scientist who analyzes and theorizes anxiously in order to solve an impersonal problem which has somehow become personal to him. By means of the solution, he arrives at a simultaneous outer and inner harmony. Perhaps our very desire to understand mysticism in its breadth and depth is tinged with a mystical hope." (Mystical Experience [Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1973], p. 2.)

cism adequately, one would need to have had at least some mystical experience. But with Hocking I believe that this experience is always at hand, in every waking of the mind to truth, beauty and goodness.\footnote{Cf. The Coming World Civilization (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), pp. 101, 208; hereafter referred to as CWC.} But this is to say in effect that mystical experience is indeed common and ordinary. Consequently, I would add, also with Hocking, that the metaphysics of mysticism must be assessed according to the ordinary canons of reason and experience.\footnote{Cf. MIHE 216. Cf. also "Illicit Naturalizing of Religion," The Journal of Religion, 3 (1923), p. 589; hereafter referred to as "INR."} The mystic has no special claim on our assent to his vision of reality.
II. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Hocking's Approach to Religious Experience and Mysticism

In treating religious and mystical experience, Hocking's method was eclectic but highly distinctive, being variously empirical, phenomenological, pragmatic, dialectical and hermeneutical. With respect to his empiricism, first, Hocking was profoundly respectful of ordinary human experience and the ability of the common man to grasp the meaning of that experience. He was thus unwilling to concede to psychologists in particular the last word in evaluating experience, especially inasmuch as there was a common tendency on the part of psychologists at the turn of the century (James almost exclusively excepted) to reduce religious experience to its psycho-physiological components. Hocking found Leuba's influential writings particularly objectionable in this respect. Nevertheless, he also felt free to draw on psychological studies of the mystics by clinicians and physiologists such as DeMontmorand, Delacroix, Murisier, James, Starbuck and even Leuba himself on occasion.

Hocking's earliest writings on mysticism were themselves concerned with psychological aspects of experience,

but from the outset he applied to mystical experience a descriptive analysis similar to those of later, more overtly phenomenological researchers. However, unlike his mentor, Husserl, Hocking did not employ the ontologically suspensive epoché. Epistemologically he was thus more a moderate realist than an idealist, maintaining throughout his career the real (extra-mental) existence of objects of experience. Hence his tendency to take the mystics seriously with respect to their reported experiences not only of God but also of the world. Here again, Hocking's rather radical empiricism was evident.¹

The pragmatic element in Hocking's method exercised an almost exclusively negative function, looking to results in living to assess the reality as well as the worth of the mystic's experience: "That which does not work is not true."² As he explained in his magnum opus,

if a theory has no consequences, or bad ones; if it makes no difference to men, or else undesirable differences; if it lowers the capacity of men to meet the stress of existence, or diminishes the worth to them of what existence they have; such a theory is somehow false, and we have no peace until it is remedied. I will even go farther, and say that a theory is false if it is not interesting: a proposition that falls on the mind so dully as to excite no enthusiasm has not attained the level of truth....³

While rejecting pragmatic criteria as a positive in-

¹ Cf. MGHE xxvff., 215 - 16, 229.
² MGHE xxiii.
³ Ibid. Cf. also TP 91.
indicator of truth, it seems not to have occurred to Hocking that even a "negative pragmatism" entailed a positive pragmatism. Nevertheless, although he never repudiated his doctrine of negative pragmatism, it found fewer and fewer references in his writings as time went on. Yet he continued to search for practical verification of mystical theories in the lived experience of individuals and societies.

Although keenly analytical, Hocking considered a primarily analytical method infertile, "preliminaries to preliminaries." As a reflection of his chief metaphysical thematic, the tension between the universal and the particular (the whole and the part), his method stressed induction and synthesis -- the logical movement from a grasp of the relations among the parts to the meaning of the whole. Thus, Hocking's method was above all dialectical or "cumulatively inductive," loving from thesis to antithesis toward a new thesis synthe-

1 Cf. "MS" 188.

2 Hocking also maintained that meaning "descended" from the whole to the parts. Hence deduction had a place in his methodology. Overall, the meaning of experience as well as the philosophical method by which experience is interpreted involve both induction and deduction related as alternating phases, i.e., dialectically. Methodologically, deduction alone remains hypothetical, presupposing the meaning of the whole. Empirically, however, the meaning of the whole must be discovered and verified by inductive stages which lead to the formation of new hypotheses and require testing. Thus, deduction represents the heart of scientific method but logically and metaphysically it is preceded and followed by induction. The hypothetical-deductive element is thus only a part of the empirical method both in science and in any philosophy which honors empirical experience. Cf. MGHE 408-09, 475-77; TF 295ff.
sizing both, much as life itself as he saw it was an on-going process involving cumulative stages which permitted advancement according to a "law" of alternation. Growth and development by means of positive and negative reciprocation became a leit-motif of Hocking's investigation of mysticism, being manifest especially in his "principle of alternation" and in his original interpretation of the mystic's "negative path." But his dialectical method was not slavishly Hegelian despite the evident influence of Hegel upon his thought and method.

Finally, Hocking's method was to a large extent hermeneutical -- relying on the interpretation and evaluation of texts composed by mystics and their commentators in both Western and Oriental traditions. While less thorough than many later scholars of comparative religion and while not as inclined to examine critically his theory of interpretation as might be expected today, Hocking continued a tradition begun in America perhaps by Emerson and carried on by Royce. He also anticipated the further development of religious hermeneutics by scholars such as Wach, Eliade, Ricoeur, Kitagawa and others.

2. Method in This Study

Hocking's disdain for rigidly systematic approaches to philosophical problems, his skill in describing human phenomena and as a dialectician, no less than his fluent lit-
erary style, still challenge the student eager to analyze and assess his thought. For it is first necessary to expose that thought in its barer outlines, shorn of fine statement and subtle detail. Accordingly, considerable attention is necessarily given in this study to textual exegesis — the attempt to discover what Hocking in fact taught over his long career and whether, for example, there are thematic undercurrents which occasionally surface but which nevertheless represent a dominant trend in his thinking. Second, a large part of the presentation involves hermeneutics — the attempt to fathom what Hocking meant, especially given conflicting opinions about his teachings, and to determine whether his doctrine remained consistent and coherent despite the intermittent character of his writings on mysticism. There is, third, an effort to analyze and evaluate the relevant elements of Hocking's teachings thus exposed in terms of cogency and validity. The expository sections of this study thus serve to provide material for argumentation, that is, for the purpose of demonstrating not only why but how Hocking was correct (or incorrect) in his appraisal of mysticism.

In many respects this approach resembles Hocking's own methodology, which is not wholly coincidental. Nevertheless, there are important differences, particularly the effort of this study to organize many scattered references thematically, to interpret earlier formulations in the light of later, more carefully articulated versions, and to con-
and compare relevant issues in Hocking's treatment with those of other standard authorities. Further, whereas Hocking was intent to discover the meaning of God in human experience by a descriptive analysis of religion and mystical experience, I intend to explore and evaluate the implications of his teachings on mysticism with regard to the metaphysical structures of experience itself.\(^1\) Overall, I con-

\(^1\)That religious and especially mystical experience are subjects common to both the philosophy and theology of religion warrants explanation inasmuch as the present study, although philosophical, nevertheless relies on theological sources to some extent.

A philosophical approach to religion differs from that of theology. Fundamentally, the theologian considers other religions from the privileged viewpoint of faith in a specific religious belief-system. That is, despite a common object in the material sense and even formally, the viewpoint of the theologian (objectum formale quo) is determined by an antecedent commitment to the truth of a particular understanding of revelation, whether this be Christian or something else and regardless of whether this perspective admits or rejects the possibility of religious truth in other traditions. Thus, for a Christian theologian, faith in Jesus Christ as the definitive revelation of God and the truth of the human situation predetermines any judgment about the content or validity of all religious experience and particular religions themselves, Christianity itself included. Catholic and Protestant viewpoints differ of course from one another and even among themselves.

A Christian philosophy of religion differs essentially from theology mainly in that the pre-commitment to a particularly Christian interpretation of experience is, in the Husserlian sense, "bracketed." The Christian philosopher of religion, while no less committed than the theologian to faith in Jesus Christ and all which that entails, does not investigate either Christianity itself or other religions under that precise formality but with regard to aspects intelligible from a common human viewpoint including empirical origin, meaning, structure, coherence, consistency, historical influence, effects, etc. Here the philosopher more closely resembles the social scientist who studies religion than he
elude that Hocking's case for the intrinsic sociality and commonness of mysticism and mystical experience is based on and inevitably points to the intrinsic intersubjective openness of human experience itself and its groundedness in an implicit dialogue with God as the personal Field of all experience.

does the theologian as such. And like scientific material, theological statements can be incorporated into a philosophical treatment of an issue without thereby compromising the freedom of philosophical inquiry in so far as the philosopher suspends or "brackets" the faith commitment presupposed by the theologian qua believer.
III. HOCKING'S PLACE IN THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITION

As a student of Peirce, Royce and James, and as the teacher of a generation of philosophers including Charles Hartshorne, Marvin Farber, Dorion Cairns, Henry Nelson Wieman and others, Hocking well represents the continuity of the American philosophical tradition. As a student for a brief time, then a life-long friend of Edmund Husserl, and as a major influence on his "disciple," Gabriel Marcel, Hocking also represents a vital link between American and European thought in this century.¹ His philosophical concern can be seen in this light as an attempt to synthesize elements of idealism and pragmatism with those of phenomenology and existentialism. Whether called "objective idealism,"² "widened empiricism,"³ or "realistic mysticism,"⁴ Hocking's philosophy is a richly complex, dialectical meta-

²TP 178, 314.
³"FEDLU" 7.
⁴Living Religions and a World Faith (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 7; hereafter referred to as LRWF.
physic of experience, similar in many respects to that of his friend but frequent philosophical opponent, John Dewey.¹

Hocking's philosophy is remembered especially with regard to its idealistic aspect, an element partly inherited from Royce, but which was ultimately Hocking's own creation. His interest in mysticism has often been identified with this strand of idealism, overlooking its prior and equal source in James' influence and personal experience. Underlying all, however, was a personal sensitivity to the meaning of God in human experience which determined Hocking's career as an exponent of mysticism.

1. The Context: Prophecy and Mysticism

Hocking's attempt to formulate a theory of mysticism consonant with the American philosophical tradition involved him in an effort to undercut a prevalent view in America and Europe which held mysticism to be opposed in principle to the socially-active, prophetic character of Christianity.² His thesis, and the occasion of his clashes


with neo-orthodox theologians, affirmed the dynamic identity of mysticism and prophecy, that is, that the meaning and structure of mystical experience were radically social. For in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the idea of prophecy was identified by Protestant theologians with social activism and reform. This understanding was characteristic, for instance, of the "Social Gospel" as set

1 Hocking's definition of meaning and structure are as elusive as those of any of his basic categories. Looking to his usage, he apparently took meaning to mean "intention" or "purpose," and sometimes "significance" or "idea." Thus, at least something of the nature of experience can be discovered by attending to its function, for "The most fundamental explanation of anything will be the function it serves." ("A World View," Preface to Philosophy, William P. Tolley, ed. [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946], p. 474; hereafter referred to as "WV.") The particular locus of meaning is the relation between the part and the whole, how "it all hangs together." Meaning, Hocking was fond of saying, descends from the whole to the parts and ascends from the parts to the whole. Meaning moves and grows. (Cf. MIHE 110, 142. On meaning and intending, cf. Human Nature and Its Remaking [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923 ed.], pp. 41, 57; hereafter referred to as HNR. Cf. also Man and the State [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926], p. 370; hereafter referred to as MS. Cf. also "WDPS" 35, MIHE 162. As a relation between the whole and the part, cf. "Religion of the Future," Religion and Modern Life, L. B. R. Briggs, ed. [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927], p. 355; hereafter referred to as "RF." Cf. also "DCEN" 230, MIHE 110-12, "Man's Cosmic Status," The Search for America, Huston Smith, ed. [Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959], p. 161; hereafter referred to as "MCS." For the movement of meaning, cf. "WDPS" 36 and "MCS" 161.) In general, structure means "The mutual relation of constituent parts or elements of a whole as determining its peculiar nature or character...." (OED, 3104.) In the present context, structure can be taken to mean an integral, self-regulating system of transformations, here following the thought of Piaget. (Cf. Jean Piaget, Structuralism, Channah Maschler, trans. [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970], pp. 5 - 7.)
forth by Walter Rauschenbusch, a disciple of Ritschl and Troeltsch, and refined by Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr.\(^1\) It was no less associated with the neo-orthodox movement inaugurated by Karl Barth and continued by Emil Brunner and Hendrik Kraemer, the latter's *Christian Faith in a Non-Christian World* (1938) being directed squarely against Hocking's position.\(^2\)

The fundamental opposition between the prophetic character of Christianity and mysticism, according to the neo-orthodox point of view, entails an essential conflict between the historical, contingent, this-worldly but ultimately trans-cultural nature of the Christian mission and the timeless, absolute, other-worldly and Hellenistic nature attributed to mystical religion.\(^3\) With regard to social reform, this opposition is experienced as a tension between involvement and escape. With regard to faith and salvation, however, prophetic action was held to rely chiefly


\(^3\) Cf. A. Léonard, "Studies in the Phenomena of Mystical Experience," *Mystery and Mysticism* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1956), p. 72: "The mystic and the prophet are not only two irreconcilable religious types, but are representatives of two human tendencies that it is impossible to harmonize: philosophy and religion."
on God's grace and initiative, whereas mystical quietism represented a subtle dependence on "works," being a merely human endeavor to reach God.

Hocking's contention that mysticism and prophetic action can be reconciled, being in effect complementary stages within a unified process, thus involved him in a head-on collision with some of the most influential theologians of his time. While in many respects Hocking's view in fact came to prevail, some contemporary scholars such as Ninian Smart continue to oppose prophecy to mysticism.¹

2. The Historical Background

Despite the long-standing liberal bias against mysticism in Protestant thought and its general neglect or even suspect character in Catholic theology following the Quietism controversies at the end of the seventeenth century, interest in mysticism was undergoing a renaissance in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century, just as Hocking was entering Harvard. This renewed interest and the subsequent reaction against it both had their antecedents in the Romantic movement, particularly in Germany and England in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The names most closely identified with the antithetical positions regarding mysticism at this time are those of Schleiermacher and Troeltsch.

¹See below, pp. 360 - 64.
Friedrich Schleiermacher perhaps gave first voice philosophically to the Romantic interest in mystical aspects of religion in his revolutionary Reden über die Religion (1799). Sensitive to Kant's anti-rationalistic rejection of any speculative knowledge of God, Schleiermacher developed a theory of religious experience based on the priority of feeling: if God could not be known, he could at least be felt. Thus, human awareness of God was conceived of as a fundamentally aesthetic response, a feeling of total dependence. Refined by generations of disciples, particularly by Rudolf Otto, this pietistic conception of religious experience has survived to the present.

Positions antithetical to Schleiermacher's were not long in forthcoming, especially in Germany. A particularly sharp rejoinder was delivered by Albert Ritschl, whose Die Christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung (1870 - 1874) postulated a strong dichotomy between biblical faith and any form of "natural religion" or mysticism, which he claimed were Hellenistic incursions into pristine Christianity.

This view of mysticism, which set it over against the prophetic elements of the Christian faith, was shared by Ritschl's great disciples, Wilhelm Herrmann, Adolf Harnack and Ernst Troeltsch. The latter was especially influential in the theological schools of turn-of-the-century America.
Nevertheless a case for mysticism won a limited hearing in America mainly because of the prestige of its students and defenders, notably William James, James Leuba, Rufus Jones, Hocking and his friend Charles Bennett.¹ But overall, the climate of scholarly opinion in the United States remained less congenial to mysticism than was that of Europe. Royce's ultimate, if regretful, rejection of mysticism was indeed more characteristic of the Harvard of Palmer, Münsterberg and Santayana than were James' and Hocking's defenses of it.² This may account for some of the subsequent neglect of Hocking's work, as noted, for instance, by Marcel,³ as well as for the failure of James' research to inspire a continuing investigation of religious experience.

Hocking's writings on mysticism thus did not appear in a neutral setting, but rather one charged with deeply felt issues and lively debate. How Hocking responded to this situation, coming to it already convinced of the fundamental rightness of the mystic's vision, can best be seen


in terms of his own development as a philosopher of religion and, in fact, a mystic. For it was in the light of his own experience that Hocking discovered the importance of the classical mystical tradition, obscured by two centuries of reaction. But his own experience was reciprocally illuminated by the writings of the world's great mystics. Significantly, however, Hocking appealed for support not only to his own experience and to that of the great mystics, but also to the experience of "everyman," which he believed to be the foundation of both.
IV. HOCKING'S DIALECTICAL DEVELOPMENT

From the relatively scant information available concerning Hocking's childhood, it seems clear that his religious experience began at a very early age. His parents were devout Methodists, and young Ernest grew up in a household permeated by a strong sense of faith and duty. Rouner recounts a crucial "conversion experience" at a prayer meeting when Hocking was twelve, quoting Hocking's remembrance of the event seventy-three years later:

Hocking did not long remember what the evangelist said in his sermon, nor was he very much aware at the time. But there was, he said, "a presence felt, a reality perceived" which was beyond the details of the service and including them. When the call came to "come down and be saved," this boy of twelve -- tears streaming down his face -- suddenly saw things "in a new light." He saw "the real," in a way which "combined a new resolve with a new insight." He saw himself as part of a "great procession of humanity in which each man had an immortal soul." He had a vision, as he puts it, of "men like souls walking."

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2 Rouner, PRCWC 10.

3 Rouner, WHE 2. Rouner adds, "The effects of this experience -- probably his most important 'mystical' experience -- lasted two or three days. He reports no great excitement, but a tremendous sense of relief and the assurance that he had broken through to a significant new perception. It led to his joining the Methodist Church." Cf. also PRCWC 10 - 11.
Whether or not this event conforms to the accepted pattern of "mystical" experiences, Hocking was nevertheless possessed thereafter of what he later called "the mystic's sense of the universe." This view was severely shaken, however, when Hocking came into contact with the writings of Herbert Spencer a year later. Several years of disillusionment followed, during which, however, he experienced another "mystical" insight into immortality. Hocking's powerful description of this episode, while long, not only illustrates his own experience, but also represents the almost prosaic kind of ordinary life-events that occasion mystical experience:

The time is 1892, more or less. The scene is the right-of-way of a single track railroad, between Aurora, Illinois, and Waukegan.... It is a summer day. A lone figure carrying a pot of white paint and a brush, stoops every 100 feet to cover a chalk mark on the inside of the rail with a vertical line of paint, and every 500 feet to paint a number. The crew of the civil engineering department are measuring the track of the railway for inventory purposes. The chalk markers, with the steel tape, have moved ahead of the painter, who doesn't mind being alone. He has become interested in the numbers.

He is, at this moment, in a cut. The banks rise on either side of him above his eye level; the breeze is shut off; the heat is oppressive. The only sounds

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1 "SSP" 388.
are the humming of insects and the occasional nervous flutter of a disturbed grasshopper's wings. The painter is painting the number 1800. He is amused to note the possibility of putting this number series into one-to-one correspondence with the years of the century. He begins to supply the numbers with events, at first bits of history -- Civil War and family background. This imaginary living-through-past-time becomes as real an experience as the rail-painting, and far more exciting! 1865, 1870 -- suddenly 1873, my birth year: "Hello! Hocking is here!" Every mark, from now on, numbered or not, is entangled with personal history. But very soon, 1892, the present: the painter's story and the actual story coincide: I paint the Now! From this point, memory is dismissed; it gives place to anticipation, dream, conjecture -- there is something relentless in the on-moving of these numbers, to be filled with something -- but with what? 1893 -- will it be the new Chicago University? 1900 -- where shall I be? 1950, fairly old, very likely gone. 1973, a hundred years from my birth -- surely gone: "Good-by, Hocking!" I see myself as dead, the nothingness of non-being sweeps over me. I have been for four years an ardent disciple of Herbert Spencer, unhappily but helplessly convinced that man is as the animals; the race moves on, the individual perishes, the living something has become -- nothing; "And not the pillow at your cheek So Slumbereth." For the first time I realize, beyond the mere clack of words, the blankness of annihilation. And no doubt, just because of this swift sense of no-sense, the shock was intense as I realized, with the same swiftness, that it was I, as surviving, who looked upon myself as dead, that it had to be so, and that because of this, annihilation can be spoken of, but never truly imagined. This was not enough to free me from the spell of Spencer, but it cracked that spell: the rest of the day was spent in a new lightness of heart, as I had come upon a truth that was not to leave me. I was glad to be alone.¹

This "crack" in Spencer's spell was subsequently widened and Hocking's youthful confidence in the mystical vision of the world restored by his reading James' Principles of Psychology while an engineering student at Iowa State

¹MIHE 213 - 14.
College in 1894, when he was twenty-one. Hocking later related that

I cannot say what its argumentative value was at the time; it proved nothing, so far as I recall— it was merely a release; it left all the systematic work to do. But it irrigated certain tracts that had become desert. I began to regain confidence that the mystic's sense of the universe is in substance a true sense, quite apart from his theological symbols. I was sure that the real world is more like the world of James' imagination than like that of Spencer's, and from that time it became my first business to define the difference and to capture some rational account of it.¹

Hocking was so impressed by James that he resolved to go to Harvard.² Once there, however, he found not James, who was in Scotland for his Gifford Lectures, but rather Josiah Royce, whose critical-skeptical interest in mysticism stimulated the young Hocking's imagination further. But James' return to Harvard in 1903, the manuscript of The Varieties of Religious Experience in hand, provided the occasion for Hocking to pass beyond the critique of theoretical mysticism inspired by Royce.³ Having begun to realize that the active non-ego of our experience must also be a self, he recognized in it

¹ "SSP" 388.
² Cf. Rouner, WHE 7f., PRCWC 14f.
³ Cf. "Lectures on Recent Trends in American Philosophy," Scripps College Bulletin, 16 (1941), p. 11; hereafter referred to as "LRT."
the Absolute of Royce's teaching. But I also recognized it as the object of that mystic experience whose significance James had begun to do justice to. With this identification, a great strand of speculative and religious tradition could be interpreted and saved for human as well as philosophic uses. Royce's dominantly negative attitude towards mysticism, which he so profoundly interpreted, becomes unnecessary.¹

It was thus in reconceiving mysticism that Hocking began to reconcile elements of James' and Royce's antipodal philosophies, creating in the process an original interpretation, indeed a mystical philosophy of human experience.

Hocking's overall interpretation of mysticism, the outcome of a life-long reworking of positions first articulated in 1912, can be divided roughly into three periods, following Rouner's suggestion regarding important shifts in his thinking.² The first period extends from 1904, the year of his dissertation, to 1918, when Hocking published his second major work, Human Nature and Its Remaking. The "middle" period will be taken to span the years between 1920 and the publication of Living Religions and a World Faith in 1940. The final period falls between 1940 and 1966, the year of his death.

1. Hocking's Early Period: 1904 - 1918

The most influential event of Hocking's early career was his marriage to Agnes Boyle O'Reilly in 1905. Not only

¹"SSP" 392 - 93.
²Cf. Rouner, WHE 188, 239 - 40.
Hocking dedicate his magnum opus to her, "an unfailing source of insight," she was in no small way responsible for much of its content and eventual "shape." Even more fundamentally, in their love Hocking realized the truth of his most important insight -- that the isolation of individuals is a metaphysical illusion. All experience is, rather, radically intersubjective or, as Hocking described it in 1912, "social":

I have sometimes sat looking at a comrade, speculating on this mysterious isolation of self from self. Why are we so made that I gaze and see of thee only thy Wall, and never Thee? This Wall of thee is but a movable part of the Wall of my world; and I also am a Wall to thee: we look out at one another from behind masks. How would it seem if my mind could but once be within thine; and we could meet and without barrier be with each other? And then it has fallen upon me like a shock -- as when one thinking himself alone has felt a presence -- but 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. For where art thou? Not there, behind those eyes, within that head, in darkness, fraternizing with chemical processes. Of these, in my own case, I know nothing, and will know nothing; for my existence is spent not behind my Wall, but in front of it. I am there, where I have treasures. And there art thou, also. This world in which I live, is the world of thy soul:


2 Social here means simply being united to or associated with other persons. (Cf. OED 2902.) Intersubjective, as Hocking came to employ the term, refers to interpersonal or social experiences which are characterized as "I-Thou" -- a direct encounter with another person as a self in a mutual, intimate, non-objective manner. It is expressed in the vocative rather than the indicative case. Social is the wider term.
and being within that, I am within thee. I can imagine no contact more real and thrilling that this: that we should meet and share identity, not through ineffable inner depths (alone), but here through the foregrounds of common experience; and that thou shouldst be -- not behind that mask -- but here, pressing with all thy consciousness upon me, containing me, and these things of mine. This is reality: and having seen it thus, I can never again be frightened into monadism by reflections which have strayed from their guiding insight.¹

As Rouner relates, the "comrade" whom Hocking was addressing was Agnes herself.² In regard to his love for her and its impact upon his philosophy, we find here perhaps the finest illustration of Hocking's reliance on his own experience with its assumed resonances in the common experience of "everyman." As we shall see, such love is pre-eminently a paradigm as well as a source of ordinary mystical experience.

When his magnum opus was published in 1912, Hocking was an assistant professor of philosophy at Yale, having moved there in 1908 from the University of California at Berkeley where he had taken a position two years before. In 1914, he was called back to Harvard. During the First World War, he saw active duty as a military engineer. Four years later, he was appointed supervisor for Army educational training programs in the northeastern United States, which

¹MGHE 265 – 66. This, perhaps the most famous and widely cited passage from his major work contains the nucleus of Hocking's personalistic refutation of solipsism.

²Rouner, WHE 44.
led to his small book, Morale and Its Enemies.\textsuperscript{1} Human Nature and Its Remaking was published the same year.

2. Hocking's Middle Period: 1920 – 1940

In 1920, Hocking was appointed Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy and Civil Polity at Harvard. Between then and 1940, he produced eight major books and over sixty articles and reviews. In 1930, he and his wife were appointed to the Laymen's Foreign Mission Inquiry, an investigating committee representing seven Protestant denominations concerned about the state of their foreign missions. Appointed chairman of the group, Hocking was enabled thereby to travel widely in the Orient, broadening his understanding of Eastern religions and the possibilities of ecumenical relations. The report which resulted from this investigation, \textit{Re-Thinking Missions}, involved Hocking and other members of the group in long and bitter controversies with neo-orthodox theologians. Not the least factor in the conflict was Hocking's manifest influence on the final report.\textsuperscript{2} One of the less controversial recommendations en-

\textsuperscript{1}Cf. Rouner, PRCWC xiii, xiv.

\textsuperscript{2}The eminent Church historian, Bishop Stephen Neill, thus evaluates the report: "The controversial elements are concentrated in the summary... which was in the main the handiwork of the eminent philosopher W. E. Hocking. The point of view here expressed was as different as could be imagined from that of the earlier missionaries. The report distinguishes between temporary and permanent elements in the function of a missionary. The task of the missionary to-
talled "a serious inquiry into the religious value of meditation, and a study of the ways in which a further place for this function can be brought into the Christian Church...."¹

At the beginning of this period, Hocking's attention began to shift from a preoccupation with religion toward social, legal and political issues.² But his involvement with the mission controversy awakened him further to the promise of ecumenism among Christian denominations as well as among different faiths. This in turn enabled him to reconceive the role of the mystic as a harbinger of religious unity on a world scale, a theme that would become dominant in the works of his last period, especially The Coming World Civilization.

In 1936, Hocking was honored with appointments to sev-

day, it was maintained, is to see the best in other religions, to help the adherents of those religions to discover, or to rediscover, all that is best in their own traditions, to cooperate with the most active and vigorous elements in the other traditions in social reform and in the purification of religious expression. The aim should not be conversion -- the drawing of members of one religious faith over into another or an attempt to establish a Christian monopoly. Cooperation is to replace aggression. The ultimate aim, in so far as any can be described, is the emergence of the various religions out of their isolation into a world fellowship in which each will find its appropriate place." (A History of Christian Missions [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965], pp. 445 - 56. For an account of the reaction against this position and its ultimate collapse, see p. 456.)

¹Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), pp. 45f.

²Cf. Rouner, WHE 188.
eral lectureships which in effect crowned his academic career. The first of these was the Hibbert Lectures at Oxford and Cambridge, later published as *Living Religions and a World Faith*. In the same year, he also delivered the Ingersoll Lectures at Harvard and the Thomas Lectures at the University of Chicago, published together in 1937 as *Thoughts on Life and Death* and revised and augmented in 1957 as *The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience*. In 1938, Hocking was invited to present the prestigious Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow, perhaps his greatest accomplishment in the field of religious studies. While never published in book form, these lectures, "Fact and Destiny," provided material for reflection which occupied Hocking until his death -- including his first insights into the self as a "field of fields," the central concern of his mature metaphysics.  

1In Scotland, I discovered that the accounts of the Gifford Lectures published in summary form in the Glasgow Herald are still accessible through back issues found at the Glasgow Public Library. These summaries were submitted by Hocking himself each day and only slightly edited; hereafter the Scottish version will be referred to as GL. Hocking later revised his notes and published them provisionally as "Fact and Destiny," *The Review of Metaphysics*, 4 (Sept., 1950), pp. 1 - 12 -- being the introduction to the whole series, and "Fact and Destiny (II)," Ibid., 4 (March, 1951), pp. 319 - 42 -- being an account of the first five lectures; hereafter referred to as "FD I" and "FD II." The second half of the first series was not published until 1958 in a greatly revised form as "Fact, Field and Destiny," *The Review of Metaphysics*, 11 (June, 1958), pp. 525 - 49; hereafter referred to as "FFD." The second series of lectures, "History and the Absolute," was revised and published in *PRCWC*, pp. 423 - 63; hereafter referred to as "HA."
3. Hocking's Final Period: 1940 - 1966

When Hocking returned from Scotland, he was then sixty-five and due to retire from Harvard. He was, however, invited by President Conant to continue teaching for an additional five years. After his actual retirement in 1943, Hocking enjoyed several guest professorships and an occasional lecture. His writing continued unabated; of the 294 items in Gilman's standard bibliography, fully 125 were written after 1943: 1

World War II created a crisis period in Hocking's life. Not only did the outbreak of war in 1939 disrupt his plans to publish "Fact and Destiny," it significantly altered his outlook on world problems, deepening his understanding of the creative potential of suffering in the emergence of any future world community united in its shared experience of God's silent presence. 2 The war also provided the occasion for his third major mystical experience, which he related years later in the preface to The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience.

He had been lecturing on metaphysics at Harvard during the autumn of 1941. The war was much on his mind. One evening as he walked along the Charles River, "It was though

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1 PRCWC 469 - 504.

for a moment Nature were holding still -- caught in a spell of quiet and tense glory, unwilling to fade."¹ In the following passage, he described his sudden insight into "a truth about the world, as well as about [the] self,"² again providing a paradigm of mystical experience, now mediated by space as before it had been occasioned by a perception of time:

Here was quiescence -- no seminar, no discussion, no labor of categories, also no war. Time had stopped, and the world was now drenched in unmoving space. Space was endless; it was my space, running out far beyond the solitary evening star; running also through the earth, and out the other side. There were armies at night, minds full of battle-plans for tomorrow's action. Was it truly the same space? Could that space, crowded with fighters' strategies, be the same as my space, spellbound in peace?

Yes, it must be the identical space; it is the same world for all of us. Yet it cannot be the same. For no one else saw the world I saw; if I had not happened along, that marvel of a sky-moment might have passed unknown. It was certainly not known to itself, was it? Those colors, lights, shadows, shapes, could exist only for a creature with eyes, stationed at or near where I was standing.³

Falling back on a theme of plural spaces about which he had theorized as early as 1912, Hocking was able to organize the elements of an actual awareness of plural spaces. He passed by reflection from that recognition to a new in-

¹MIHE xiv - xv.
²MGHE 362. Cf. 450.
³MIHE xv.
sight into the concept of interacting fields, inklings of which had also appeared in previous works. He continued,

our various spaces, all infinite, must be and cannot be identical. The answer? Space is not single, but plural. There is a world-space, identical for all included persons. But for each one, there is also a private space, perhaps spaces, holding private responses to qualities, holding also futurities, not yet existent -- plans, battle plans perhaps, plans that can be detained, modified, canceled, as events in the identical world-space cannot be.

Space must have a plural -- this we were saying in the seminar. And more than this, each person envisages plural spaces. Then, the position of the person, the self, toward this his plurality, how shall we describe it? Each space can be called a "field," a continuum on which infinite positions, potentials, etc., can be distinguished and held-together. Could the self, as envisaging plural fields, be a field of fields?¹

What he had merely thought before, he was now experiencing.² Out of that experience came a new assurance in the reality of human freedom, immortality -- which had figured prominently in both his "conversion" experience and his encounter with time and death, and God, an assurance not the result of an inference, but a conviction based on immediate experience.³

¹Ibid.


³MIHE xvi.
Commenting much later on the philosophical significance of this and similar episodes in so far as they are in some sense extraordinary, Hocking noted that

The function of unusual experiences is, as a rule, not so much to answer questions as to open them. They stir us out of our habitual assumptions. They may illuminate; but the final answers must be in the common experiences of mankind -- this has become my firm conviction. If there is any truth is "mystic experience," it is what every man subconsciously knows, and what thought can eventually validate. ¹

The specific significance of these events and Hocking's more ordinary experiences of love and duty will occupy us later, when we return to the mystical status of the man and his philosophy. It is important here to note his own estimation of the criteriological function of ordinary experience, but also his intimation that the roots of mystical experience lie in the depths of common knowledge. And thus, what may be unusual or extraordinary with respect to incidence or intensity need not be so with regard to either capacity or extent. "Everyman" is fundamentally a mystic.

Having set out the basic problematic of this investigation in terms of its historical and thematic context as well as Hocking's own development, we turn now to consider his basic concept of experience as rooted in the triadic, intersubjective relationship of the Self, the World and Other Selves, grounded in God as the Field of all Experience.

¹ MIHE 216.
CHAPTER I

THE DIALECTIC OF EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

Hocking's concept of experience was developmental and fluid; he proposed various formulations throughout his long career, altering emphases and recasting the elements of his definitions. One such formulation from his middle and late periods, "The self meeting the world more or less well," has been taken as definitive by several commentators. But while perhaps adequately reflecting Hocking's basic concept of experience, this was neither his clearest nor his final formulation.

In this chapter, I shall argue that Hocking's concept of experience involved a progressive clarification of early formulations elaborated in conscious opposition to the classical, empirical concept. Inasmuch as this classical concept consisted of the relation, usually specified as consciousness or knowledge, between an object and a subject, it can be called dyadic. Hocking's formulations, building on rather than rejecting the dyadic concept, were typically triadic, involving three elements— the subjective, the objective and

the intersubjective (or social), related to each other in
distinctively different modes of consciousness, including
knowledge, volition and feeling.¹ I also contend that in
articulating this triadic notion of experience, Hocking not
only overcame some perplexing problems raised by the classi-
cal concept, but was thereby enabled to develop his doctrine
of "relative immediacy" by which he could in turn account
for the possibility of mystical experience as the full ma-
nifestation of the implicit theistic dialogue grounding all
experience, that is, as an immediate as well as a direct ex-
perience of God.

Hocking may never have achieved what to him was a
finally satisfying definition of experience. Nevertheless,
an analysis of the three principal formulations of his tri-
adic concept, "I-It-Thou" (nuclear experience), "The Self
Meeting the World More or Less Well," and "Fact, Field and
Destiny," indicates that each incorporated the same elements
expressed differently according to differing priorities in
Hocking's philosophical concerns at the time. Further, I be-
lieve that these formulations were not in fact successive
attempts to formulate a single, all-encompassing definition,
but varying ways of expressing the same insight into the
fundamental structure of experience and refer as well to

¹Cf. MGHE 252, n. 1 for the use of the terms "dyad"
and "triad."
different aspects of experience taken in a general sense. Each builds upon and clarifies the others. Consequently, I hold that the primary value of Hocking's descriptive analysis of experience lies not in the progressive articulation of a comprehensive, fully adequate definition, but in his illumination of manifold dimensions of experience in regard to its three-fold constitution expressed in terms of the structure of the human psyche, the nature of social interactions, and their metaphysical ground.

Summarily, Hocking's elaboration of experience as a system of relations between the Self, Nature and Society (including intersubjective relations) grounded in a divine "field of reference" can best be viewed as a dialectical process having three distinct phases -- the early, psychological formulations, their reconception in terms of social transactions and, finally, their reinterpretation in metaphysical terms characteristic of Hocking's mature thought.

1Among contemporary commentators, Andrew Reck has recognized a connection between "the Self, the Other and God" and Fact, Field and Destiny, but relates neither to "The Self Meeting the World More or Less Well." (Cf. "Hocking's Place in American Metaphysics," PRCWC 47.) Further, his first "triad" is not exactly equivalent to the "I-It-Thou" of nuclear experience. Nor is God to be identified with the "Thou" of nuclear experience too closely. For God is experienced as different from other (finite) selves, being in fact not an element of nuclear experience so much as its field or ground establishing the possibility of structural relations between "I-It-Thou(s)." Cf. MGHE 298.
Hocking faced two major problems in formulating each of these concepts: first, to account for human intersubjectivity and, second, to account for the awareness of God within human experience.¹ Hocking's enterprise can be interpreted, therefore, as an attempt to articulate a radical concept of experience adequate to the psychological and sociological dynamics of human existence and to establish a metaphysical foundation for what might still be called a "natural theology," especially with respect to its experiential manifestation in mysticism. I shall attempt to show that while perhaps not wholly successful, Hocking's reconceptualization of the classical concept of experience accomplished these objectives. I shall argue, moreover, that his doctrine of relative immediacy still provides a penetrating solution to the problem of how God can be immediately and directly experienced.

¹For an explicit statement of this enduring two-fold agendum, see the 1962 preface to MGHE, pp. xff.
I. THE EVOLUTION OF A CONCEPT

As Hocking began his study of experience, he found it, as he later remarked, conceptually "tired" and ambiguous, having been exhausted, as it were, and bifurcated by the analyses of Descartes, the English empiricists, Kant and the German idealists.\(^1\) The previous three centuries of investigation had, moreover, fostered several fundamental misconceptions about the character of experience: subjectivity, passivity, shreddibility and indifference,\(^2\) coupled with invariance and an overriding cognitive bias.\(^3\) Underlying these misconceptions was the classical concept of experience as sense-data interpreted by reason or thought,\(^4\) that is, the empirical concept which had attained the status of an axiom in Western philosophy.\(^5\)

The inadequacy of the dyadic concept of experience as facts plus consciousness was revealed to Hocking in the

\hspace{1cm} \begin{align*}
1\text{Cf. } & "LRT" 16, "FD I" 320. \\
2\text{Cf. } & "LRT" 16 - 17. \\
3\text{Cf. } & "FD I" 320. \\
4\text{Cf. } & MIHE 51. \\
5\text{Cf. } & MGHE 43: "Philosophers wonderfully agree in accepting the term 'experience' as a comprehensive name for whatever is either real or significant. Facts and events may have their independent external existence; but they gain living certainty and importance only as they impinge upon consciousness. Unless a fact is caught up in the sensitive, irritable, responsive thing we call a mind, it is nothing."
\end{align*}
major distortions which sprang from it. The first was sub-
jective idealism, the "retreat into subjectivity," by which
experience was riven into separate realms, one or both poles
of which were removed from actual awareness. Important in-
stances of subjectivism include Berkeley's reduction of the
objective world to a mental construct of the experiencing
subject and Kant's postulation of noumena and the transcen-
dental ego.¹ A second major distortion was promoted by real-
istic naturalism, whether the atomistic phenomenalism of
Hume, classical realism, or modern behavioralism, which con-
versely absorbed the experiencing subject into the fact-
world -- with the consequent denial of the reality of the
self.² As a result,

When we speak of experience, what is called to mind is
usually experience with the experiencers left out; ex-
perience just in so far as it can easily be common ob-
ject and no farther. Hume, in his examination of experi-
ence found no self; he had gone out of his house, as
one noted rejoinder had it, and looking in at the window
was unable to find himself at home.³

In addition to either overdeveloping the subjective
or objective aspects of experience, or sundering them com-
pletely, subjective idealism and naturalism were incapable
of accounting for the experience of other selves, that is,

¹Cf. MGHE 192 - 93.
²Cf. MGHE 194 - 95.
truly interpersonal relations. Further, God was ruled out as a possible object of experience.

For Hocking, an adequate concept of experience would have to do justice to actual experience itself. It would have to preserve the irreducible, felt reality of both the thinking-feeling Self and the world of fact as met in lived events of Nature and Society. It would neither radically dichotomize the subjective and objective elements, thereby rendering their relatedness wholly adventitious or illusory, nor collapse one element into another, thus no less effectively suppressing real relations. Moreover, an adequate conception of experience would be able to provide some understanding of our direct experience of persons as distinct from non-personal objects of experience as well as the fact that God continued to be reported as ingredient in experience, Kant to the contrary notwithstanding.

In order to preserve conceptually both the unity and duality of experience "as an interplay between an active Self and an active External Reality" while accounting for interpersonal relations and the experience of God, Hocking proposed a third element in the structure of experience, the social (or, later, intersubjective) dimension. In referring to Hume's failure to find himself "at home," Hocking

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1 Cf. MGHE 204: "Briefly, Sein and Bewusstsein together give Werden."

2 MGHE 285.
had noted that

In truth, it is not I alone, but we who go out, and cannot be discovered by ourselves in that house. And that same reflexive turn of consciousness which takes notice of Self, as of something always present, must, if we are right, discover the Other also, my other I, perpetual sustainer of universality in my judgments of experience.¹

In short, "Experience is always and necessarily social, or never, -- these are our alternatives."² Hume's mistake, as well as that of Descartes, Berkeley and Kant, lay in failing to recognize experience as intersubjective from the outset, indeed as "consubjective."³ Without a third element, the social dimension, in the very structure of experience to balance the objective-subjective tension of opposition, one aspect tended to become a prison, the other an illusion.

Hocking's argument was two-fold; first, our experience, even of Nature, is in fact social, that is, shared with others and known to be so.⁴ Second, the fact of present social experience implies not an emergence out of private experience, but the actualizing of a potential already

¹ MGHE 281. Cf. CWC 39, quoted below, p.

² MGHE 282. Cf. also 273, 275 - 76.

³ Cf. MGHE 242, 262. Consuctivity, a term appearing in Hocking's writings even later than intersuctivity, refers to this "we-consciousness" of the world and, as an expression of the social dimension of experience, constitutes a distinctive type of relation which might be termed "We-It" and conceivably even "We-Thou," although Hocking, so far as I know, never did so. Cf. "MGIM" 458 - 59.

⁴ Cf. MGHE 284: "We look at Nature through the eyes of a social world." Cf. 273 n. and 278.
present from the beginning because an element in the very nature of experience itself.

With regard to the first part of his thesis, Hocking devoted many pages of his *magnum opus* to the description of our actual social experience of the world, summarizing it in terms both of a shared experience of *I-thou* relations and also of a sense of universality as the extension of our intersubjective awareness of a common world:

we see objects and truths in general through two *pairs* of eyes, through indefinite multitudes of eyes, and thereby acquire that deepest solidity of judgment which we call "universality." Universality is a social habit; the necessary habit of looking at any truth as if not I alone but the whole conscious universe were looking at it with me.¹

That is to say, natural and social objects exist in a realm of common or shared experience which has unlimited scope. As we shall see, that is what Hocking meant by the term "world."

The second part of his thesis affirmed that the fact of social experience rests not on a breakthrough into shared experience from the isolation of privacy, which as the classical empiricists realized, cannot be substantiated in experience. It depends, rather, on the more or less progressive realization of a potential already there in the nature of experience itself: "If, then, experience even becomes actually social, it has, in more rarefied condition,

¹MGHE 282.
always been so; and hence is, in the same fundamental sense, continuously so."¹

For Hocking, solipsism could only be the result of a failure to realize one's deepest potential as a social being and therefore constituted either a moral lapse or, presumably, a psychological disorder. We shall return to this point again. Here I wish only to note that this process of actualizing the potential or implicit structure of all experience was the immediate basis of Hocking's controversial contention that "In any sense in which I can imagine, or think, or conceive an experience of Other [M]ind, in that same sense I have an experience of Other Mind, apart from which I should have no such idea."² In other words, "the Idea of a social experience would not be possible, unless such an experience were actual."³ This proposition itself rests on a principle taken from communications theory and its metaphysical correlate. The principle which Hocking adopted from "the logic of communications" states simply that "In order that any two beings should establish communication, they must already have something in common."⁴ Today

¹ MGHE 273.
² MGHE 274.
³ Ibid., original emphasized.
⁴ MGHE 272, original emphasized. The importance of communications theory in Hocking's early philosophy is reflected significantly in the subtitle proposed for his dis-
this shared ground required as the condition for the possibility of communication is generally described as "the field of reference" or "field of experience."¹ In similarly describing this common field, Hocking anticipated much later developments in theory. He also thereby introduced the theme which he would develop into a major metaphysical statement and even at this date provided the basis for his effort to "surmount" solipsism:

For when I consider the two beings, prior to their communication, as apart from one another, I must consider at the same time the field through which they must pass to approach each other: and this field is already a common field.²

The fact of communication thus entails an underlying region of mutuality between communicators: "All actual approach implies a deeper-going presence as an accomplished fact."³ Here we find in different language the metaphysical principle on which Hocking's argument ultimately rests: all possibility depends on a prior actuality.⁴ Experience can


² MGHE 272.

³ MGHE 273.

⁴ This classical principle, actus prior est potentia,
become explicitly social because it was antecedently social, that is, implicitly so by nature of the metaphysical structure of experience as a triadic relationship of I, It and Thou(s). In a later article, Hocking would refer to this in terms of a process of explicitation or specification of "that latent or unfulfilled intersubjectivity underlying the entire social life of mankind in which the individual Thou's of the 'we' are a mere algebraic 'x.'"¹ As a universal capacity for social experience, this latent intersubjectivity needs only the appropriate occasion for its actualization: "This 'x' is always capable of specification, and always finding it as individual persons enter the scene and constitute a wholly concrete group, with its own identity and very likely its own proper name."² Thus, Hocking concluded, "if there were no [prior] experience of 'we' there could be no [subsequent] idea of 'we.' In some degree, intersubjectivity is either everywhere or nowhere."³

was first formulated by Aristotle (Cf. Metaphysics 1049b4 – 1051a3) and, as refined by Thomas Aquinas, became a cornerstone of scholastic philosophy for centuries (cf. Summa Theologiae, I, Q. 3, a. 1; Q. 77, a. 1; Summa Contra Gentiles, I, 16, 3 and elsewhere.) Hocking clearly appeals to this principle in related contexts as well: "... the inherent publicity of Nature, the fitness of all its objects to be communally experienced, is no empty potentiality, but a potentiality founded (like other potentialities) on some actuality." (MGHE 278.)

¹"MGIM" 458.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.
Hocking pursued this line of investigation beyond the relationship of possibility to actuality. Already sensitized to the need for a field to ground the possibility of communication, he realized that the condition for the possibility of all intersubjective experience had to be a prior agency possessing a social character which could constitute a field of experience in which all further communication could be grounded. For Hocking, only God could be such an agency. For God alone could call the Self into existence through the natural and social media of the World by first establishing the Self in its fundamental intersubjectivity, that is, as a Thou. Moreover, all specific fields of experience are limited and relative with regard to space and time. But if intersubjectivity is primordially universal, as it has to be to account for the fact of universal social experience, then there had to be an unlimited, absolute field of reference to ground the possibility of all such experience. As the Field of all fields, God was for Hocking the ultimate ground of experience. But by Hocking's logic, such an idea of God implied an experience of God, and thus arose his second problematic: does God ever enter human experience in any way recognizable as the ground of all experience? Turning to actual human experience, Hocking found just such a claim in the writings of the mystics, who not only

\[1 \text{Cf. MGHE } 295 - 97. \]
described their own direct and immediate experiences of God, but also declared that such experiences were within the capacity of everyone.

Thus, for Hocking the solution to the two-fold problem of modern philosophy came to hand early in his career if, indeed, he would spend a lifetime elaborating its full significance. Intersubjectivity is not merely an achievement but, in a more radical sense, the pre-condition for the possibility of all experience. God, as the ground of experience, is not simply encountered as an object among other objects, but recognized or "discovered" as the Field of our experience of Self, Nature and Society. Furthermore, God is so discovered not merely as an impersonal background or fringe of consciousness, but as "Thou" — a distinctively unique Presence addressing the Self in the depths of experience and dimly perceived by all as an intimate, infallible associate.

The transition in experience from other minds to the Other Mind (that is, God) as the "Thou of the World" and "the heart of Fact," constituted a problem which perhaps most vexed both Hocking and his critics. He may well have never satisfactorily resolved it, but I believe that he


2Cf. MGHE 224.

3CWC 198.
successfully articulated the principal factors in this transition by his analysis of mystical experience. And in doing so, Hocking developed a general concept of experience which overcame the misconceptions of previous interpretations of it as atomistic, phenomenalistic, rationalistic, passive, invariant, subjectivistic and devoid of divine influence. For Hocking, experience was holistic, metaphysically intentional, aesthetic, active, dynamic, social and theistic. That is to say, Hocking conceived of experience as a unified, dialectical system of interactions between a changing Self and a real but variable environment in which feeling entered as an intrinsic element and which was rooted in an openness to other persons as well as the all-pervasive presence of the Thou sustaining all reality.

1. Initial Concepts of Experience: "I-It-Thou"

Out of the wealth of denotations funded by centuries of reflection, Hocking incorporated three elements in his

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1In ordinary use, the English word "experience," derived from the Latin verb experiri, meaning "to put to the test," acquired a variety of meanings: "The action of putting to the test; trial.... Proof by actual trial, practical demonstration.... The actual observation of facts or events, considered as a source of knowledge.... The fact of being consciously the subject of a state or condition, or of being consciously affected by an event.... What has been experienced; the events that have taken place within the knowledge of an individual, community, mankind at large, either during a particular period or generally.... Knowledge resulting from actual observation or from what one has undergone.... A piece of experimental knowledge.... The state of
reconception of experience: subjectivity -- a knowing self; objectivity -- a fact-world existing independently of the human mind; and intersubjectivity -- social interaction of a direct and immediate nature; all united in a common field of reference. As the manifold of structural relations between these factors, experience would find expression in three somewhat differing formulations, the first of these being an articulation of the radical psychological character of consciousness, or "nuclear experience," the "I-It-Thou" triad. While he did not mention the term "nuclear experience" or the "I-It-Thou" triad in his magnum opus, Hocking later identified these as the fundamental experiential thematic of that study.¹

Hocking's initial triadic conception was already clearly operative in his 1904 dissertation, which was deliberately intended to overcome the idealistic view found even in Royce, that individuals can know only their own mental states, being forever barred from directly experiencing the personality of another Self. Hocking wrote in his preface, "Idealism has been exercised to rediscover the outer world which the individual self has absorbed: I wish to restore the stinging reality of contact with the human

having been occupied in any department of study or practice, in affairs generally, or in the intercourse of life...."

(OED 930.)

¹Cf. the 1962 preface, MGHE xii - xiii. Cf. also 315f.
comrade which this same idealism obscures."

From the beginning, Hocking identified the elements of human experience in terms of a three-fold focus of attention: physical objects, ourselves (that is, our inner states) and other minds. Further, he claimed, we cannot make physical objects the pattern of our experience of other persons, nor can we make ourselves such a pattern. The experience of another person as "thou" possesses a "primordial nature." In his magnum opus he wrote,

All the (substantive) objects of human attention and experience may be put into three fundamental classes: the physical objects, which with their relations we sum up as Nature; the psychical objects, which with their relations we sum up as Self; and the social objects, or other minds, which with their relations we sum up as Society, or still more comprehensively, as our Spiritual World, ourselves being included. These classes of objects seem clearly distinguishable; not mixing or blending at their borders -- when I mean another mind I distinctly do not mean either my own mind or a physical thing.

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1 The Elementary Experience of Other Conscious Being in Its Relations to the Elementary Experience of Physical and Reflexive Objects (Dissertation, Harvard University, 1904), p. iv; hereafter referred to as EEOCB.

2 EEOCB i.

3 EEOCB ii.

4 EEOCB iii.

5 MGHE 241 - 42. Here it is important to note that for Hocking the social dimension of experience has a dual character, the intersubjective, in which the other is referred to vocatively as "thou" or "you" (plural), and objective, in which others are referred to indicatively as "he," "she," and "they." The intersubjective aspect includes the con-
The triadic character of these and subsequent formulations resulted not from some dialectical penchant for trinitarian conceptual play, but from the exigencies of widening the dyadic concept of experience sufficiently to include a neglected but irreducibly necessary factor in actual human experience—the social dimension, especially its intersubjective aspect.¹

Objectivity and intersubjectivity are both distinct functions of social experience: "I do not know my physical world as a world of objects and then as a world of shared objects: it is through a prior recognition of Other Mind that my physical experience acquires objectivity at all."² Reality was for Hocking clearly a social construction, a view he called "the realism of social experience."³

The objectivity of the world as a whole is a function of its experientiability by all selves in space and time—Other Mind as the collectivity of knowing subjects.⁴

¹ Cf. MGHE 252, n. 1. Elsewhere, Hocking even went beyond a triadic formulation of the structure of experience, including a fourth "field" alongside Nature, Society and the Self: Ideals. (Cf. "MGHE" 65.) This, however, was in terms of a controversy concerning Dewey and was not retained in subsequent formulations. What this departure reveals, I think, is that Hocking was by no means captured by the lure of three’s.


⁴ Hocking seems to claim in such contexts that by a
Subjectivity in the sense of individual consciousness of self and other natural and social objects is likewise dependent upon a more primordial sociality: for Hocking, "we do not begin as solitary beings and then acquire the arts of solitude..."¹ His philosophy of self, which runs through all his formulations of the concept of experience, consistently maintained that all experience is thus fundamentally social, including our experience of Nature.

Process of extension, the totality of possible (finite) other knowers of my world must have its own other Knower, for otherwise it would be inconceivable. But unlike a "class of all possible classes," the class of all possible knowers is not unthinkable, for it is not self-encompassing and has a finite basis. Thus anchoring his argument in the logical priority of actuality over possibility, Hocking moved to the conclusion that an actual Knower of all possible knowers exists if any actual knowers exist. Consequently, the realization that my present act of knowing something as a shared object entails other knowers can be an occasion for an awareness of the presence of God as the active ground of such knowledge, now knowing me. Thus the term "Other Mind" primarily refers to God as the ultimate, wholly active and therefore creative knower of myself, other selves and the world of Nature and Society. Hocking's distinction of two aspects of Other Mind which are not reducible to each other, and his transition from other mind(s) to Other Mind is a very difficult one to follow. But in both respects, the point regarding objectivity remains the same: objectivity implies a prior subjectivity. (Cf. MGHE 294f., 332.)

Important here, too, is the implication that it is impossible to encompass the totality of all knowers conceptually; an infinite abyss separates the finite knowers, possible and actual, from the Infinite Knower. (Compare here the treatment of the same issue by Emmanuel Levinas, Totality and Infinity [Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969].) Significantly, Hocking's notion of God as the All-knower was conditioned by time. As he was fond of saying, "God does not know what I am going to do this afternoon." (Cf. Rouner, WHE 107.)

¹ MGHE 299.
A Self for Hocking was a system of systems -- a system of behavior and meanings (mind) interrelated with a system of facts (body) which is the interface between the mind and the "exosystems" of Nature and Society. Mind is half of Nature and the body is part of Nature as well as an instrument of mind.\(^1\) The "whole" of reality is thus on one level the community of selves and on another the Self together with its natural environment. But in so far as the objects of Nature are common to many selves, the physical environment is the overall context and yet also part of the community of selves:

A self, we have said, is a process of intercourse with reality: cut away the objects and there is no process, the mind becomes a seeing without light. The empty mind is equivalent to no mind; hence we speak of the out-world as its 'contents,' and draw the mind's boundary not at the eyes but far and away in front of them. The self must include something of its objects.\(^2\)

\[1\text{Cf. The Self Its Body and Freedom (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928), pp. 23f.; hereafter referred to as SBF.} \]

\[2\text{MS 232. Cf. also the famous passage in MGHE 265 - 66.} \]

\[3\text{MS 343. Cf. HNR 173: "... social experience is an integral part of individual experience, since individual experience has neither its complete data nor its working tools apart from social interaction."} \]
selves, the World of fact, and the Self conscious of both
as well as of itself.

Ingredient in each conscious Self are sensations,
emotions and will; ideas and feelings; and subconscious
elements: instincts, memories, habits and repressed factors.
These latter are a non-thinking aspect of Self, more akin
to feeling than to thought.¹ By the subconscious, Hocking
did not mean some special faculty or a "superhuman resource,"
but a marginal area of ordinary consciousness voluntarily
"condemned to death" to enable the Self to "gain firmness
in the saddle of practical self-possession," that is, to
become the "artificial self."²

¹ Ch. MGHE 105.
² MGHE 371, 414. For Hocking the subconscious has two
aspects, the allied and the critical. The former is subcon­
scious in so far as "it is not being thought of, though it
is being thought with." (MGHE 527.) Its contents are, roughly,
"the instincts that we inherit and the habits we form;
also the memories we store, and all the system of ideas with
which we do our perceiving. It contains the habits of ap­
preciation we build up and the habits of decision -- in
short, our 'character.'" (Ibid.) Active in all experience,
the elements of the allied subconscious are always suscepti­
ble of becoming objects of reflective scrutiny. By contrast,
the critical subconscious is 'a consciousness of objects
which we, the artificial person, have chosen not to be con­
scious of. It is the unchosen or repressed, marginal life
of the mind, maintaining an existence of protest, like a
sort of bad conscience." (MGHE 528.) This aspect of con­
sciousness is also influential in everyday life, but not
susceptible to deliberate scrutiny as is the allied sub­
consciousness. With James, Hocking insisted that there are
no real divisions in consciousness; both aspects of the sub­
conscious Self are within consciousness, so that the only
"proper contrast is between the subconscious and the arti­
ficial self." (MGHE 528, n. 1; cf. 537.)
The artificial self is that "made" (or "remade") self consequent on the practical necessity of directing attention to partial aspects as opposed to the whole of experientiable reality. Conversely, the "natural self" is the whole Self —"the stark and original self,"¹ the conscious and the subconscious self, the full integrity of which seems to be felt only in childhood and in rare moments of mystical revelation.² The artificial self is the socially-constructed self in its relations with others, especially as these relations are the result of the exigencies of social life itself: strenuousness, resistance to criticism and organic growth.³ (One function of mystical experience is rejoining the artificial and subconscious selves by countering the force of social demands, as we shall see.)

In both his earlier and later periods, Hocking thus stressed the wholeness of the Self against any effort to

¹MGHE 438.
²Cf. MGHE 527; cf. 430.
³Cf. MGHE 531 - 33. Revising the concepts of the Self and the subconscious some forty years later, Hocking replaced the term "artificial" with "excursive" and contrasted the excursive self with the "reflective" self, the equivalent of the "natural self" of his early works. The fundamental thrust of his argument was the same. However, rather than finding the subconscious self peripheral to the excursive self, he now located it "at the center of selfhood, and the invidious term 'subconsciousness,'" he declared, "is an inept recognition of the fact that the primary springs of selfhood are not habitually at the focus of its outgoing interests." (MIHE 50.)
fragment it. The Self is individual. But it is also integrated -- composed of differentiated functions and aspects. The division between consciousness and subconsciousness is a tension of opposition within a single conscious Self. Further, if the Self can only be truly grasped in its wholeness because it is primarily a whole, it must also be grasped in its relatedness. The Self cannot be understood in isolation because it does not exist in isolation. It is structurally related to other selves by direct interactions such as love as well as by the media of natural and social objects.

The "I" of nuclear experience, the constant if often "invisible" (i.e., pre-reflexive) "I-think" which can be added to every fact of which we are conscious, is therefore found in the specific, concrete events of Nature and Society as a social Self. The "invisibility" of the Self is in large measure the consequence of the social character of experience itself, for, as Hocking observed, "it is not I alone, but we who go out...."¹ The we-consciousness of consubjective experience is prior to the I-consciousness of Cartesian individualism and Kant's transcendental ego. As modern developmental psychology as shown, every "I" is a partial "We" discovered by a gradual process of disengagement. The I-Thou (-It) consciousness of intersubjectivity is already a step

¹MGHE 281.
away from (or perhaps back toward) the primordial awareness of We(-It).

In *Types of Philosophy*, Hocking acknowledged this dimension of primordial awareness in social experience to be a psychological fact:

At the beginning of experience, whatever is other-than-self, acting on self, is other self; the infant's social awareness is contemporary with his recognition of sensation as the inner aspect of an outer action, addressed to him: his sense experience is a direct social experience.¹

The newborn infant has no explicit awareness of the "It" world as different from its own being, nor does it have a distinct concept of itself as separate from the environmental activity to which it reacts.² In particular, the infant fails to perceive itself as distinct from its mother or other social "objects."³ Only gradually does the infant begin to distinguish itself from other selves and from the fact-world. For some years afterward, the child continues to personify inanimate objects.

The sociality of experience is not merely an adventitious psychological fact, however; it is rooted in the very

¹TP 192.

²The "it" of Hocking's first triad is the World or Fact of his later formulations. As the manifold collectivity of natural and social objects and relations, "It" refers to everything which is not "We," "I," or "Thou." For World as Nature and Society, cf. MGHE 157, 230f., 236, etc.

structure of experience. The infant's awareness of being a kind of all-inclusive selfhood is a nascent reflection of metaphysical fact. Thus, taking an ordinary adult experience as his point of departure, Hocking could also observe that

Love, an admission into identity with Being-other-than-self, the human-other in the foreground, includes the world-other in its natural sweep: it is our most direct partnership with the life-within-nature, our most immediate awareness of the Real. Its most familiar form, that of ordinary human communication, is an experience of receiving-and-invading in which the solitary I-think of Descartes becomes spontaneously a We-think -- so simply that we fail to note the momentous transition. In it, we directly share the object world. It is "our" world; it is universal. "Here we are," its most spontaneous language, contains the rejection of solipsism, that spectre which modern philosophy, held by Descartes' I-think, has been unable to shake off. In this, our nor- man "intersubjectivity," we recognize, without analysis, that the "objectivity" of this object-world is something more and other than alien stuff. The silent, impersonal "It" retains its abstraction for a purpose: the "It" discloses itself as a "Thou."¹

All experience is thus radically social, from that of the infant to the adult, being both a primordial and ultimate involvement with Other Mind actively addressing the Self. But neither consubjectivity nor intersubjectivity nor any other form of social experience exists without the contextual mediation of the world, whether adverted to or not. If we experience other mind(s) in our awareness of natural and social objects, so also we experience the world in our awareness of other mind(s), for no mind can be truly empty

¹TP 309.
and be known. Each functions as a "third" for the other, thus permitting the ego to escape its predicament of self-enclosure. The world, as shared, alone can bring human selves knowingly into each other's experience. There is no direct vision of another by some kind of psychic intuition:

Human beings can only approach each other by way of third objects. We do not see each other; we see only the outer shell -- the body, and the objects which we have in common -- things and events in space. We are like persons on opposite sides of a mountain, invisible to one another; they cannot meet by direct approach, they have nothing to aim at, but each can see along his own path the point of junction, the rendezvous; by way of this third object they meet. Likewise with all mental approach. There is no direct way of comparing ideas and sentiments; agreement means a common attitude to a common object; ultimate agreement means caring for and serving the same causes -- worshipping the same gods. All human approach of minds and wills is thus indirect.

Hocking is not denying here that we can have a direct experience of other selves -- a thesis which had occupied so many crucial pages of his *magnum opus*. Rather, he is denying that there can be directness without mediation -- exactly the point he had made before. The world is the necessary medium of both our intersubjectivity and our consubjectivity. It is by restoring the objectivity of the world without diminishing the independent reality of the Self that "the stinging reality of contact with the comrade"

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1LRWF 33 - 34. Cf. MGHE 256 - 57 and Marcel's commentary on this passage, art. cit., PRCWC 29.

2This passage should be compared with the famous "comrade" passage in MGHE 265 - 66, cited above, p. 33 - 34.
can be restored. Experience is always a relationship of thirds -- I, It and Thou(s), and hence the necessity of passing beyond the traditional dyadic conception of experience in order to describe it adequately.

Hocking did not close his accounts with experience by exposing its necessary triadic structure, however. The second part of his program concerned discovering how God could be ingredient in experience both immediately and directly. As social, that is, shared, experience was for him capable of revealing its ground, the condition for the possibility of all social intercourse. That ground is first disclosed as the underlying unity that constitutes the possibility of relations between I, It and Thou(s):

this everyday process of 'finding themselves sharing the planet,' together with every mutual understanding growing out of this discovery, implies that these selves have always had some region of unity, or identical experience, known to be such. This aboriginal core of unity cannot be the result of historical achievements; it cannot be the state. It is an object not of social but of metaphysical reflection; our practical dealings with it are matters not of politics but of religion.¹

Similarly, in his magnum opus, Hocking unmistakably identified the Other Mind perceived in our natural and social experiences as God:

The idea of God is not an attribute which in the course of experience I come to attach to my original whole —

¹MS 377. Cf. also MGHE 315, and "FFD" 545 – 46.
idea: the unity of my world which makes it from the beginning a whole, knowable in simplicity, as the unity of other selfhood.

God then is immediately known, and permanently known, as the Other Mind which in creating Nature is also creating me. Of this knowledge nothing can despoil us; this knowledge has never been wanting to the self-knowing mind of man.¹

Our fundamental social experience is, therefore, an experience of God, whether or not it is recognized as such. Further, such experience "is not an inference, but an immediate experience. As simply as Nature presents itself as objective, just so simply and directly is the Other Mind present to me in that objectivity, as its actual meaning."² Society, too, composed at first glance of the multiple selves to whom we are variously related, whether expressed indicatively or vocatively, discloses the presence of a

¹MGHE 296 - 97. In a letter to an unnamed friend (1920), Hocking identified God as the ultimate medium of interpersonal communication: "If we could understand the mystery of our human communication, we might get some light on the Divine Mystery at the same time. Now it seems to me that we perceive each other by the aid of objects which we have in common, meeting in a common place and time, under a common sky, having some common interests and ideas, and most fundamentally, common love of truth. And before we met each other, or anybody else for that matter, we knew that these objects and interests were not our private property, but were sharable -- yes, already shared with a companion who does not come and go. In short, it is God who from the beginning shares all our objects, and so God is the real medium of communication between one person and another. That is all." (Quoted by Rouner, WHE 41.)

²MGHE 288; cf. 230ff. Importantly, Hocking insisted that although objective in experience, just as God is not discovered as "an object among other objects" ("MGHE" 62), so also God is not found as another mind among other minds. (Cf. MGHE 332.)
Thou calling to the Self through the exigencies of love and duty. ¹

Precisely here arises the chief difficulty in Hocking's elaboration of social experience. If our knowledge of God is not only inferential but also immediate, and God is the ground of our experience, the very condition for its possibility and its wholly active source, ² how and when does the identification of this ultimate "field of reference" as God occur within human experience, that is, consciously?

In his magnum opus, Hocking held that our initial knowledge of God as the wholly active Self communicating to me through the events of Nature and Society is neither conspicuous nor adequate. ³ But it is recognizable:

It will be present for the most part in no other form than as the abiding sense of what stability and certainty we have, as we move about among men and things; it will be present for the most part just as our own force of self-assertion and self-confidence is present, that force by which we individually will "to maintain ourselves in being" in a world known, by what assurance we do not ordinarily inquire, to be no hostile, nor ultimately alien, thing. It will be present chiefly in my persistent sense of reality in that with which I am dealing, and in those fellow minds with whom I converse. ⁴

¹ Cf. MIHE 89 - 92, 247ff., and MGHE 231ff.
² Cf. MGHE 295.
³ Cf. MGHE 294, 300.
⁴ MGHE 296 - 97.
Also present in "objectivity of mind," an empirical openness to experience, as well as in the sense of responsibility and dependence, this sense of an Absolute Other is inseparable overall from self-consciousness "and discernible in all the dimensions and assertions of self-consciousness."¹

Similarly, in his 1935 address entitled significantly "The Meaning of God and Human Experience," Hocking reiterated his position that experience was metaphysically intentional: "Experience is always 'of' something."² Ultimately, what it is "of" is reality, the Real. Thus, "Whether experience reveals God at any point, then, depends simply on whether the real is God, or whether God is the real."³

The two primary regions of reality, Nature and Society, are manifestly not God. But in experiences of Nature and Society, especially in the latter respect of friendship, there opens another region: "Where two or three are gathered together in friendship there is always a third."⁴ Ultimately this third is not merely the common world, but another presence, found not as an object among other objects, but as

¹MGHE 296.
²"MGHE" 61. In a brief article, "On Royce's Empiricism," Hocking again stated that being "is always a factor in experience: ... experience is always ontological, and ... ontology is always empirical. The real is not behind the surface of experience but in it: a valid empiricism will include the 'what' as well as the 'that' of our perceptions." (The Journal of Philosophy, 53, 3 [Feb. 2, 1956], p. 59; hereafter referred to as "ORE.")
³"MGHE" 61. ⁴"MGHE" 65.
the Thou always there, once more, "the point of certainty implied in all [human] experimental outreaching into the world of flux, confusion and uncertainty." ¹

Here, Hocking is restating a position first proposed in his magnum opus. God is ultimately disclosed not as an impersonal item (It) in the constellation of environmental factors we recognize in our dealings with natural events and society, but as a personal dimension, an Other Mind of immense presence, unlike all finite objects and other minds. This personal Presence is not encountered in a delimited fashion as a "he" (or conceivably "she" or "they"), but as a supportive, sometimes demanding Thou. But God as the "Thou of the World" ² is not circumscribed in experience, that is, objectified among other objects of consciousness, even as a vocative presence. He is a Thou of a wholly different character from all the other thou's, grounding, circumscribing and non-finite.

The reality of natural and social experiences thus depends on a more primordial reality, and it is in this sense that God is the real. The limited, contingent reality of our experiences of the world bespeak a source in which all our lesser realities are grounded. In his magnum opus, this thesis became the basis for Hocking's original treat-

¹Ibid.
²"RF" 365.
ment of the ontological argument for God's existence.¹ At a later date, he pressed on to characterize this Reality as the field of experience, or, as it put it then, "the frame of the universal":

There are those who doubt whether God can be given in experience because, as they say, experience gives only the immediate, whereas God is all. The answer lies in the structure of experience. Experience is here and now. But it is always more than immediate; for it is experience of an object. Now the objects which experience deals with change; but the changing objects are always placed; they stand in a context which is beyond change. This context we have been calling "reality"; and we have been implying that whatever else we are dealing with, we are dealing with reality, and reality is one and whole. It is this character, always dimly present, which religious experience makes salient. Experience gives us change, yes, but change in the frame of the not-self; it gives the particular, but in the frame of the universal; it gives the evil and the defeating, but in the frame of the absolute assurance of substantial good.²

The structure of experience thus includes the "frame" dimension, without which the fragmentary aspects of life would not even have their relative coherence. There is a reality beyond and upholding the three-fold elements of experience, a reality capable of being consciously if "dimly" perceived. Hocking elsewhere concludes,

¹"The ontological argument reasons that because the world is not, God is. It is not from the world as a stable premise that we can proceed to God as a conclusion: it is rather when the world ceases to satisfy us as a premise and appears as a conclusion from something more substantial that we find God -- proceeding then from the world as a conclusion to God as a premise." (MGHE 312.)

²"MGHE" 65.
Religion thus contains in itself the ultimate truth of human psychology (not as a rule discovered by the psychologists), that the mental life of man is conversation with an absolute object, apart from which the whole sail-expanse of his several desires flaps loosely in divergent winds.¹

Nowhere is it clear in these passages, however, just how the transition is made in conscious experience from the immediate awareness of Presence in our experience as the source of our fundamental certitude, objectivity of mind, sense of reality and personal destiny, to the recognition of God. It is conceivable that without a concept with which to thematize the perception, the grounding Other Mind would not be recognized as God. Conversely, it would seem that by "religious experience," Hocking understood just such a non-inferential realization: that it is God who is here and now present as the ultimate ground of experience. And thus the problem of the transition must be deferred at this point to an inquiry into the religious dimension of experience.

In summary, the following elements can be discerned as constituting the structure of experience according to Hocking's fundamental conception. First, the Self or "I," including the plural ego or "We," being a unified composite of body, ideas, feelings, will, instincts, memory -- both conscious and unconscious, realizing itself excursively (the artificial self) and reflectively (the natural self).

¹LRWF 34 - 35.
Second, a common world of fact -- Nature as physical and animate environment and Society as the realm of persons and relations experienced objectively or "indicatively" -- "he," "she," or "they." Third, the world of other persons perceived intersubjectively as "thou" and "you" (plural) and relating in turn to the "I" as "thou." Each of these three dimensions of human experience is reciprocally related to the others, functioning as a medium of disclosure. That is, the World is the indirect object and medium of every I-Thou encounter and vice versa. Finally, these elements and their relations are grounded in an encompassing field of experience providing the possibility of interaction and the assurance of reality. This field, as the ground of experience, shares in its qualities in a transcendent manner -- it manifests selfhood, objectivity and intersubjective presence as Thou. It is, in short, divine.

2. Reconceptions of Experience: The Self Meeting the World More or Less Well

Hocking's second and third formulations of the concept of experience can be shown to have been modifications of his fundamental concept rather than departures from it. The first presages of the second formulation appeared in his 1938 Gifford Lectures, fully three years before "Lectures on Recent Trends in American Philosophy" was pub-
lished. There, he observed that

the term [experience is] full of false suggestions when taken as a non-committal or peculiarly secure point of beginning. It [is] not a primitive or unanalysable term. We must take the risk of dissecting it, and of describing experience as a 'meeting between a self and a world.'

This indicate[s] that experiencing [is] active, not merely receptive, and that it [is] done more or less well.¹

Experience is a doing, not merely a passive undergoing of outer activity. Further, it is done more or less well because the "equipment," the experiential means by which we meet the world, is ideas, which are always more or less adequate to the task of relating the world to consciousness.²

The watershed into which Hocking's initial and later conceptions of experience were gathered was, as indicated earlier, the essay "Lectures on Recent Trends in American Philosophy" published in 1941. In it he identified certain misconceptions which had rendered even the word "experience" tired: subjectivity, passivity, shreddibility and indifference.³ Against these misconceptions were being

¹GL Jan. 18, 1938. Past tenses have been rendered present for the sake of uniformity with other writings.

²Ibid. Hocking can thus be considered only a tentative rationalist. However, he explicitly rejected the opinion that our ideas of reality are ever completely inadequate, with the possible exception of our ideas of God. (Cf. "LRT" 18.)

³"LRT" 16 - 17.
lodged the complaints of Dewey, Whitehead and Wild, who had prepared for "a new beginning which shall unite the elements of these various protests."¹ To this end, Hocking proposed the three components of his definition: (1) The Self, (2) Meeting the World, (3) More or Less Well. This conception, he argued, "evades subjectivity because it brings the Self and the World together."² Thus the misconceptions of subjectivism and naturalism were corrected.

Further, atomicity is corrected, for whatever else I think of, I am thinking of the world as a scene for the detail. Further, there is always an agendum and therefore solicitude. Whenever an individual has anything to do he realizes it as part of a total unmastered task; therefore there is concern; and where there is concern, nothing is blank, neutral fact.³ Experience, from this perspective, is revealed to be objective, that is, metaphysically intentional; contextual, thus implying a field of reference; active; and, finally, passionate.

As in his Gifford Lectures, for Hocking "Ideas are the equipment with which we meet the world."⁴ But ideas are always to some extent inadequate, if never totally so, and thus our meeting with the world is itself always "more or less adequate."⁵

¹"LRT" 17.  
²"LRT" 18.  
³Ibid.  
⁴Ibid.  
⁵Ibid.
In his 1951 reworking of the first five Gifford Lectures, "Fact and Destiny (II)," Hocking similarly argued for a widened conception of experience. "I propose," he wrote, "that we consider all experience as experience by a self, a 'subject,' and as experience of a non-self, an 'object.'" Once again, Hocking was starting from rather than rejecting the dyadic conception. "But," he continued, taking the second step with the first -- all experience is of a not-self -- we break out of the ego-centric enclosure and escape the subjective bias without repudiating the self-subject who seems to be always discoverable. [...] For simplicity and without doctrinaire implications, let us say that experience is of 'a world': it is a special sort of meeting between a self and a world.

Experience is thus metaphysically intentional or objective: it is of a world having its own "persistent character." Such an independent fact-world seems at this point to bear its own warrant, however. The objectifying social dimension of experience does not arise, although it might well be presumed. In fact, I believe it was.

The specific misconceptions of experience Hocking was concerned to correct at this time were passivity, a cognitive bias, and invariance, against which he countered: "Experience includes experiencing: and experiencing is an activity detailed at its maximum quiescence, in acts of attention." Further, "... every item of experience is charged

1"FD II" 320. 
2Ibid. 
3Ibid.
with feeling."¹ Moreover, not only is the "content of ex-
perience... subject to judgment at every point as better or
worse,"² but, once more, the "equipment of ideas" with
which we meet the world is more or less adequate. Thus ex-
periencing itself can be better or worse. Therefore,

These observations enable us to enlarge our notion of
experience to an extent likely (and intended) to bring
consternation to any who regard it as a primitive term:
in experience, we venture to say, a self is meeting its
world always receptively, but also actively, passionately
and more or less well.³

What is perhaps most significant about all three ver-
sions of Hocking's second formulation is that the social
and theistic dimensions of experience are at most implicit.
The issue of intersubjective knowledge simply does not
arise, nor does that of the field of experience. As we
shall see, however, Hocking had not retracted his conten-
tions that all experience is radically social and divinely
grounded. Even in these references, the implicit inclusion
of ideas, the equipment for meeting the world, carries a
social dimension in so far as all ideas are in some sense
common. That is, we know the objects of natural and social
experience as known by others. Further, World, as we have
seen, contains the realm of both Nature and Society. But

¹Ibid.
²"FD II" 323.
³Ibid.
despite such allusions, it is obvious that Hocking's con-
ceptualization of experience during the period between 1938
and 1951 was less explicitly social in view of his overall
philosophical project. This may be because Hocking had ear-
lier striven to bring the social dimension forward from a
psychological perspective and in view of the problem of
solipsism. In the following period, he was not only addres-
sing the topic from the perspective of his own active soci-
al involvement, but was considering another set of problems,
including that of the intentionality of experience. But in
this regard the second formulation was perhaps even more
social than the previous conception in its presumed inter-
subjectivity.

At this time, in fact, Hocking's views on intersub-
jectivity and the religious dimension of experience were
being developed even further, but elsewhere.\(^1\) With respect
to the social dimension of experience, in 1954 Hocking ad-
dressed himself directly to the tension between the direct
and immediate experience of other selves versus the neces-
sity of mediation and interpretation in all experience. In
a detailed analysis of some recent works by Gabriel Marcel,
he noted that the "illusion of directness" has its correla-

\(^1\) Hocking's explicit writings on religion and reli-
gious experience at this time will be considered in chap-
ters II and III below.
stant reality of intersubjectivity.¹ That is to say, "indirect intersubjectivity," I-It relations mediated by Thou's not the direct focus of attention, "is possible only if there is already a direct intersubjectivity somewhere."² The latter case would comprise I-Thou relations mediated by "It's" no longer at the center of conscious attention. Hocking was here returning to the principle of the priority of actuality over possibility. Similarly, he argued, the "fulfilled" intersubjectivity of direct I-Thou encounter in actual experience has as its ground a latent or "unfulfilled" intersubjectivity which, below the threshold of full consciousness, is nevertheless "our native air."³ That is, as Hocking said elsewhere, we possess an actual capacity for intersubjective experience of which we are ordinarily only "dimly" aware, if only because it, like the air we breathe, is so utterly familiar as to escape notice until some striking alteration brings it to mind. This latent intersubjectivity, we are told, is our nuclear experience, in which individual Thou's, as we have seen, remain "a mere algebraic 'x'" until in the intercourse of actual experience our general intersubjective potential is "specified," finding fulfillment in a concrete I-Thou encounter.⁴

¹"MGIM" 453. ²Ibid. ³"MGIM" 453 – 54. ⁴"MGIM" 458.
The experiences by which intersubjective latency finds manifest fulfillment are those, generally, of love and obligation, including a sense of destiny. Thus, for Hocking the "relatively unmixed experiences of intersubjectivity must belong either to the inaccessible beginnings of mental life or to the mature revulsions from solitude." Intersubjectivity thus exists in two forms: as a radical but potential openness to others in nuclear experience and also in actual encounters with particular persons in which the acquired arts of solitude are surmounted. Hence, our most primitive human illumination is a breaking out of solitude into a possessed intersubjectivity, which is also consubjectivity. Through the love born in it as a response, the discovering and realizing self is under pressure to spread its light.

Hocking is here claiming that once the acquired solipsism of individual isolation is overcome, especially in acts of compassion and love, there is a natural inclination to expand the intersubjective-consubjective horizon, to relate to more and more persons as "Thou" and "We." His argument is founded on a familiar principle. Indirect I-Thou relations imply direct I-Thou relations, inasmuch as consciousness of the world as mediated by other minds is epistemologically posterior to an awareness of other minds as mediated

1"MGIM" 457, 460.  
2"MGIM" 458.  
3CWC 107.
by the World. Objectivity is, like solitude, an acquisition, a property discovered by a shift of attention from "(I-) Thou" to "(I-) It." In turn, direct and explicit intersubjective experiences are possible only because there is a primordial capacity for them which has been specified in the concrete event. In both cases, the logic is the same: possibility implies prior actuality. Experience is always social or never. It is primordially social because the very structure of experience itself is a dialogue with the Other Mind mediated by the natural and social World as a whole and in detail.

"Developed" or explicit experience as an articulation of the nuclear I-Thou-It relation is a progressive disengagement of the three elements at one level of psychological maturity and a re-engagement of them later on in the following order: objectivity, subjectivity and, finally, intersubjectivity and consubjectivity. Epistemologically, however, both objectivity and subjectivity depend upon a latent or implicit intersubjectivity, which finds explicitation in a twofold psychological movement. First, the disengagement of subject from object, followed by the full realization of intersubjectivity, the discovery of other selves by a detachment of the "Thou" from the "It." That is to say, the psychological order of development reverses the epistemological order of priority.
The field of experience remains a latent factor in consciousness as the elements of experience are gradually distinguished. But it is capable of being brought to awareness by a shift of attention from any of the three elements of experience to the context which grounds them. In his next major work, *The Coming World Civilization*, Hocking continued to insist that the intersubjective character of all experience thus leads directly to an awareness of God by a contextual reflection:

The same turn that brings the I-think into the picture also brings the sharableness: the simple thereness is already common experience, common receptivity toward an intersubjective action. Yet as action it is wholly different from any activity I might perceive in the field of thereness: it is silent, unrelenting, with no insistence on change, more like a firm pressure-of-being from the unnamed, unvocal, nonintrusive Other.¹

In a shift of attention from the part, the self-conscious ego, to the whole, the field of consciousness, the Other is brought to explicit awareness in what can only be described as a mystical experience: "I recognize it as the will of another self, a purposive selfhood, purposing among other things the being of this I-think. It is the Thou-art, immediately experienced as such."²

On the basis of this discussion, to describe the process by which the structure of experience is explicitated

1CWC 39.

2Ibid. Cf. 40. The field of experience can also be brought to conscious awareness by reflex acts of attention in dealing with other Thou's and the World itself.
in the concrete events of life becomes possible in terms of
the creation of a Self by another Self in a process of self-
communication mediated through the natural and social World.
This process succeeds "more or less well" inasmuch as the
conceptual presentation of reality by ideas is more or less
adequate. (It is important to remember that for Hocking
ideas never exist in isolation from feelings.) The Self so
created is thus always a social Self.

3. Final Conceptions of Experience: Fact, Field and Destiny

Hocking's third formulation of the concept of experi-
ence was both more overtly metaphysical than the previous
two and also emphasized the contextual field of experience
more than they did. The continuity between the concept of
experience as the interrelationship of Fact, Field and Des-
tiny is perhaps not immediately apparent in Hocking's arti-
culation of his final metaphysic, but I believe that a clear
line of convergence can be discerned. For in Hocking's view,
Fact came to signify the ultimate category of the World's
reality, the bald "It" of nuclear experience. Field similarly
assumed functions of the "I" and the "Self" of the for-
mer concepts. Field also united the World of Fact with the
Self, for facts do not exist in isolation, but as elements
in a field. Further, the Self is also a field in which Fact-
fields intersect; the Self is a "Field of Fields." The ulti-
mate intersubjective or social dimension of experience came to be embodied for Hocking in the notion of Destiny, the I-Thou relationship between God as the ground of experience and the Self, expressed in terms of creativity and purpose. The context of human destiny is the field of social interaction, particularly as manifest in science, love and justice. God is the Infinite Field ultimately binding Facts, finite Fields and their Destiny together. And thus the concept of experience debouches, as Hocking might say, into that of religion.¹

i. Fact

The importance of Fact as an element in experience was clearly stated in Hocking's 1951 version of "Fact and Destiny," in which he related it to his second formulation of the concept of experience. In so far as experience can be described as "a meeting of a world by a self in successive acts of attention,"² then the "existent object of a single act of attention is, in general, a 'fact.'"³

¹The categories of Fact, Field and Destiny were not novel to Hocking's final period of development, but had figured more or less prominently from his earliest period. Their convergence toward the end of his life as the major metaphysical category-system must be seen as the culmina-tion of a process of gradual, even dialectical development in which the radically theistic character of experience became more pronounced.

²"FD II" 322.

³Ibid.
Hocking had already introduced Fact in the preceding article as a datum, something given in the course of experience as "simply there, without apology or permission, with silent finality."\(^1\) Its salient feature is its "hardness" -- the quality or "whatness" by which "it irresistibly displaces whatever we might imagine there in its place."\(^2\) Fact is also characterized by existence, its "thereness" or "presence in the realm of being!".\(^3\) A third characteristic of Fact is its impenetrability: "it lends no encouragement to understanding."\(^4\)

Fact, Hocking later claimed, is always accompanied in its singular particularity by its "shadow" -- the vague presence of the whole.\(^5\) Facts occur in context, ultimately that of the World as a whole. The particular bespeaks the universal. Whether in terms of existence or of meaning, facts are elements in a field potentially infinite.\(^6\)

ii. Field

Field was also a category of Hocking's thought from

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\(^1\) "FD I" 2; cf. MGHE 485, 106, 137.
\(^2\) "FD I" 4.
\(^3\) Ibid.
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) "FD II" 325 - 26.
\(^6\) Cf. "FD II" 328 - 29.
his earliest writings. His concept of the Self as a "Field of Fields" was foreshadowed as early as 1926, when he described the unity of the Self as one in which Nature, Society and God interact: "The self stands as the vinculum between a plurality of space-time orders: it is not completely absorbed in any one of them, and no one of them is for it exclusively real."  

Hocking's awareness of the metaphysical importance of the concept of Field with regard to the triadic nature of experience was noted in 1940: "The content of experience consists of (a) particulars exemplifying or embodying (b) universals, and (c) the fields in which these particulars lie." In a note, he added, "Since these fields (such as space, time) are particular fields, namely the fields of these particular events, they may be dealt with for the present discussion as particulars."  

iii. Destiny

The concept of Destiny had figured unobtrusively in

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1Cf. MGHE 118 - 19, where Hocking refers to "object-fields and field-contents... space-fields, cosmic force-field and one ultimate background-field of infinite time." Cf. also 272, 298.

2SBF 94; cf. also 177f., "WM" 426, "MGHE" 65.

3"OSSM" 257. It is hard to dismiss the possibility that Hocking has here replaced the "form" mentioned in his dissertation with its metaphysical equivalent. See below, p. 108.

4Ibid. For an analysis of Hocking's use of the field-concept, cf. Frederick Werner, "Integrity," PRCWC 95 - 120.
Hocking's *magnum opus*, especially in its two concluding chapters, where it was identified with the prophetic consciousness of God's providence:

Unless the original sources of history, the ultimate arrangements of natural facts, the configurations of physical things which set the last limits to the hopes of all living beings, are already subject to some other control than our own, there is no such thing as absolute certainty of historic action.¹

While appearing in subsequent works, Destiny was not developed as a major category, however, until Hocking's last period of metaphysical reflection.

In *Science and the Idea of God*, Hocking referred to nuclear experience, stressing the ethical element of call and response which would eventually become the sense of Destiny. He began, however, by exposing in the concept of Fact, the "datum" of sense experience, the implicit give-and-take which gives rise to call and response and thereby to duty. As a personal transaction, call and response implies a dimension of experience beyond the simple dyad of mind-meeting-object. The first stage in making manifest the intersubjective character of scientific experience is the rejection, accordingly, of pure subjectivism: "As a 'datum,' it [i.e., fact] is something 'given,' and that means given to a receiving self by an outer activity; it is a surface of contact between a living mind and a living world."² Such a da-

¹MGHE 516. Cf. also 488, 503, 511ff., 515ff.

²*Science and the Idea of God* (Chapel Hill: University
tum of experience presents me with a **moral** alternative: do I take it as solipsistic, mere fodder for subjective self-enjoyment, or as a summons to think, a phase of an object, the sign of an objective world? Hocking replied,

The life of the man and the life of science itself depend on rejecting the first alternative, and going in for the second; it is the rejection of solipsism, and therewith of solipsistic enjoyment; it is the beginning of conversation.¹

Here, Hocking clearly implies that experientially, the rejection of solipsism is a matter of moral **choice**. This is, I believe, a manifest reference to his notion of destiny perceived as a call of duty to address and deal with the natural and social World as a dual realm of personal responsibility.² A "natural" failure to do so would amount to something like deliberate autism; the moral refusal to come out of one's solitary self-preoccupation and undertake the duties of social life would be an act of fundamental selfishness.

Further, the fact of scientific enterprise itself asserts by implication that the outer agency is not only a source of obligation but a "Thou." For

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¹SIG 113.

²Cf CWC 198: "God is the heart of Fact; and with this primary Fact appears my first duty, to come out of my self and converse with him."
only a living self can be such a source. This is not argued out by the incipient consciousness of the infant; its attitude is far more substantial and direct. It does the primary ethical deed of living outward rather than inward, as no proof could either require or reach, because it already perceives that which is not itself as a Thou, an Other, and accepts its destiny as a life of conversation with that Other. This is the immediate presence of purpose in the nucleus of the world, precisely there where science begins and also the mystic.¹

Perhaps this view is not an extreme extrapolation of the view of Eddington that "the stuff of the universe is mind stuff."² Hocking is claiming that both the mystic and the scientist, even the infant, are responding to what is perceived as the call of a living self, not the bare facticity of a dead universe. Only a living mind has such a "pull." The mystic and the scientist differ from the infant in reaching out deliberately, fulfilling with the fullness of conscious decision what the infant normally does instinctively and effortlessly.

Similarly, in The Coming World Civilization Hocking, moving closer to his explicit concept of Destiny, maintained that

In the presence of the universal Thou-art, there is an immediate summons to live by objective thought (including science) and by creative action: and in so far as the individual responds, partially or completely to


this imperative, God is literally, through him, at work in history.¹

The reworking of Thoughts on Life and Death (1937) as The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience in 1957 gave Hocking the opportunity to bring Destiny explicitly forward as an experiential fact. The sense of destiny, he observed, is fundamentally an experience or feeling that one

is in the hands of an overnecessity which in the course of his world line he could not evade except at the cost of complete futility. The sense of power is to such persons a sense of obligation, and the quest not of inner dimensionality, but of specific agenda, as of the thing or things one was meant to do.²

In so far as this "overnecessity" is an experience, more precisely a feeling, it is not exactly to the point to account for it in terms of social demands, family expectations, education, etc. And this for two reasons. First, as an "overnecessity," there is apparently some awareness that Destiny is not of the same kind as the common necessities of life, although perhaps implicated in them, but something over and beyond them, something possibly on the order of Kant's categorical imperative. Second, even if the immediate occasion of the specific feeling of destiny were the ordi-

¹CWC 83. Cf. MGHE 511ff., HNR, Chapter 14 and "HA" 435.

²MIHE 95. Cf. also "A Brief Note on Individuality in East and West," The Status of the Individual in East and West, Charles Moore, ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), pp. 94 - 95; hereafter referred to as "ABN."
nary necessities imposed upon us by the demands of social life, these might well be perceived as the media of some higher call addressing us through them, a possibility which, given Hocking's respect for ordinary experience and mediation, provides an attractive theoretical account. At any rate, it is the force of conviction, not the specific occasion that Hocking has here singled out for consideration. Further, those who express such a conviction are themselves at a loss to describe it accurately.¹

Hocking's last metaphysical testament brought greater, perhaps final sharpness to the relations between the fundamental elements of experience: the given aspect of Fact, the Field which grounds Fact both as background and as consciousness or Self, and the call of an Other, which demands a response in the purposeful activities of the Self in the fact-world of Nature and Society and ultimately stands revealed as the Field of all experience.

Much of Hocking's treatment of Fact in "Fact, Field and Destiny" is indebted to "Fact and Destiny (II)." He added, importantly, however, that Fact "has the wide generality of both 'thing' and 'event'...."² And here, even more

¹Cf. MIHE 95: "Let us designate such persons as the mystics. They are led on by something they know not what. They are at a disadvantage in giving an account of it."

²"FFD" .527.
importantly, Fact is no longer synonymous with datum: "The English word 'Fact' ... suggests an independent entity standing pat toward our encounter -- offering itself, if at all, only to our awareness. The self-giving of the particular Fact is a piece of the self-standing of the world."¹ Fact is the fundamentally irreducible but non-deducible element of extramental reality in our experience.² But Fact is problematic. While it is necessary that if anything is to exist that there be a factual world, still, any singular Fact is unnecessary and therefore contingent.³ Facts may well be prosaic, but they also have indisputable authority when established.⁴ In sum, "It belongs to the concept of a Fact that a fact is identifiable -- and this trait implies finitude, boundary, and presumably plurality. And if Fact implies facts, there must also be relations among facts, distinguishable from the facts themselves."⁵ Such relations are often considered "facts of a second order." But relations presuppose a background which is the context and ground, not of themselves alone, but of their relata, Facts. Therefore, Hocking brought forth the concept of Field for consideration as a fundamental metaphysical category.

¹Ibid. Cf. 525: "...the business of Metaphysics is to understand the world, that is to say, the given world which, as given, is one stupendous Fact."

²Ibid.

³Cf. "FFD" 528 – 29.

⁴Cf. "FFD" 530.

⁵"FFD" 531.
Field is no mere mental construct; it is real and factual: "Having no specific sense-properties of its own, it is (in a sense) indistinguishable from Nothing, and has often been referred to as 'The Void.' But unlike a Nothing, it has properties such as continuity and measurability."¹ Space and time are such fields. Hocking, however, congruently with his 1941 insight, found in Field a more ordinary meaning: "the term Field is not originally technical but a term of common speech, to which I now propose to return it, but with an ideal emptiness!"² He advanced his case for the metaphysical significance of field-theory by addressing the knotty problem of necessity and freedom, especially as then embodied in controversies over biological determinism. Hocking, ever-certain of the irrefragible reality of freedom, utilized the concept of Field and the creativity it grounds in order to overcome the philosophical impasse. The solution lay, he advanced,

in the circumstance that Fields, infinite Fields, may have plurals. Kant to the contrary notwithstanding, there may be more than one total space, more than one total time, more than one world-order. Because of this valid pluralism, the apparent alternatives before us, as we deliberate courses of action, are genuine alternatives — not pantomime: the term "possibility" has a literal validity, not to be dismissed as necessity in disguise.³

¹Ibid.
²"FFD" 532. Cf. MIHE xvi.
³"FFD" 541.
Further, "since fields do not exist in their own right, but are derivative from events, as Relativity theory implies, if there can be independent events, there can be independent fields." ¹ But a plurality of independent fields indicates an absolute ontological pluralism and its consequence, an ultimate lack of coherence, unless such a plurality can be contained by another kind of field. As Hocking had realized on his lonely walk by the Charles River, the Self is such a field. Thus, even though there is "no physical transition from one field to another... there is transition" and therefore the possibility of novelty,

namely by a movement of attention: the Self is, we may say, the vinculum between one field and the other. On the view of the general thesis that wherever there is a homogeneous plurality there is a Field expressive of the relationships between individual entities, the Self here functions as a Field of Fields.²

The implications of this insight are important and relevant to Hocking's final conceptualization of experience. First, the Self is a metaphysical category of first priority, transcending the limitations of subordinate fields and the closed cosmos of the conservative system:

the phenomenal world -- that of the conservative order -- will maintain its rules; but ... the rules are at every point subject to alteration of field-reckoning through the creative decisions of Selves. This implies that

¹Ibid.
²"FFD" 541 - 42.
while the phenomenal world is a closed system, the real universe is to some extent "open toward the future."\footnote{"FFD" 542.}

Second, by means of the emergence of creativity and purpose, Hocking prepared the way for a consideration of Destiny. He pointed out that our creativity is radically limited and actually nascent:

we human beings never create-in-toto: we bring into existence states of fact not otherwise involved in the conservative system; we have indeed introduced novelty into the world, but novelty of familiar kinds — a novelty of rearrangement rather than of production \textit{ex nihilo}. Our creativity is fractional. The truth is, \textit{we have to learn how to create}; and the value of the product is in proportion to the prior docility — let me say to the depth of the generating empirical plunge.\footnote{"FFD" 543 - 44.}

We are, as he said elsewhere, "apprentices in creativity."\footnote{Ibid. Cf. MGHE 299, TP 179, "ABN" 95.}

Human creativity is thus derivative. It is, further, often spontaneous and unpredictable: "Not only is our creativity dependent on a prior realism, the new idea we call our own often arrives without intent or plan."\footnote{"FFD" 543.} It is also sometimes the response to excitations not entirely within the scope of our voluntary origination and therefore implies community: creativity occurs within a trans-personal field of interacting agents. Art is a form of communication: It is of the essence of human creation that its product, like its gestation, belongs not alone to the author's world but to our world. For as the lesser creativity of
free action implies a passage of telos from a private world to a factual world field, so the greater creativity means a passage from the world of private conception into the world of every man. Each such decision, and each such output of idea, is attended by the simple certitude that one's private thought is in its nature universal -- the natural, unquestioned intersubjectivity of experience.¹

Here, intersubjectivity refers not merely to I-Thou or even social relationships in general, but to the intercourse between the finite mind and the infinite Other Mind in the act of objective thinking. Creative thought is consequently a participation in the creative activity of God. And with such creativity enters Destiny: "the creative self perceives his product as having a destiny beyond himself. This, its destiny, is part of its being; and also part of his. The idea of destiny becomes part of our empirical outlook."²

The field-concept thus joins the concepts of Fact and Destiny in a synthesis that includes the field of reference as well as the Self, now clearly associated with the original notion of nuclear experience:

...the Field-concept... underlies all discontinuities, and, ...once recognized, accounts for the simply felt unity of the world. Within this felt unity, there is a richness of experience which is at a disadvantage for recognition, partly because it is too near us, beneath the level of specific language, and partly because its aspects are mutually involved. To refer to it, we must use speech; and every translation does it some injustice.

¹"FFD" 544 - 45.
²"FFD" 545.
Let me refer to this region as our nuclear awareness of the world. Within it there is, for example, a nuclear awareness of our Self, so central, and so engaged, that Hume and many after him, interested in separate impressions, not only fail to find it, but deny its existence. There is a nuclear awareness of the intersubjective Thou-art. There is also a nuclear awareness of bodily well-or-ill being, of certain instinctive powers, of a general direction of process in time, involving what is now pertinent to us, a sense of destiny.

Fact, Field and Destiny thus incorporate the elements of nuclear experience, providing the bare "I-It-Thou" with relational content. The psychological triad has become a metaphysical one. Two items remained to be specified in this metaphysics of experience, however; the content of the category of Destiny and the relation between Destiny and God as the Ground of experience.

Recalling his original, more descriptive analysis of prophetic consciousness in his magnum opus, his characterization of objective thought in Science and the Idea of God as well as of Destiny itself in The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, Hocking found in Destiny at this point a reconciliation of present quest and future attainment:

There is here something like an incipient sense of "duty" (from which will come, in due time, science); but not of duty alone: it is at the same time the way to fulfillment. Destiny, as the elemental End, is the natural synthesis of "duty" and "happiness." Into it, there comes by degrees a specification, that of having an individual

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1"FPD" 545 - 46. Significantly, Hocking added, "Its most tangible elements are the elements vaguely called feeling, at once cognitive and emotional, endlessly variable and intertwined."
"calling," in which concept one detects (i) an undefined something for me to do, an obligation, and (ii) an undefined promise, an assurance of possible success, authoritative!

Such purpose and fulfillment cannot escape our conscious awareness if it is at all real within human experience, nor, as Hocking argues, can we be ignorant of its source in a "creative real, somehow akin." Destiny involves us in a relation, both latent in the deepest structure of experience and manifest in the imperative of scientist and mystic, with an all-embracing Field of Fields. And our life thus finds meaning as a response to a call: "It is a call to the finite creator... to fill a need which is a world need, that meaning be realized in his unique and factual situation, a contribution to the life of God, as the hidden meaning of creation ex nihilo."  

As Hocking's triadic concept of experience evolved, the social character of experience was articulated in different modes, but was present in all three major formulations. As the concept of intersubjectivity became clearer in his exposition, curiously, explicit reference to the "thou-dimension" of experience diminished. It is only by analyzing the concepts of World, Idea and Field that the social dimension is in fact made manifest. In each instance,

1 "FFD" 546 - 47.
2 "FFD" 547.
3 Ibid.
the social aspect is specified by the function of mediation: the World-objects, both inanimate and personal, ideas (by which the World is met) and fields of all kinds (and the creativity they permit) are all common media -- they unite selves in shared experience. The possibility of such unity is conditioned by the presence of a total Field which not only grounds the elements of experience, but also enters into active relationship with those consciously aware of themselves, others and the Fact-world.

God thus enters the scene, not as Ralph Barton Perry remarked, "at the point at which Other Mind is capitalized,"\(^1\) but in moments of feeling-charged insight that this, my experience of whatever aspect of Nature or Society, is situated within a context which is not only itself social, that is, related to other selves and known to be so, but laden with a personal meaning for my own future happiness. I am being addressed, called to become responsibly creative of the coming world civilization by a Presence operating in history and through me.

The specific manifestations of God in human experience are matters for treatment under the religious dimension of experience; the point Hocking has established in his articulation of the structure of experience as such is

\(^1\)Ralph Barton Perry, "Contemporary Philosophies of Religion," *Harvard Theological Review*, 7 (1914), pp. 385 - 86.
that it is grounded in a divine Field which can become salient in human experience by a direction of attention either inwards or outwards. In both cases, the sense of God's presence has an infallibly social character.

Religious experience thus becomes a mode of experience in general, the conscious manifestation of the theistic ground mediated in whatever fashion. Mystical experience, in turn, can be seen to represent the fullest realization of that divine presence. Mediation remains the function of experience which conditions the possibility of an awareness of God in either case, if such awareness is to exist at all. For all experience, as triadic, is mediated, whether direct or indirect. There is no I-It relation outside the sphere of other knowers. And the field of experience can become manifest only in relation to the figures for which it is the ground. And thus we return to the problem of immediate experience: how is it possible for any relation, not only with God, but with anything or anyone, to be immediate, direct and yet mediated? Did Hocking, by espousing a triadic concept of experience with its necessary implication of mediation, preclude the possibility of mystical experience?
II. THE PROBLEM OF IMMEDIACY

As noted before, John E. Smith's distinction between immediate experience, mediated (interpreted) experience and inference has direct bearing on the present discussion.\(^1\) According to this view, both interpretation and inference, as mediated, exclude immediacy in any absolute sense. Therefore Smith denies that an immediate experience of God is possible, in so far as God can never be disclosed without some intervening medium. Moreover, absolute immediacy, meaning non-mediated experience, would negate the structure of experience itself:

Absolute immediacy can never deliver what it promises because some form of mediation -- concepts, language, symbols -- always intervenes and makes it impossible to pass from the experience to the reality of God; inference does not suffice because it always takes the form of necessity, which means not that God is experienced, but that something else is experienced and that therefore God "must" be real.\(^2\)

Thus Smith proposes an approach to experience between absolute immediacy and inference, "that of mediated or interpreted experience in which both experience and interpretation are interwoven."\(^3\) Smith does not consider, how-

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\(^1\) For a direct application of Smith's critique to Hocking, cf. Mary E. Giegengack, op. cit.


\(^3\) Ibid.
ever, whether in this interweaving some kind of immediacy is retained. Hocking, on the other hand, as we have seen, clearly stated that God is not only directly but immediately experienced. Consequently, in attempting to discover the condition for the possibility of such an experience of God, we must inquire whether Hocking meant something other than "absolute immediacy" when referring to an immediate experience of God.

It should be observed here that Smith's criticism of an immediate experience of God extends to immediate experience in general. Hocking himself held, as we shall see, that immediacy was to the contrary a property of all experience and that therefore, taken as a criterion, insufficiently distinguished mystical experience from other types of experience. But Hocking also held that all experience, including the direct experience of God, was mediated, as Smith cogently argues. Consequently, if Hocking could show how an experience of God could be both immediate and mediated, a possible case would be established for all experience. (The reciprocal claim would not necessarily follow unless it were shown that the experience of God is not exceptional, that is, essentially extraordinary. This was, of course, one of Hock-

1 Following Smith, Giegengack clearly rules out any immediate experience of God along with all other absolutely immediate experience, thus contending that Hocking's position is untenable. Cf. Giegengack, op. cit., pp. 68, 78.

2 See below, pp. 113 and 223.
In the following section, I shall attempt to show that Hocking anticipated Smith's objections by developing his concept of "relative immediacy," which not only covers Smith's "third alternative," but also developed it further and more carefully. This, I believe, established the logical basis for Hocking's argument that religious and mystical experience are more developed forms of experience in general in which the theistic element, the divine "field of reference," becomes progressively more salient. That is to say, religious and mystical experience represent the explicitation of the religious dimension of all experience.

1. Hocking's Concept of Immediacy

Hocking nowhere offered a specific definition of immediacy. He was aware, I believe, that in general usage, "immediate" means not only "unmediated," but also "present" -- in the sense of both spatial and temporal "proximity" or intimacy -- "here and now."¹ It was to this latter, positive

¹According to the OED, "immediate" is "Said of a person or thing in its relation to another: That has no intermediary or intervening member, medium or agent; that is in actual contact or direct personal relation." As such, it is opposed both to mediate and remote. Immediate also denotes "Having no person, thing, or space intervening, in place, order, or succession; standing or coming next; proximate, nearest, next; close, near...." With respect to time, it signifies "Present or next adjacent.... Occurring, accomplished, or taking effect without delay or lapse of time; done at once, instant." (OED1379.) Similarly, the American Heritage
aspect of direct and objective presence that Hocking's general use of the term primarily referred rather than to "unmediated" -- its negative meaning. In one instance, he noted tersely that "Experience is here and now." He also called this quality of experience "simple thereness," suggesting a mode of spatial presence or "place." In making "An Appeal to Immediate Experience," he wrote, again, "We do not ordinarily consider the world we perceive as an activity upon ourselves. We perceive it as a simple thereness of the sense-presented expanse." In a late work, Hocking similarly invoked the temporal dimension of our assurance of reality, simultaneous with our awareness of the presence of God: "In my view, the assurance of reality is immediate; because the experience of an actual world is at the same time an experience of its active source, the self-authenticating Thou-art." Thus Hocking opposed immediate experi-

Dictionary of the English Language gives the following meanings of immediate: "1. Being without mediation or interposition; direct. 2. Intuitive. 3. Next in line or relation. 4. Occurring or accomplished without delay; instant. 5. Near to the present. 6. Near at hand." (Op. cit., p. 352.)

1 "MGHE" 65. Cf. also MGHE 203.

2 CWC 38. Cf. also 191 - 92, where, utilizing both senses of immediate, Hocking further describes the "therefulness" of God's immediate presence in terms of William James' "quiet music playing in the back of the mind": "...the music is addressed to the mind it inhabits, and to many this presence takes companionly form, without any of the palpable intrusions of human companionship. It means, at least, 'He is there'; and because of this, my solitude can never be deserted and insignificant." Cf. also "RF" 360.

3 MIHE 241.
ence to inference or indirect or vicarious experience, in which an object of experience was not "here and now," but separated by time or distance.

The earliest instances of the space-time proximity connotated by immediate in Hocking's writings appear in his unpublished 1904 dissertation. In developing the concept of the "judgment of experience," he raised the subject in the following manner:

A rough description of the current judgment of experience... is this: It is charging immediacy with universals. The more we know and the wider awake we are, the more we see in what is before us, the more it means to us.¹

The simplest example of the judgment of experience would be a predication such as "This is ice," about which Hocking commented, "The subject is the 'this-now,' and the predicate undertakes to characterize it by a general meaning found perhaps in some previous experience...."² Thus judgment was for Hocking "a universalizing of the given" in which he distinguished three elements:

¹ EEOCB 37. Hocking first mentions "immediate experience" on p. 39. Roland Rice, in his dissertation on Hocking's mysticism, claims in this respect that "Immediacy refers to content already there and available for any future knowledge." (Mysticism in the Philosophy of William Ernest Hocking, Dissertation, Boston University, 1954, p. 22.) Rice is definite in maintaining that even in his earliest writings, Hocking was not referring primarily to simple or pure immediacy, but to immediacy as a result of interpretation. Cf. pp. 2, 24, 27, 50 and 153 - 54.

² Ibid.
(1) The immediate, "this-now" character;
(2) The universal character, which has various offices, as classing, characterizing, signifying, associating;
(3) The form.

In developing the positive concept of immediacy throughout his career, Hocking never deviated far from this initial position. The distinction between the positive and negative senses of immediate is, further, important, given the perhaps subtle but nevertheless significant difference between their references.

In actual practice, Hocking used immediate to qualify many aspects of experience, generally in the sense of "this-now" or "here and now" proximity rather than of "non-mediated." While it would be inaccurate to say that Hocking was uncritical in his employment of the term, immediate has somewhat different connotations in different contexts, although within the general ambience of "presence." Thus, for

1EEOCB 59.

2At least the major instances of this usage fall under the following nine categories: immediate assurance ("How Can Christianity Be the Final Religion?" Yale Divinity Quarterly, 5 [Mar. 1909], p. 287; hereafter referred to as "HCCBFR"); TP 317; "LRT" 43; "DCEN" 242; "HA" 435); immediate awareness (MGHE 390; MS 441 - 42, 330; "MS" 190, 194; LRWF 87); immediate certainty (MGHE 449 - 50 n. 1; MIHE 159); immediate experience (MGHE xxix, 410, 474; "RF" 365; TP 262 - 63, 316; RM 45; CWC 39; MIHE 37, 246; "FFD" 548; "HA" 460, etc.); immediately felt meaning (MIHE 98, 159; "FFD" 545); immediate knowledge (MGHE 297; "INR" 582, 588); immediate perception (CWC 97 - 98; cf. also for "immediate insight" MGHE 361); immediate presence (CWC 198; SIG 112, 114; "FFD" 548); and the immediate sense of God (CWC 198).
instance in his magnum opus he wrote, "The mystic finds his absolute in immediate experience." 1 Elsewhere he noted, "The ultimate evidence for the selfhood of the whole is not primarily the evidence of argument, however, nor of analogy, but that of immediate experience, interpreted by the dialectic." 2 In what is likely his last article, Hocking observed, "The genius of the East has turned with even greater emphasis toward a type of knowledge in which the distinction between subject and object yields place to an experience of unity, and immediate awareness of its theme." 3

2. The Problem of Pure Immediacy

Although willing to regard pure or absolute immediacy as a possible dimension of human experience, Hocking did not find in it the satisfaction of the desire to know, to love or to create. For pure immediacy lacks structure and meaningful content. Here, Hocking clearly anticipated Smith:

A purely immediate experience would be empty of meaning: our most nearly immediate experience, self-awareness, is mediated by the current rill of sensation and the contents of memory and purpose. To find God in immediate experience, which is indeed the substance of religion as experience, is therefore to find him through some mediation. 4

1 MGHE xxix.
2 TP 316.
3 "ABN" 96.
4 CWC 99. Earlier, Hocking had played upon the para-
God may well be present to us in the pure immediacy of pre-reflexive, subconscious experience, but such absolute and primordial communion is not available for understanding without the intervention of some mental process. To be meaningful, immediate experience was for Hocking first of all intentional and therefore relative: "Experience is always here and now. But it is always more than immediate; for it is experience of an object." Such objects of experience possess real and external relations to the perceiving Self (and to each other), relations which are not only experienced but also charge all meaningful immediacy with relativity both in time and "place." Thus, "The immediacy of any experience must submit to interpretation by what is outside it and related to it." Even if understood as the supreme instance of immediacy, mystical experience, there is no exception to this general rule: "...the immediacy of the mystic experience has its external relations." Further, "...the immediacy of the [mystical] experience is never so great as to be wholly free from outer reference, ...some dox implicit in the preceding quotation: "This present actuality of experience, 'pure experience,' finds me in living relation with that which is most utterly non-myself. Here, in the immediate, is my absolute escape from immediacy. Here in the given present is my escape from myself, my window upon infinity, my exit unto God." (MGHE 316, emphasis added.)

1"MGHE" 65.
2MGHE 354.
3MGHE 355. Here Hocking clearly departs from Smith.
consciousness of the worldly self and of its ties remains."

Hocking also clearly indicated the limits of immediacy with respect to other important aspects of experience, notably knowledge, meaning and certitude. First, as early as his dissertation, he asserted that experience does not come in self-contained units, but has its beginnings in previous experience and leads to further experience: "The immediate 'for itself' is not knowledge.... Knowledge as we know it never begins out of immediacy; but always stands upon a given piece of knowledge to reach out toward more." Knowledge was thus "funded" for Hocking by past experience as part of a temporal system which entails the future inasmuch as our limited knowledge implies further experience—more to be known and done. Hence cognitive experience cannot be immediate in the sense that it is devoid of connections beyond its "here and now" presence before the mind. By implication, the objects of knowledge are intermediaries between this experience and further experience as well as between knowers.

Second, with regard to several paradoxes of meaning, Hocking again both affirmed (relative) and denied (absolute) immediacy: "There can be no meaning in life unless there is


2EEOCB 40.
an immediate meaning," he declared, explaining that "Meaning cannot lie in postponed satisfaction in some future attainment. However we try to refer meaning to an 'end' or 'goal,' it is the nature of experience to lure it back and weave it in with the quality of the on-going present." On the other hand, he was no less explicit in stating that

There can be no sufficient meaning in life in immediacy. ... Meaning is not a taste, nor any sort of purely animal sensitivity; for a human being can take no self-enjoyment in a sub-human form of consciousness. And the human form is actively referring to its present some sort of a beyond which the taster fails to get.2

For Hocking, then, the immediately felt meaning that endows life with hope is always limited and thus relative, both with reference to time and in terms of its own adequacy, which is always partial. Meaning is always provisional, and because of that, third, the immediate certitude of the mystic (and everyman) is likewise limited and provisional although persistently aimed at fuller satisfaction and completion.3

Clearly, Hocking envisioned not only the possibility of an interpretative (or mediated) dimension of experience as called for by Smith's critique, but in fact went on to propose a model which did not jettison the dimension of immediacy associated with mystical experience. Nor did Hocking

1 MIHE 98.
2 Ibid.
3 On immediate certitude or assurance, cf. also MGHE 296, 453 - 54; MIHE 241, 200; and "ABN" 95.
subordinate immediate experience to interpretation, a stratagem of Royce which he had expressly rejected. For Royce had held that God, as well as the Self and other selves were not known in immediate experience but solely by interpretation.¹ Hocking held to the contrary that all meaningful experience, including the immediate experience of God, the Self and other selves, was mediated.²

3. Relative Immediacy

Relative immediacy was thus characterized for Hocking by a non-exclusive relation with mediation.³ "Third" ob-

¹For Hocking's criticism of Royce's doctrine, cf. "ORE" 61ff. and "INR" 588. For Hocking on interpretation, see below, pp. 282 - 91.

²Cf. LRWF: "The perception of God for us mortals is always by way of something or through something: it is 'mediated.'" He added, significantly, "Through such mediation, God becomes for our perception as real as the human world, as real as things, as real as ourselves!"

³Hocking expressly mentioned "relative immediacy" in a discussion with John Dewey in which he described how by reflection subsequent to an experience, immediacy is "lost": "Accepting the maxim that the ingredients of experience are first had then thought about, this subsequent thinking deals in general with the enquiries 'What is this object?' 'On what does it depend?' In the course of these enquiries, which are always pertinent, the relative immediacy of the experience of 'having' is lost; the immediate becomes charged with 'mediation.'" ("DCEN" 236.) If, however, the ingredients of experience are not first had and subsequently thought about, but simultaneously had and thought about, e.g., recognized or conceptualized -- an event definitely consonant with Hocking's epistemology -- then, presumably, the mediation would not rob the experience of its immediacy, that is, the felt presence of its objective ingredient.
jects as possibly "transparent" intermediaries between selves, have a double significance. As he had observed in his magnum opus,

Any connecting medium is apt to appear as an obstacle to direct relationship; on the other hand, any obstacle may discover itself to be a mediator, sign of unbroken continuity. The sea separates, -- or the sea connects; it cannot do one without doing the other also. So Nature may be interpreted in its relation to social consciousness as the visible pledge and immediate evidence of our living contact with God.¹

But, as Hocking also insisted, "...let us be clear that whenever mediated and indirect relations are possible and valuable, there presumably immediate relations are possible and valuable as well."² Here again Hocking is building on the axiom that actuality precedes possibility; immediacy is prior to mediation as subjectivity is prior to objectivity. In terms of God, this means that "...the assurance of reality is immediate; because the experience of an actual world is at the same time an experience of its actual source, the self-authenticating Thou-art."³

God, therefore, can be encountered in immediate experience but meaningfully only if mediated by real "third" entities which permit and indeed demand interpretation. In-

¹ MGHE 266. Compare Hocking's notion of concepts with a "double boundary": GL Mar. 18, 1938; "WDPS" 37; "Response to Prof. Krikorian's Discussion," Journal of Philosophy, 55, 7 (Mar. 27, 1958), p. 276; hereafter referred to as "RFK." Cf. also Rouner, WHE 122, and "MS" 190.
² MGHE 357.
³ MIHE 241.
terpretation in this sense can be taken as the ability to explicate the implicit meaning (or "content") of an experience by rendering intermediaries transparent, that is, by recognizing them as "third" objects uniting knowing and feeling selves. "Objects" are media of communication. Interpretation is the conscious, subjective aspect of mediation; both are essential parts of experience.¹ The recognition of the mediating and thus relative function of "thirds" becomes the means to known immediacy, which is alone meaningful, being the more or less structured and "located" elevation of pure (absolute) immediacy to consciousness: "...reaching the non-mediated is a passage beyond mediation, by aid of that mediation."² For the mystic and potentially for everyman, therefore, anything — indeed, everything — can become such a mediator:

The mystic finds the absolute in immediate experience. Whatever is mediated is for him not yet the real which he seeks. This means to some that the mystic rejects all mediators: the implication is mistaken. To say that a mediator is not the finality is not to say that a mediator is nothing. The self-knowing mystic, so far from rejecting mediators, makes all things mediators in their own measure. To all particulars he denies the name God, -- to endow them with the title of mediator between himself and God.³

¹See below, pp. 182ff., 282 - 91.

²CWC 99. Regarding "location," Hocking observed that "Knowing, as process, is essentially the work of placing a given experience within the entire system of experience." ("The Transcendence of Knowledge," art. cit., p. 22.)

³MGHE xxix. Here and in the previous quotation, Hock-
The triadic structure of experience entails that all experience is mediated. It also enables the mystic (and Hocking) to avoid pantheism, for even the Whole of experience, when taken as an "object" of conscious reflection, is not thereby identified with God, but mediates God. Every "part" of the Whole is likewise a possible intermediary because of the actual mediation of the Whole.

4. Conclusion

In summary, Hocking's doctrine of immediacy can be expressed in the following propositions. Pure or absolute immediacy lies below (or above) the threshold of conscious meaning and can be termed "experience" only in a limited sense. All consciously meaningful experience is, conversely, always mediated to some degree. Such interpreted experience can either be "relatively" immediate or inferential, that is, deductive or inductive. And thus, mediation is not an obstacle to immediate experience in the sense of direct presence "here and now," but a means to it, i.e., to known immediacy.

Hence Hocking could claim without inconsistency or

...ing may have alluded to a third level of immediacy, a "pure" experience of God which transcends all consciousness of the media which "trigger" it. Whether such an experience could be meaningful in its moment is doubtful by Hocking's criteria as well as Smith's. The raptures of the mystics, which are subsequently identified as a pure awareness of God, could readily fit such a description. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, Q. 180, a. 5.

1See below for discussion, pp. 147f., 193ff., 197, 202ff.
contradiction that God can be experienced first, in a direct but restricted, pre-reflexive manner (i.e., in absolute immediacy) as a presence of which we are at most only "dimly" aware. Second, God can also be experienced in a direct but mediated manner (i.e., relative immediacy), in which the dim awareness of his presence is raised to fuller consciousness by the interpretation of the media of Self, Nature and Society. Third, God can be indirectly experienced in the events of everyday life as well as in rapturous experiences of absolute immediacy in so far as both are subject to later interpretation or inference.

Consequently, it seems evident that it is not useful to categorize experience as "immediate," "interpreted" and "inferred" with Smith (and Giegengack) in so far as for Hocking all meaningful experience, including (relatively) immediate experience, is both mediated and interpreted. Even absolute immediacy remains open to later interpretation.

Two alternatives are possible: experience can be distinguished either (1) as absolutely (purely) immediate, relatively immediate and inferential; or, (2) as direct, composed of both absolute and relative immediacy, and indirect, that is, inference. In either case, absolute immediacy must be sharply distinguished from relative immediacy. A difficulty lies in Hocking's reticence to refer to absolute immediacy as experience in any but a marginal sense since,
being without known external relations, it is (in its mo-
ment) un-mediated, un-interpretable and therefore devoid of
meaning. Subject to later or even simultaneous interpreta-
tion, however, even absolute immediacy remains in some sense
related to both conscious, relative immediacy and infer-
ential or reflexive experience.

If Hocking had used another term for either "immedi-
ate" or "mediation," or if he had more systematically de-
veloped his concept of "relative immediacy," a good deal of
ambiguity could have been avoided. His occasional failure
to qualify immediate, allowing the context to provide the
appropriate connotation, is particularly liable to produce
misunderstanding, especially if one has a univocal concept
of immediacy.

Nevertheless, I believe that, overall, Hocking es-
caped the dilemma posed by Smith. Further, I believe that
the articulation of his doctrine of relative immediacy pro-
posed above avoids the difficulty of how God can be experi-
enced within human experience short of becoming an object
among other objects. In fact, Smith's rejection of the al-
leged immediacy of mystical experience, far from weakening
Hocking's position, virtually reiterates it:

A pure empiricism of immediacy such as can be found in
mysticism, where God is disclosed without a medium, as
it were, would seem to demand that the reality or exist-
ence of God be given along with the immediate experi-
ence itself. If, however, we deny that there can be an
absolutely immediate experience that is also meaningful, it follows that any supposed experience of God would have to be mediated in some way.¹

Hocking, of course, would simply deny that in mystical experience, God is ever disclosed without a medium. For him, if God is to be meaningfully disclosed, it must be through some medium. In this, Hocking is in full agreement with the classical Western mystical tradition, as we shall have occasion to recall.² Further, by elaborating the implications of his triadic conception of experience, Hocking also established the logical basis for his investigation of religious and mystical experience as well as his argument that these forms of experience are not different in kind from other experience, but represent the fuller development of the triadic character of all experience. As such, they are at least potentially the common inheritance of all human persons.

¹Smith, op. cit., p. 52. Elsewhere Smith argues against mysticism in even stronger terms but along the same lines as above. (Cf. "In What Sense Can We Speak of Experiencing God?" Journal of Religion, 50 [1970], pp. 229 - 44.) However, as with the objections brought forward in his book, the latter do not hold against Hocking's concept of relative immediacy but only against claims that God is experienced in absolute immediacy. For a recent discussion provoked by Smith's approach, cf. Robert A. Oakes, "Sensible Experience of God," The New Scholasticism, 48, 2 (Spring, 1974), pp. 171 - 84; Edward Walter, "Can There Be Sensible Experience of God?" Ibid., 48, 4 (Autumn, 1974), pp. 519 - 26; and Robert A. Oakes, "Sensible Experience of God -- Once Again," Ibid., 49, 3 (Summer, 1975), pp. 341 -43.

III. THE MEANING AND STRUCTURE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE:

CONCLUSION

Following the line of argumentation so far exposed, the meaning of experience in general, that is, the purpose it serves and therefore the value it has, could only lie for Hocking in the progressive realization of the intersubjective unity of persons, Nature and Society in God. The meaning of experience is community, community which involves communion with God or, rather, rests upon communion with God. In both individual and social experience, this unification occurs (or will occur) in history.¹ Inasmuch as the unifying presence of God in individual and social history occurs in a movement of progressive explicitation, it is likely that the meaning of human experience will be most keenly felt in the individual and social dimensions of that realm of experience called religious. For religion and religious experience mark the frontier for Hocking between the latent and manifest awareness of God as Thou. In other words, in religious experience we should expect to find the more explicit meaning of all human experience, its essence as well as its manifestation. For the structure of experience itself, as a triadic interrelationship of the Self, the World and other selves, is grounded in a field of reference which not only

enables the act of community, that is, communication, to occur, but itself enters into communication and communion as a personal agency.

Each of the three concepts of experience developed by Hocking to illuminate different aspects of human existence -- its psychological "interior," its sociological "exterior," and its metaphysical significance -- are also related to each other as moments of a dynamic, i.e., temporal, process of development. That is to say, these aspects of human existence succeed each other in the life history of the individual as it unfolds in a progressive explicitation of the meaning of experience. The agency of explicitation is the course of experience itself, the more or less adequate interplay in which the universal capacities of the Self are particularized in actual encounters with individual persons and the facts of the natural and social World. Experience is thus structured both as a state and a process.

As structural elements, Nature, Self and Society are progressively related by antitheses of predominantly objective and subjective moments culminating in a unified subjective-objective synthesis of intersubjective or consubjective awareness. While vulnerable to criticism as an abstract and somewhat forced conceptualization of the dynamic and concrete process described at some length by Hocking, the following sketch is intended to indicate the movement of
conscious development from the objective to the intersubjective aspects of experience, beginning from the experience of Nature.

Taken as a whole, which is apparently how children and "primitives" take Nature in large measure, the objective World manifests a character of power and sometimes of threat. The subjective response is one of a sense of helplessness, fear, often of reverence or fascination, but just as likely of horror -- leading withal to a demand for justice addressed to the World of Nature as a primordial Thou: the intersubjective moment.

As mysterious, further, Nature in its objective power is revealed as somehow already known, for it is discovered to be knowable, perhaps endlessly knowable. But it is never discovered as knowable only by me; it is at least potentially known by others, even by all others. Such possible knowledge rests on some actual knowledge of the Whole. Accordingly, the change of person and voice grammatically from "it is known" to "he knows it" has an apparently universal range in actual occurrence. The subjective correlate is the conscious response to mystery -- the awareness of one's own ignorance of what can be but is not yet known, although

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1 For the "dialectic of Nature," cf. MGHE 6, 229ff., and TP 265.
2 MGHE 146.
3 Cf. MGHE 334ff.; cf. also 308ff.
"he knows it."¹ The intersubjective moment is the discovery that the World is shared and belongs to us. In knowing the common world, one knows the Other.²

A third dialectical moment in Nature springs from the discovery of the common world. Nature as knowable calls forth the subjective sense of obligation actually to know, the imperative of science.³ The intersubjective or consubjective aspect of knowing the world as shared in terms of a call to know it further is the emergence of "con-science" — a community of knowers morally interrelated as if knowing were done in the presence of a universal onlooker.⁴

Experiences of one's own self and of society are similarly structured by moments of objectivity and subjectivity, culminating (ideally) in an intersubjective or consubjective synthesis. First, one's inner life has its moments of objectivity which include the contents of the mind, conscious as well as subconscious, such as ideas of things, instincts, memories, internalized criteria, etc.⁵ The subjec-

¹MGHE 237. On mystery, cf. MGHE 234, 398; TP 315; "SSP" 397; "MGIM" 448 - 49, n. 11; "FD II" 339.

²Cf. MGHE 288ff., 231, 236, 317 - 18.

³Cf. MGHE 409, n. 1.

⁴Cf. "Science in its Relation to Value and Religion," The Rice Institute Pamphlet, 29 (1942), pp. 182 - 191, 220. Cf. also SIG 113ff. In Hocking's thought, science as a response to Nature also represents a response to Society and ultimately to God and has important parallels with religion and art.

⁵Cf. MGHE 527 - 38; cf. also HNR 430, CWC 73.
tive response to the recognition of such psychic objects is the mental or emotional aspect of "interior" experience, especially the sense of "I" achieved in peak moments of reflexive awareness. The intersubjective moment is the perception (or apperception) of the essentially shared elements of the World as the contents of one's own mind: each "I" is also a "We." There is no wholly private world, short of madness; nor is there a wholly public one.

Second, the major sectors of social experience fell for Hocking under the general categories of love (or friendship) and duty (or justice), in which the objective presence of the Other(s) occasions a response which itself leads to genuine, manifest intersubjectivity and the consubjective "We-consciousness" of true community. Examples of social experience -- death, birth, war and wedlock, dream, disease, apparitions, etc. -- are as numerous as those of Nature and follow a similar dialectic of development. The movement from the universal to the particular, from the impersonal to the personal, from objectivity to intersubjectivity, from latent to manifest -- clearly pertains here. (It should perhaps be observed here that as a dynamic structure, the dialectical process is not itself the experience,

1 Cf. MGHE 231, 295, 317 - 18, 431.

but its general form in temporal perspective.)

The natural and social elements of experience are also structured as media of God's self-revelation (communication) to human selves, the dialectic here being the transition from the opacity to the transparency of intermediaries by means of a shift of attention from the partial aspects of experience to the Whole. Here, the perception of and response to God again moves from "It" to "He" to "Thou."

The underlying ground or field of all these types of experience is the intersubjective field itself, existing and perceptible as an infinitely expansive and progressive matrix of creativity: God himself as the constant Thou present to and addressing us in all our experiences of Nature and Society as well as of the Self. The two-fold (i.e., static and dynamic) structure of experience is thus not only personal, it is dialogical -- an on-going communication in which mutual self-disclosure reciprocates with mutual acceptance (or, conceivably, inadvertance or even rejection: Hocking was not blind to the reality of sin and even the possibility of ultimate loss\(^1\)). The structure of experience is a pattern of communication, a dialogue.

Here we are already beyond the threshold of religion; for the manifestation of the Thou of the World as God constitutes religious experience. And it is in examining reli-

\(^1\) Cf. "HCCBFR" 280; MGHE 515, 523; HNR 125 - 68; "RF" 350.
gious experience that the meaning and structure of human experience must find its further scope and depth.
CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

All human experience, as we have seen thus far, had for Hocking an intrinsic religious dimension — here taking religion as "man's relation with God."¹ God is ingredient in experience not as an object among other objects, but as the "field of reference" grounding all relationships among selves and the natural and social World as the actual condition of their possibility. Given the structure of experience as thus articulated by Hocking, the relationship between man (or, better, men) and God can be expected to be manifold rather than simple, both objective (i.e., intentional) and intersubjective (social) rather than merely subjective or "private," aesthetic rather than merely cognitive, active rather than merely receptive, and variable rather than invariant. It is also latent as well as manifest in so far as the divine field of reference, as context,

¹The origin of the word is obscure. Modern scholars generally associate it with religare, "to bind." (Cf. OED 2481.) Religion can be described therefore as the "bond" between man and God or, as Paul Ricoeur suggests, "The bond between man and what he considers to be sacred." (The Symbolism of Evil, Emerson Buchanan, trans. [Boston: Beacon Press, 1969], p. 5.) Hocking's use of the word indicates a general agreement with this traditional meaning. See below, pp. 130, 137ff.
does not enter our conscious awareness when we are preoccupied with the ordinary objects of experience. However, the latency of the relation can give way to manifestness through a process of explicitation in which, by a shift of attention, the context or ground of experience becomes focal. And this religious experience, the awareness of our relation with God, is a development of ordinary experience as a heightened consciousness of the most fundamental element in the structure of experience, its ground. This is not to say that the perception of the ground may not be surprising and in that sense extraordinary. It is to say that the religious dimension thus revealed is not added to ordinary experience, but discovered within it.

It is this dimension of experience and its explicitation which we have before us now for consideration. The burden of the argument of this chapter will be to show that Hocking adequately demonstrated that religious experience is a development of ordinary experience as the explicitation of the relations between the elements of experience and their ground or field of reference. Further, I shall argue that he proved religion to be intrinsically social, that is, originating in an intersubjective dialogue and manifesting itself in both corporate worship and public activity. Hocking also held that religion, as "the redemption of solitude," fostered individual human development. I
shall also argue that Hocking's progressive explicitation of the concept of religion was positively related to his development of the concept of experience. But ultimately, religion in its ordinary manifestations fell short for Hocking of fully satisfying the desire for union with God. It does not represent the fullest expression of the theistic relation within experience. A further dimension of human experience is opened, however, by reaching the limits of ordinary religious experience—that in which it is claimed that the quest for final satisfaction is fully met: mystical experience.

At the outset of this inquiry into the further dimensions of human experience, it will be important to note the distinction in Hocking's thought between religion and religious experience on one hand, and that between religion and religions on the other. In turn, this will require attending to the social and individual aspects of religious experience and the reciprocal relations between them. In thus exploring the meaning and structure of religious experience, we are no longer asking whether but how God is directly and immediately met in human experience and what the effects of that meeting are on Self and Society.
I. RELIGION, RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AND RELIGIONS

1. Religion and Religious Experience

Religion as a whole, that is, in its universal aspect, was evidently not simply identical for Hocking with religious experience (a phrase he rarely used, as we shall have occasion to note again). Fundamentally, religion is the relation or bond, both latent and manifest, between the Self and God as "the 'Thou' of the world."¹ Particular religions are concrete instances of this universal dimension of human experience, localized in time and space and necessarily conditioned by culture and history. As particular, religions are institutions, being established ways of realizing the human involvement with the totality of experience (the Whole as the Holy) — in codes, creeds, liturgical cult, buildings, books, ministries, etc.² Nevertheless, each religion can also be characterized as more or less universal in its scope and outreach.³ In this characterization, Hocking remained well within the orthodox Western tradition.

¹"RF" 365.

²Cf. LRWF 63f. An institution for Hocking is "a more or less settled way in which the members of a society have come to satisfy their main interests, including property and the family, education and religion, science and the arts, the traditional ways of amusement and recreation." ("WV" 37.) For a discussion of religion and religions, see below.

³See below, p. 134ff.
Religious experience, on the other hand, signifies the explicit awareness of the Self's relation to God, whether as a dimension of all experience or as realized in specific instances as religious experiences. Religious experience in either sense is, however, a phrase Hocking rarely employed. The reason for this is, I believe, that as we have seen, for Hocking all experience has a fundamental, at least implicit, religious dimension and, further, the instances in which God becomes most manifest in consciousness were, for him, better described as mystical. At any rate, it is clear that Hocking did not take religious experience to signify a kind of experience different from ordinary experience:

Religious experience is not as a rule the object of a special faculty; it is a development of ordinary experience, and religion invites men to take this ordinary experience not less but more realistically than those who are content with its surfaces.2

The importance of this passage is difficult to overestimate. Its significance lies not only in the connection between religious and ordinary experience, but in the implication that if mysticism is a fuller development of religion, then it, too, is rooted in ordinary experience.

As a development of ordinary experience, religious

1"MGHE" 62, 65 and C\&C 73 being among the few instances.

experience refers then to the explicit manifestation of the theistic dimension of experience, the divine "field of reference" which grounds the interrelations among the Self, the World and other selves but also enters the process of experiencing actively. For, as was shown in the first chapter, this field and the relationship of the elements which it grounds constitute the primary locus of the divine presence active in the structure of experience itself. Religion can be described, consequently, as the relation (i.e., "bond") between human persons, both individually and collectively, and God as the Field of experience. To understand religion entails understanding the nature of that relation. At this point, the question remains whether in fact the human experience of God reveals a presence which is both the ground of Self, the World and Other Self, that is to say, the ground of the Whole, and yet reveals itself as a Thou (or, more accurately, an "I") calling persons to union through the particular events of life.¹

¹It should be noted here that another, perhaps subtle but nevertheless important distinction should be drawn between religion as the manifold relation between human persons and God, and religious experience in the form of a heightened perception of God's presence. Presumably one can be aware primarily of the relation, e.g., dependence, protection, favor, estrangement, etc., without thereby having a direct awareness of God as "Thou." I believe that this distinction constitutes a major difference between ordinary religion and mysticism. For religion as a bond among men, cf. "INR" 576, MGHE 522, "HCCBFR" 270 and "Does Civilization Still Need Religion?" Christendom, 1 (1935), p. 35; hereafter referred to as "DCSNR." Also see below, pp. 171 - 75.
On the basis of the preceding remarks, in this study I shall take the terms "religion," "religious experience" and "the religious dimension of (all) experience" to be only roughly equivalent. Exceptions will be indicated, as in reference to "a" religion or "a" religious experience as a particular instance of the explicit consciousness of God as present. But the distinction between religion and religious experience as the tension between the latent and manifest dimension of all experience remains relevant. It is based on the distinction already alluded to between the universal and the particular aspects of religion, the whole and the part. For each individual exists in the particularity of culture and history, which constitute the finite context for the realization of all human potential.

2. Religion and Religions

The tension between the universal element in all religions and the particularity of each religion was present in Hocking's thought from the beginning of his career. In 1909 he wrote,

The universality of truth seems the best and most natural security for the universality of religion. [...] But the trouble is that the universal religion, when defined on the basis of truth, is not identifiable with any particular religion, and hence not with Christianity except by that courtesy which we by our birth are inclined to concede.¹

¹"HCCBFR" 269 - 70.
The paradox of all religions, but especially those with a claim to universality, is that of representing both the universal and particular aspects of human experience including pre-eminently the theistic relation.

Hocking's insistence on the universal aspect of religion was most forcefully presented in his study of comparative religion, *Living Religions and a World Faith*, in which he articulated two "postulates." The first was that "Religion must be universal":

> It arises in a universal human craving directed to an equally universal object. [Religion] is not a capacity of special men or races. It belongs to the psychology of man; that is, it is the response of human nature everywhere as it faces its finite situation in the great world.¹

Thus, even though religious expression is not equally distributed among human persons, "there are no natively unreligious peoples or individuals."²

*Universal* here connotes, first, a capacity of human nature as such. Religion in this sense exists within the very structure of human experience. As a psychological fact, accordingly, religion concerns both consciousness and behavior and, as such, it is related thematically to Hocking's first, psychological formulation of the concept of experience. But it should be noted that Hocking also employs uni-

¹LRWF 31.
²Ibid.
versal in the secondary sense of pervasive distribution. Religion as a concrete manifestation of a fundamental element of human experience is found everywhere. Religion in this sense is an obviously social phenomenon. The truly irreligious man is, by that token, in the same predicament as the solipsist who refuses to acknowledge his native social relatedness, refusing to come out of his acquired solitude to converse with God.

Hocking's second postulate was that "Religion must be particular."¹ In fact, it is because religion is universal (in the first sense) that it must become particular.² For Hocking the "abstract universal" belongs to the realm of possibility, whereas particularity is actual. Here he is indebted to Hegel:

everything in the realm of "spirit" -- thought, fancy, feeling -- tries to take on bodily form: we can hardly think at all unless our ideas wrap themselves in floating imagery, then attach themselves to words, then work themselves into action.³

Religion thus tends to actualize itself as a universal capacity of human nature by taking on concrete form, in short, by appearing in history, by becoming explicit. In so doing, religion becomes concretely universal -- extended everywhere

¹LRWF 36.
²Ibid.
³LRWF 37.
in the human realm, if actually diversified in particular.

For Hocking, a sense of obligation, a moral imperative, constitutes the human aspect of the diffusion of religion: "There is an element of duty in the situation which coincides with the natural impulse of joy to overflow." Part of this motive is compassion for those who have not yet perceived the truth of religious insight, part is contingent upon the inherent social relatedness among men which demands communication. For "Unless the discoverer speaks, he is separated from his fellows by his insight, rather than united to them. His enlightenment is socially dangerous." Dangerous because private, that is, sharable but not yet shared. Hence the universal capacity for religion appears in particular historical form because men are

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1LRWF 39. Cf. 36: "In so far as [religion as] the passion for righteousness reaches satisfaction, it becomes a passion for the spread of righteousness. And this activity of spreading, as well as the search for and the practice of the right way, is conceived as a cosmic demand." Cf. also p. 37: "The impulse [to spread religion] lies at the root of much unique religious behavior whose meaning tends to escape the polite academic mind, for example, the strange activity of preaching, which naturally expands into the founding of a religious community with its special organization, and into the mission."

2LRWF 39 - 40. He continued, "His truth is potentially the deepest bond of himself with his fellows; but unless they see that truth, it alienates them from him. It is not a bond unless it is made a bond: he must become a teacher, or else a hermit or an outcast." Thus religion as an institution is a social construction. For religion as a bond among men, cf. MGHE 316. On compassion, cf. LRWF 39.
by nature social beings:

in so far as one's moral destiny becomes... identified with the moral destiny of the group within which one acts, the religion of the preacher will be immersed in regional character and regional history: it will be religion in particular.\(^1\)

Not even religious experience can remain private, despite its rootedness in the depths of each person's consciousness.

Thus for Hocking religion \(\ddot{\text{uberhaupt}}\) is a unity of universal and particular elements as they appear in individual consciousness and history:

Our religion must be a particular religion as well as a universal one. This is the real source of the casuistry of apologetic; -- for religion, like every other live thing, is growing under the pressure of antagonistic requirements: it must be universal, and yet at the same time particular, authoritative, continuous, historical.\(^2\)

Summarily, the religious dimension of all experience was of greater philosophical concern to Hocking than were

\(1\) LRWF 43.

\(2\) Hocking's insistence on the reality of the universal character of religion, both as a native capacity of man and as a cultural phenomenon, led to an express disagreement with John Dewey, against whose rejection of religion in view of the allegedly irreducible multitude of religions Hocking devoted the opening argument of LRWF. (For Dewey's position, see A Common Faith, op. cit.) Contemporary studies of religion, especially phenomenological and structuralist accounts, tend mainly to support Hocking's approach rather than Dewey's.
episodes of particular "religious experience," not least because the instances reveal an underlying and wider potential than is likely to be realized in any single episode. Both religions and religious experiences are thus to be understood as the manifest development, the explicitation, of the manifold relation between the three constituents of the field grounding the structure of experience. But common elements exist in both forms of manifestation which, while rooted in the universal relation at the foundation of all experience, are truly universal in extension, that is, concretely.

Hocking's use of the categories of universality and particularity to structure his phenomenology of religion was not new; it is specifically endebted to Hegel, as noted above. Obviously, these categories are related to Hocking's reliance upon the whole-part relation, which he employed in a variety of contexts.

As a relational scheme, this approach has its limitations and, as a result, fell into disfavor early in the present century. It is somewhat forced and abstract, simple and radically limited -- as are dichotomous relations in general. Nevertheless, it applies. So pre-eminent a scholar of religions as the late Joachim Wach singled out Hocking's
approach for qualified but definite endorsement, siding with Hocking in more than one disputed interpretation. With reservations, therefore, I suggest that as employed by Hocking, the characterization of religion as universal and yet particular remains plausible. For the philosophy of religion deals both with the common and with the universal elements of all religions while recognizing the real differences among religions based upon fundamental differences in human culture, history and even temperaments. The universal elements such as structures and functions are always incarnate in particular manifestations. As such they are accessible for consideration only by a process of abstraction. Nevertheless, as embodied such universals are always concrete. Thus, to be adequate, any philosophy of religion must deal with the idiosyncrasies and significant differences among various religions as well as their underlying commonalities. In this regard, Hocking was more attentive than Dewey to structural and functional similarities, but less attentive to differences.

Several preliminary conclusions can be drawn from this purview of Hocking's investigation of religion. First, the universal aspect of religion is consequent upon the structure of human experience itself as a triadic relationship between the Self, the World and other selves, in which God is present as the unifying ground or field of experience. As a personal presence, this transcendent Other Self addresses the finite ego and calls it to its destiny through particular natural and social experiences. Reciprocally, all such experiences are at least implicitly religious, that is, related to the ground and ultimate meaning of one's entire life, whether one is consciously aware of it or not.

Second, in so far as all experience is thus fundamentally religious, that is, entailing an implicit theistic ground, any actual experience is a potential occasion for "a" religious experience, that is, the manifest awareness of one's relatedness to God as mediated by this experience. Further, these occasions of religious experience, given the manifold relations possible (and actual) among the various elements of experience (I, It, Thou[s]), can be expected to be numerous rather than few, depending upon a person's ability to attend to the context of relations by a shift of
awareness rendering transparent the opacity of intermediaries. This occurs in a possibly subtle but profound change of consciousness in which the holistic aspect of experience supercedes the particular. This ability can be greater or less in different persons; it can also be increased or "heightened" and, presumably, lost.

Third, religion is thus a common or ordinary dimension of everyman's experience as the explicitation of its ground. Religious experience is extraordinary only in the sense of its possible infrequency, suddenness or intensity in particular instances. It is a different degree, not kind of experience.

Fourth, as common, religious experience is thus inevitably social, in so far as all experience is both radically intersubjective and particularized by social activity, including our transactions with Nature. As the fuller development of experience in general, religious experience can be expected to manifest more fully -- if not simultaneously -- all the characteristic qualities of experience as such, not only its social character, but as holistic, intentional, cognitive, passionate, active, variable, dynamic and, of course, theistic.

From these provisional conclusions, which may also be taken as hypotheses for further investigation, it would
seem to follow in addition that for Hocking the particular function of religion as a social phenomenon is realized in furnishing interpretative schemata which facilitate the explicitation of God's presence by showing how the intermediaries can be made transparent. Further, religion provides particular occasions for "religious experiences" in the form of prayer and worship. It also teaches persons how to satisfy whatever psychological and moral conditions might be required for "seeing" God. And, finally, religion provides opportunities for individual and social action as the outgrowth of the receptive aspects of religious experience. All this religion does by institutionalizing, that is, preserving in time and space the structures and events that have successfully fulfilled these functions, for instance, liturgical expressions, sacred scriptures, creeds, commentaries, moral codes, ascetical practices, authority structures and concrete forms of behavior such as preaching, charitable works, social reform, etc.

The crisis of religion arises when the institutional aspects cease to function properly, when modes of expression grow outdated, when liturgies ossify, when the spoken and written word rings hollow, when moral concern hardens into casuistry and the rule of law becomes supreme, authority overmasting service. In such a situation, religion can only
die or renew itself by incorporating the energy of a fresh vision of its deepest nature and recovering its original purpose. To this end, as we shall see, religion needs its mystics.

Thus circumscribing the topic of religion in advance sets up certain parameters for a consideration of Hocking's treatment of religion as a concept, that is, in its formal aspects -- its characteristics, elements, structures and functions, the present study is not intended to suggest that he was insensitive to the specific content of religious beliefs.

1See TP 16 - 17, LRWF 227, 27f., 219.
II. HOCKING'S CONCEPT OF RELIGION

1. Fundamental Concepts

As already indicated, Hocking adhered to a basically traditional notion of religion as the relation or bond between man and what he holds to be the divine element in the whole of reality, the totality of experience. The work of religion is to raise to consciousness that fundamental bond. This it does by calling to mind the holistic character of human life with respect to its experiential ground: "Everyone begins with his whole-idea; but it is the function of religion to interpret this whole as divine; in brief, to make the transition from the whole-idea to the idea of God."¹

The mediate character of all experience calls for interpretation; the agency of interpretation in the present instance is religion as in some sense institutionalized. The

¹MGHE 142. Cf. 95: "The religious idea will be as positive and primordial as any; will insist that it is possible to begin with the whole, as readily as with any fragment." Cf. also 129 - 133 for the whole-idea as Weltanschauung. In SBF Hocking wrote, "Religion is man's intuition of his destiny to have commerce with the ultimate powers of the world, and the impulse which accompanies that intuition. It nerves him to the audacious effort to match his thought against the whole of things, and to make that whole an object of contemplative enjoyment." (SBF 5.) Cf. also "MGHE" 65 and "Christianity and Intercultural Contacts," Modern Trends in World Religions, A Eustace Haydon, ed. (Freeport New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), p. 146; hereafter referred to as "CIC." Cf. also "DCSNR" 39.
categories of interpretation are not innate but embodied (as are all a priori ideas) in the World.

Religion is not merely a cognitive activity, a "mere" recognition of the ultimate meaning of the whole of the World. The religious attitude is practical and unitive: "It is a practical relation established between man and the totality with which he is destined to deal." ¹ Further,

In religion the will of man seeks union with the simple center of power which is "beyond" and "within" the world as the will of the world. The extravagant claim of religion has been that union with God is itself a good, and indeed, the supreme and sufficient satisfaction of the will.²

The function of religion in this regard will be "integrating the human will in view of the whole." ³

Thus religion seeks a personal relationship of unity with the power representing the will of the world, the only kind of relationship which could satisfy the longing of the human spirit for ultimate fulfillment. For Hocking "... religion thinks of the universe not in terms of 'It,' but in terms of 'Thou.' It exists when man apprehends, beyond or within the dark reaches of his environment, a controlling power or powers in some measure akin to himself." ⁴ Thus religion is "the ability to say 'thou' to the universe, as God

¹ "WV" 32.

² HNR. 352. For religion as the Self-Whole relation, cf. 296, TP 315 – 16, "WM" 415, CWC 26 and SMN 207.

³ CWC 46; cf. 92

⁴ "WV" 33, emphasis added.
is the 'Thou' of the World." However, the perception of the personal character of the ground of the Whole ("Thou") would seem to be a distinct moment dialectically from the recognition of this "Thou" as God, a recognition made possible by the availability of a suitable concept of God in the conceptual armory of any given culture.

Summarily, the religious dimension of experience becomes salient for Hocking when the ground of experience becomes manifest not only as the infinite Thou of the World, but as God. In Hocking's thought, as I understand it, this occurs first when the whole-idea, the non-reflexive, working concept of the world as the total context of experience (The World) becomes focal in consciousness but, and most importantly, as a transparent medium of the known-felt presence of God. The first phase of this process involves a psychological shift of attention from the part to the whole, an "induction" in which consciousness of the ground of experience replaces that of its elements: one's own psychic objects, natural and social objects or other persons as thou(s). The second phase entails the recognition of the ground as God, which involves not merely the God-concept (which we think God with), but a concept of God -- an idea accessible to us by which the God-concept and the experience of the ground are recognized as coincident. It is in this sense that the function of religion as an institution is to provide the

1"RF" 365.
concepts of God which thematize our experiences of God, that is, give them structure and definition, and thus to interpret the Whole as divine. But as culturally conditioned, as well as limited by their definiteness, all such concepts are inadequate to the God experienced -- a point typically stressed by the mystics, as we shall see. Such concepts reveal God to us in the immediacy of experience, but they likewise obscure the full transparency of the experience. The more concrete and definite the concepts, the more restrictive they are in operation.¹

Conceivably, one's idea of God could be so limited, so "small" as J. B. Phillips' would say,² that the God experienced is all but missed in being conceptualized. The failure to recognize the presence intuited as God (i.e., as "God" is conceived in different cultures) could also result from a deficient or simply different concept of God without thereby affecting the initial moment of personal recognition of the "Thou-character" of the presence felt. Hocking nowhere developed this line of thought, to my knowledge. But it has importance inasmuch as the failure to achieve a manifest awareness of the presence of God as God could be attri-

¹Compare St. Augustine's comment: "For God is more truly thought than expressed; and he exists more truly than he is thought." (De Trinitate, VII, iv, 7. Cited in An Augustine Synthesis, Erich Przywara, S.J., ed. [New York: Sheed and Ward, 1945], p. 83.)

putable to influences largely beyond the individual's power to control and therefore outside the perimeter of culpability.

The second way in which the religious dimension of experience becomes salient involves a movement opposite from that just described -- a "deductive" process in which attention shifts from the Whole to the part, as it were. That is, when the presence of God as the pervading Thou of the World is discovered through the transparency of particular media such as one's own psychic objects, some element of the World, or an experience of interpersonal sharing. Hocking was fully alert to the reality of such particular experiences, in which the love of a friend, the beauty of a landscape or a symphony, perhaps an awareness of truth suddenly conveyed to the astonished mind a sense of God's nearness.¹ This recognition may well occur to a person "when in some use of his whole-idea he suddenly notes God standing there."² He may nevertheless have no explicit awareness of the Whole -- passing from the "part" to God immediately.

In both ways, human consciousness comes to an awareness of God mediated by the World -- as a Whole or in part. Hence, perhaps, the reason why to the mystic the part "gives" or "stands for" the Whole; the experiences are ultimately

¹ Cf. MGHE 230ff.
² MGHE 234.
equivalent. The intensity of religious experience may also vary from an awareness of some aspect of the overall relation of the Self and God to an awareness of God's direct and immediate presence, culminating in the experience of union in which intersubjective consciousness of I-and-Thou gives way to the consubjective consciousness of We.¹ This perhaps is why the great mystics, although in the "unitive way," have nevertheless been able to attend to worldly affairs without losing consciousness of God's presence: God's presence and their own self-awareness are not experienced as distinct. Thus, Meister Eckhart's aphorism might be paraphrased "The eye by which I see the World is the eye by which God sees the World."

At this point, the chief difficulty I find in Hocking's account is precisely its completeness. Its major lines are clear, despite some internal fuzziness concerning the transition from social knowledge to God as the supreme Other Mind, as was noted before. However, the communications model on which Hocking based his structural paradigm of experience is a relatively closed system, given the all-encompassing nature of the underlying Field of reference. An indefinite plurality of finite fields -- selves, time, space, etc. -- prevents the system from being absolutely closed. But the possibility of novelty, creativity and freedom in any but a

¹Cf. MGHE 279 - 80.
highly relative sense seems radically limited by the absolute character of the divine field of (all possible) experience. Hocking's solution to this problem depended upon an exploration into the exigencies of mystical experience, and it is to a consideration of that dimension of religion that we must defer further comment.

2. Reconceptions of Religion

Hocking's method of precising the fundamental meaning(s) of religion was to look to its primary functions in life as a whole.\(^1\) Thus in his *magnum opus* he initially investigated religion as "the mother of the arts," its historical role.\(^2\) But while a true function, fostering the arts, like other social functions, cannot constitute religion's ultimate meaning, for this is an *effect* of something far more characteristic.\(^3\)

In this early period of Hocking's thought, religion had as its primary function and therefore its basic meaning "the anticipation of attainment."\(^4\) By this Hocking meant the

\(^1\) Cf. MGHE 4, 11 and passim.  \(^2\) MGHE 13 - 14, 18, 25.  

\(^3\) "To define religion by its function, that is, pragmatically, is to define it by its effects; but that is quite different from identifying it with its effects. We can only approach religion as we approach any other reality, through things which are external to the thing itself, as are the services which it renders to persons and society. To identify it with its services, however, is to lose the reality and thus, eventually, the services." ("HCCBFR" 278.)

\(^4\) MGHE 31f., 326 and passim.
power of religion to make present in current experience the goals, meanings and values which represent the highest aspirations of both individuals and the race.

Both concepts continued to occupy a place of importance in Hocking's later thought. 1 But as his philosophy developed, certain significant shifts in emphasis occurred, as noted before. The early notions of religion were psychological and individualistically oriented, despite Hocking's emphasis on their intrinsic connection with social process. As Hocking's interests and activity extended to the fields of law, politics and practical religion (e.g., missionary endeavor), his attitude toward religion, like that toward experience, became more socially conscious, especially in its concrete manifestation. By 1936, when Hocking delivered the Hibbert Lectures (later published as Living Religions and a World Faith), he had arrived at a new definition:

If, to agree on a name, we were to characterize the deepest impulse in us as a "will to live," religion could also be called a will to live but with an accent of solicitude -- an ambition to do one's living well! Or, more adequately, religion is a passion for righteousness, and for the spread of righteousness, conceived as a cosmic demand. 2

1 Cf. "INR" 568, "WV" 33, "SSP" 399.

2 In clarifying his notion of "righteousness," Hocking observed that "The term 'righteousness' is not used in the conventional sense of compliance with a known law. It is a search for a law: there is a right way of living, it must be found. There is a primitive assurance... that living is intended to be good; and an equally primitive denial that living as it offers itself is good!" (LRWF 27.)
Beset with accident, passingness and disease, in addition to the other manifold woes of life, the religious impulse is the conviction that "There must be a way of life, distinct from this, a right way." And thus salvation, as Hocking would later describe it, "means the discovery of that way of life which makes it possible for us to realize the potentialities of human nature." Ideas operate in this regard as practical means to action.

Similarly recalling the "passionate" character of experience as implied in his second formulation, Hocking's reference to "passion" in this description of religion "implies not a disturbed state of emotion but the inescapable urgency or 'seriousness' which belongs to the central stake of human existence -- whether one lives or misses living."

The existential urgency conveyed by this comment serves to relate Hocking's second notion of religion to his second formulation of experience, and also leads directly

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1 Ibid.

2 "CIC" 150. And salvation is "given" when "it is seen as the mystics have seen, and have best seen when the course of experience has been most against them -- that all of experience is a history of intercourse between the soul of man and his God." ("MGHE" 66.)

3 LRWF 28. He continued, "...human living proceeds under a tension of concern, anxiety, such as no animal can feel; for it is only the human type of consciousness which knows that living, in its chief dimension, may be a failure. This anxious self-consciousness is the capacity for religion; and the depth of concern is the measure of the man." (LRWF 29.)
to the element which figures so strongly in his final formulation of experience, Destiny.

In this, Hocking's last work devoted entirely to the subject of religion, he fused his notions of "cosmic demand" with the consciousness of the world as a shared whole, strongly emphasizing the social dimension of religion. He also avoided the trap of moralism:

Religion is a neighbor of morality, but it is not the same thing. The difference lies first in that factor of "cosmic demand." And then in the depth of the feeling: when this cosmic concern fuses with one's own there arises that peculiar ardor for right living which dutifulness alone knows nothing about. For if right living, whatever it is, lies in the nature of things, not simply in my free choice, then whether I go right or not is not solely my own concern: the total world, there, expects something of me, and my effort becomes a response; the moral scene acquires, as in binocular vision, a third dimension, a qualitatively new importance.¹

Here Hocking was alluding clearly to the concept of Destiny. Rather than a mere cultivation of solitude, the religious dimension of experience is a response to a summons, "a step out of privacy, a rejection of the illusion of privacy."² In a striking, familiar passage, Hocking went on to

¹LRWF 26.
²Compare James' notion of religion as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine." (James, op. cit., p. 42.) Note also Whitehead's characterization: "Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness." (Religion in the Making [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926], p. 16.)
In a sense, each self is alone with its experience: it issues its acts from a position of complete inner security; it enjoys 'subjectivity.' And subjectivity is opportunity. All the primitive iniquities... are the exploiting of the subjective opportunity in the interest of my private gratification. Religion is the rejection of this exploit from the root, because of an elemental inkling that the privacy is conferred and therefore not absolute: religion is the redemption of solitude.¹

Thus, selfishness is the religious equivalent of solipsism; a morally culpable failure to come out of one's solitude and converse. The social function of religion does not suppress but in fact enhances individuality, however: "Even in Hinduism, the most individualistic of all religions, the hermit customarily leaves a path to his door."²

Religion as a passion for the spread of righteousness is therefore a response to a demand perceived as emanating from outside the Self and directing the Self into society, the realm not only of authentic experience, but of individuation and, ultimately, of salvation. As a particularized phenomenon in the life of an individual, religion as Hocking now conceived it, finds both its meaning and function in the social world.

3. Final Conceptions of Religion

In his later writings, Hocking preserved the notion

¹LRWF 27.
²LRWF 40.
of religion as the bond between men and God, for which *The Coming World Civilization* provides ample evidence. Religion, he wrote, is "whatever unites the soul of man with the whole,"¹ "the affirmation of the anchorage in reality of ideal ends"² whose function is "integrating the human will in view of the whole...."³ He explicitly stated at one point that religion was, simply, the "bond between the soul of man and the Real."⁴ Further, religion was still particular and yet universal:

Religion must somehow present itself as the personal intimacy of the Whole to the Infinitesimal, as an inversion both of the physical and of the conceptual perspectives, an inversion adumbrated by Cusanus in his strange doctrine of the coincidence of opposites. In brief it belongs to the general essence of all religion that at some point it escapes generality, clothes itself in particulars, descends to the shaping of personal deeds and hopes, becomes "a" religion.⁵

Nor did Hocking forget his notion of religion as a passionate concern for the spread of righteousness. In his last book, a prophetic study of what he called a Soviet-American détente, he wrote, at age eighty-six,

The deepest of issues pertains to the ultimate passions of mankind -- the passionate hatred of evil and also the passionate love of the infinite. It is the passion commonly called "religion" -- which we may simply identify as "world passion" -- a reach of kinship toward the to-

¹*CNC* 26.  
²*CNC* 30.  
³*CNC* 92.  
⁴*CNC* 46.  
⁵*CNC* 180.
tality in which at rare moments we not only feel but know ourselves to be immersed. It is that inner passion for what is beyond the evident that glorifies the man-animal and spurs him to build into history, through art and faith, a fraction of his cosmic love -- which is, in fact, his love of life.¹

While understandably nuanced in a work on political issues, this passage contains implicit references to the major meanings of religion Hocking had hitherto explored -- the anticipation of ultimate integrity, the passion for a full life well-lived, the "cosmic demand" spurring man toward the unification of history in love, even the bond between men and God -- here, unless I am mistaken, implied in "the passionate love of the infinite" and the "kinship" with the totality in which we are immersed.

But despite the elegance and sophistication of its reiteration, this conception of religion appears as restricted as was the second formulation of experience by a concern for "living well" which remains largely "horizontal" and activistic. "The spread of righteousness" implies little depth of experience. The encounter with God as the ground of experience, the concern of Hocking's initial conceptions, is at best an implication. The social dimension, while present, is limited to extending the "good life." The mediatory

potential of Nature and Society is barely even implied. The intersubjective and consubjective intensity of social relations is also implicit if not merely presupposed. In general, this conception reflects a preoccupation with external, "excursive" activity and the interfaces between Church and society.

However, Hocking's concerns had, as we know, shifted at this time to the social world, wherein he exposed the place and function of religion, especially as an institution. But this perspective did not permit him to incorporate the deeper aspects of experience. I detect little if any advancement toward this end in further formulations of the concept of religion after 1940. I think, however, that there is a simple explanation for this apparent failure to move the concept of religion into a phase of development commensurate with Hocking's metaphysical appraisal of experience as the Fact-Field-Destiny constellation. In his final stage of philosophical reflection Hocking had come to identify the fullest expression of religion with mysticism. It is consequently in the investigation of that aspect of religious experience that we should expect to find the equivalent of his third conceptualization of experience.
As we have seen in the preceding exposition, in both latent and manifest form the essential elements of religious experience were for Hocking the Self, the World of nature and society as the general medium of revelation, and God as the Thou revealed in the World as well as in the depths of the psyche as the ground or field of experience. Briefly, the elements of religion are the same as those of experience as such. If and how, in actual experience, especially its social forms, the field of experience becomes manifest as God, and whether perceiving the relationship with this field is how religion arises in human consciousness can only be determined by an inquiry into that realm of experience wherein such claims are found, especially its mystical territory, whose occupants typically report having had a direct and immediate experience of God.

In any event, God enters the scene not when Other Mind becomes capitalized, but in sudden or gradual "break-through" events involving the reciprocal character of natural and social experience. Having arrived at the point where the elements of experience (I, It and Thou[s]) intersect,

All that is needed is a step of breaking through the shell of human self-enclosure to the reality outside, or that this reality outside break through to us. This breaking-through, both ways at once, is, I believe, the
point at which God appears in experience.¹

Hocking's structural description and analysis of religious experience, both as a general quality of all experience and as particular "breakthrough" events, addressed not only the static (synchronic) dimension -- how religious experience involves a reciprocal relationship between the Self and God mediated by the World, but also the genetic (diachronic) dimension -- "how the idea of God first arises in human consciousness,"² both in terms of individual awareness and as a developmental social phenomenon.

1. The Static Dimension

The development of religious consciousness through a dialectical process involving an interpretation of experiences of Nature and Society concerns both the elements of religious experience and their structural relations. As we have seen, implicit in every experience, both in the infancy of the person and that of the social group, is an awareness, however "dim" (i.e., not fully conscious) of the grounding presence of God not only in the World but also in the depths of the psyche. This is the I-It-Thou relationship of nuclear experience which, raised to fuller awareness by reflection on actual, concrete encounters in Nature and Society, gives

¹"MGHE" 65.
²MGHE 144 - 45.
explicit knowledge of the Self as a subjective field, of the World as a real and objective system of facts, and of the Other as Thou -- first, as other selves in the immediacy of sharing a common world, then as a supreme and Other Thou communicating his other selfhood as a personal call through the events of reflexive, natural and social experience.

Two aspects of the Self are especially relevant here: the subconscious and the reflective self. For Hocking it seems safe to say that the nuclear experience of God and the World has its locus in the subconscious self, in particular the "allied" subconscious, that "apperceptive mass" which we think with but rarely think of. Inasmuch as something like "pure immediacy" exists, it exists there, and as I read Hocking, God is indeed present to each Self in that subliminal region of awareness, James' "back of the mind." But God as the Other Thou is consciously recognized, though not as different from what is "always dimly perceived," only by means of the mediation of idea-feelings acquired and sustained in social interaction.

Attending to God as the "frame of the universal," the "Thou of the World," is an activity of the reflective self, having withdrawn its immediate attention from the business

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1See above, pp. 62f. For the "allied" subconscious and the "apperceptive mass," cf. MGHE 527, 534, 537.

of the World. But because the reflective self enjoys a wider field of consciousness than the excursive self, in attending to the whole of experience, it reduces the borders of the allied subconscious so that the "God within" can be apprehended with greater personal immediacy though in fact "always there." To that extent, the recognition of God in experience is not inferential, for the "God without," summoning the Self to greater intimacy through the World, is discovered to be the same as the God present in the depths of the psyche. The remote and transcendent God without and the near and immanent God within coincide.

The character of the relations between the Self, the World and God is multiform, but consistently reciprocal: the Self is related to the natural world as knower and known (cognition), as field and event (transaction), as exploiter and exploited (labor), even as victim and predator (misfortune, suffering, death). The social world is related to the Self primarily in experiences summarized as love (association) and duty (obligation), including science, art and religion. Selves are interrelated by both natural and social intermediaries; such mediation is best described as communication. This applies both to individual human selves in an I-Thou relationship and also to the relationship between the Self and God (revelation, adoration) in which all things and anything can serve as mediators.
Among the relations between the Self and God, worship, as the chief act of religion, \(^1\) is the characteristic response of the Self to its awareness of God's communication through the media of Nature and Society. In worship, God is expressly addressed in the vocative case as Thou. \(^2\) In worship, God is adverted to as present "here and now," and in that presence the manifold experiences of the excursive self are illumined in their character as intermediaries between the Self and God. Hence, for Hocking, as we shall see, mystical experience is the heightened awareness of God's presence in the form of an extension of the act of worship. Worship thus functions as the point of contact between ordinary religion and its mystical expression inasmuch as it constitutes a conscious shift of attention away from the daily agenda of partial deeds to the meaning of the whole of experience.

Worship is an activity of the reflective self in contrast to the activities of the excursive self. Nevertheless, the events of daily life are the intermediaries which, reflected upon as a whole, are rendered transparent retrospectively as media of the presence and activity of God. However, the judgment that God is present is not a mere inference, because it is the God-idea now operating which illuminates

\(^1\) Cf. "MM" 39, MGHE 341.

\(^2\) Cf. MGHE 342 - 44.
these experiences and which coincides with the presence thus revealed, of which the Self had heretofore been only "dimly aware." ¹

In addition to explicating man's bond with God, worship has a social function: the "bonding" of men in a peaceful and prayerful "meeting of minds." It brings

the minds of individual disputants into a region of common human concern, and of common humility before that which is above them all -- the sense of humility being the psychological sign that the individual is being actually enlarged, restored to his normal dimensions, until his periphery can once more make contact with that of his neighbor.²

We shall return to the social function of religion below; here it is sufficient to note that for Hocking religion is revealed in its social nature by its fundamental act. Worship reaches its perfection only in the society of selves united in a common act of praise.³

¹ In developed mysticism by contrast, God is immediately discerned as present in events of daily life and the prayerfully reflective moment of worship is foreshortened or abolished altogether. In mystical experience, as the fuller development of the immediacy of religious experience, worship is in this sense made coterminous with the activities of the excursive self.

² "INR" 576. He continued, "In the contemplation of worship -- assuming that human minds, released from their prepossessions, tend to converge upon the same reality -- there is always the possibility that my enemy will reach the same premise from which I depart in refuting him, and so will at least begin the process of refuting himself."

³ Cf. MGHE 522: "Worship is imperfect unless when I worship, I am joining the race in worship."
The thought has long fascinated students of history that each individual seems to reproduce to some extent in his own career the progressive manifestation of religious awareness that occurred historically in the collective experience of his culture. In both cases, the religious experience of mankind has a temporal structure, indeed a dialectic moving from stage to stage by affirmation and negation, that is, by overcoming obstacles in its forward movement in time. For Hocking, the historical development of religion consisted in a progression from general animism -- the perception of the World as somehow alive and responsive to human interests -- to spiritism -- the belief that the cosmic forces behind and within Nature and Society are somehow personal -- to polytheism and monotheism -- the conception of superhuman personal entities (or entity) as sovereign master(s) of natural and social destiny -- and finally to mysticism, the apex of theism -- the quest for and achievement of union with the god(s) with its culmination in prophetic action.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Interestingly, Hocking seems never to have entertained any notion of a primordial monotheism; for him, the discovery of unity is subsequent to the perception of plurality. Cf. MGHE 6 - 7, 229 - 40, 317 - 37; GL Dec. 10, 1938; "HA" 433; and especially LRWF 190ff. In MGHE he wrote "There is no such thing in history as a primitive monotheism; but there is a permanent singleness in the thought of deity which man forever departs from, through loyalty to the variety of deity's manifestations."(324 - 25.)
The negative moments in this dialectic appear, first, in the discrimination between the living and spiritual from the merely material aspects of Nature, which marks the transition from animism to (poly)spiritism. \(^1\) The emergence of the genuinely religious frame of mind begins in the discovery of the personal nature of the "powers" in or behind Nature, and the eventual segregation of the sacred and profane realms of experience. The second negative moment concerns the discernment of the divine character of the spirit world -- the transcendent dimension of the gods, in contrast to the lesser natures of other numinous entities such as ghosts, demons, kings and heroes. \(^2\) (At this point, presumably, the god[s] as well as other "supernatural" entities would be positively perceived as "Thou[s].") The third moment negates the plural aspect of theism in the discovery of the absolute nature of God: the many Thou's coalesce into the One. \(^3\)

With "the discovery of the Absolute," religion passed historically from a personal to an impersonal conception of God, who was no longer merely an other Thou, but the all-present and inexpressible ground of being in which all differences were reconciled. \(^4\) This discovery, which Hocking

\(^1\) Cf. MGHE 317.

\(^2\) Cf. MGHE 319.

\(^3\) Cf. MGHE 325f.

\(^4\) Cf. MGHE 323; GL Dec. 10, 1938; and "HA" 433.
called "the most important cultural achievement of antiquity,"\(^1\) marks the first stage in the evolution of mysticism. The negative aspect of this discovery is expressed in the "neti, neti," "nada, nada," of the mystics East and West: God is not this, not that particular entity, but somehow implicated in the Whole. Pantheism is one historical manifestation of this insight; monism is its philosophical counterpart.\(^2\) But a further development took the dialectic forward a step: the belief in the possibility of realizing union with the Absolute by a life of moral discipline, i.e., "right living." In renunciation and meditation, the "negative path" of the mystic, in which the motif is both personal and impersonal ("That art Thou"), the spirit is prepared for a transforming union with the Absolute. Even mystical withdrawal into contemplative union was, however, surpassed in the final stage of religious development, the mystic's return to the World of plurality and action. Mysticism gives rise to prophecy as its logical and natural culmination.\(^3\)

Individual religious development does not reproduce the whole gamut of the historical phases with anything like microcosmic exactitude, although the animistic and polyspiritistic attitudes of the infant are similar to the early

\(^1\) GL Dec. 10, 1938; "HA" 433.

\(^2\) Cf. MGHE 326.

\(^3\) Cf. GL Dec. 10, 1938; "HA" 433 – 34.
stages of religious evolution in many respects, as Hocking observed and has been more systematically studied by Piaget and others.¹ Hocking clearly indicated, however, that individual development in terms of religious awareness involves a progressive explicitation of the latent dimension of God-awareness in nuclear experience, that is, the emergence in consciousness of events in Nature and Society, the expression of I-Thou relatedness in worship, and the culmination of both in the heightened awareness of God's presence in mystical experience with its actively prophetic consequences.

Both the social and individual history of religious development are thus rooted in and productive of social experience. Hocking occupied dozens of pages in his magnum opus illustrating how the religious perception of Nature as the habitat or medium of God's presence is radically social, concluding that

Social experience, then, becomes religious experience only when it is at the same time an experience of Nature power. And nature experience likewise is religious only when Nature becomes an object of social apprehension. Spiritism and Animism are at bottom the same.²

Nature, as we have seen, is known as a shared world -- I know Nature as already known by Him (or Them), which


accounts for its very knowability.\textsuperscript{1} The child, similarly, is born into a social world, that is, into a system of structures already organized into meanings which he must largely assimilate by an active process of "construction."\textsuperscript{2} All knowledge is thus social knowledge, for all experience is social experience and knowledge is the natural term of all experience.\textsuperscript{3}

Nature and Society together thus constitute in both historical and individual genesis a shared field of possible action in which one is always dealing with God whether he knows it or not.\textsuperscript{4} A possible and sometimes actual mistake consequent on the "dim awareness" of God's omnipresence consists in concluding that Nature and/or Society are God rather than media of God's self-communication. It is therefore not surprising that one function of religion has been to relativize both Nature and the State,\textsuperscript{5} an achievement made possible by the recognition of God as the Absolute -- "whatever else he may be."\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{1}Cf. MGHE 239 - 40: "At the source of all religion, so far as our analysis can discover, we find an experience of God as Other Knower of our World, already in close relation to self, and also in some natural bond with our social and physical experience. Such is the report of the elementary religious consciousness...."


\textsuperscript{3}Cf. MGHE 282, 64, 67f. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{4}Cf. LRWF 278, "MS" 189.

\textsuperscript{5}Cf. "INR" 378. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{6}MGHE 206.
Overall, then, the structure of religious experience is both historically and individually social in origin, development and consequences. The nuclear foundation of all experience, the I-It-Thou relation, is explicitated in both dimensions as the awareness of God's presence in the events of Nature and Society, reaching in mysticism levels of increasing explicitness and intensity, culminating in the direct and immediate experience of God described as mystical union or communion. The outcome of this dialectical process of explicitation is also social, and it is at the stage of mystical experience that the transition from contemplative union to active, prophetic engagement in the world is most effectively realized and where it must be sought. Hence, it will be necessary to turn to an investigation of mysticism as the fullest development of nuclear experience in order to complete the analysis of the social structure of religious experience.
IV. CONCLUSION: THE MEANING AND VALUE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

For Hocking, as was noted before, meaning is found in the dynamic relation of the parts to the whole -- of the partial aspects and elements of experience to the whole frame of experience; of the universal to the particular; of the general to the specific. Meaning is dynamic in so far as it "descends" from the whole to the parts, from the real to the "less real," in a dialectical alternation with its inductive "ascent" from the partial to the holistic. The dynamism of meaning is also a function of its temporal structure; the dialectic of experience is a cumulative induction, a process. Hence meaning is discoverable in function; what something is will be most clearly understood in view of what it does -- its overall purpose, development and effects. So too with religion.

In terms of its most immediate purpose with respect to its character as a bond between men and God, religion exercises a moral function, indeed an "ascetical" one: freeing men from "worldly" preoccupations by withdrawing their attention temporarily ("detaching" them) from that world, but without thereby totally disengaging them from society, where they have a necessary place and destiny:

If men are to live freely in a world of uncertain fortune it is necessary that their affections be in a meas-

1 See above, p. 22, n. 1. Cf. also MGHE 409, n. 1.
ure detached from the world of objects, and from the necessity of success in the world, and yet they must continue to act there and with absolute power. They must be detached without losing attachment: it will not suffice that they are assured of really being identical with Brahmar, if they must realize this identity by retreat from affairs.

How religion thus functions, and the variety of possible meanings it consequently possesses, can be seen in respect to both the individual person and the social group, whether dynamically or statically considered: integration and growth.

As mentioned before, for Hocking, the overall human function of religion is unification or integration -- the unifying process of individual persons, both at a given moment (integration) and over time (individuation), as well as the social unification of men currently (cohesion) and in history (progress). Both processes are reciprocally related by a dialectic of alternation -- each person arising out of the social matrix, achieving individuality (or failing to) by seeking independence from society and then contributing to the development of society by free and creative social involvement.

1. Individual Integrity and Development

Several instances of individual integration as a func-

1"HCCBFR" 282. This, Hocking's principle of asceticism, is found in works from all periods of his life. Cf. e.g., MGHE 105, 493f.; HNR 353; TP 182, 187, 268, 270, 274; RM 58; "NGIM" 462; CWC 123; NIHE 126ff., 129, 131, 154.
tion of religion have been cited already. Religion tends to effect a unifying transformation of the instincts, sexuality, aggression and ambition; also of the will and conscience, stripping the person of artificialities in order to liberate the simple and sincere "real self," the whole man. It enables the individual to overcome evil and sin as fragmenting forces by including them as partial aspects of a greater whole, that is, by "transmuting" them.

Religion affects a greater harmony between the Self and the world of Nature, begetting objectivity of mind and thereby creating the conditions necessary for the emergence of science. Religion endows the individual with a greater sense of self-worth and an assurance of the realism of his hope. It is his anticipation of attainment. Religion thus promotes wholeness.

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1See above, pp. 132, 138ff.
2Cf. HNR 367; CWC 92; MS 429; MGHE 436 - 38.
4Cf. MS 429, SIG 113, TIMF 145 - 46, etc.
5Cf. "DCSNR" 39 and "HCCBFR" 277.
6Cf. Bernard Meland, Faith and Culture (London: Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1955), p. 166: "Wholeness as the ultimate condition of the spiritual life is generally associated with a monistic metaphysics. In Absolute Idealism, for example, religion and wholeness came to have identical meaning. Whole-
With respect to the individual's relation to society, he is provided by religion with a measure of detachment from social norms and thereby independence in thought and action, primarily by a breaking down of socially conditioned habits of behavior.\(^1\) By withdrawing a person from society temporarily, religion thus catalyzes the process of individuation, which as a temporal period of growth prepares the person for a return to society more creative and free.\(^2\) And by the ongoing dialectic of withdrawal and return, that is, of excursion and reflection, continued growth is achieved. From a social point of view, then, religion is society's way of rejuvenating its inner resources by enhancing the experience of its members. (This is not to say, however, that this is the main purpose of religion on the individual level, which is, rather, closer union with God. It is to say that closer union with God has important social consequences which are inseparable from the nature of religion as a social phenomenon.)

\(\text{ness in this sense is always in danger of obscuring the individual, as Josiah Royce well knew, and as William Ernest Hocking has clearly indicated in stating his principle of alternation.}^"\)

\(^1\text{Cf. HNR 378; "DCSNR" 43; "INR" 568 - 71, etc.}\)

\(^2\text{Cf. MGHE 25, 462ff.}\)
2. Social Cohesion and Progress

Turning then to the social effects of religion, the pattern of integration and growth is parallel: for Hocking, religion tends to increase social cohesion and to promote social progress, if it does not always in fact succeed. First, and most importantly, religion in its most characteristic activity tends to achieve an historical union of wills, that is, of human persons. Thus religion tends to produce the unification of history itself. Religion further promotes a contemporaneous "meeting of minds": it brings men together, perpetually reaffirming "that original human solidarity which underlies political and all other social grouping." Religion promotes an "impersonal interest in mankind which political life increasingly demands, and yet increasingly tends to break down," thereby maintaining the conditions necessary for the continuation of justice and law. Moreover, "worship sensitizes the individual conscience, and confirms that 'better reason' which law embodies or

1Cf. "HCCBFR" 270: "...one of the functions of religion is to join the minds of worshippers in the present time with the minds of worshippers in all past and all future time. Worship is imperfect unless when I worship I am joining the race in worship." Cf. MGHE 522, "DCSNR" 35.

2Cf. MGHE 515ff.; GL Dec. 10, 1938; "HA" 433.

3MS 426 - 27; cf. "INR" 576.

4MS 427 - 28.
ought to embody,"¹ thus contributing to civil harmony, religion's conservative influence. It also reduces aggressiveness on the social level as well as on that of individuals.²

More positively, religion has borne both the sciences and the arts.³ Religion, by enhancing the individuality of society's members, assures the on-going and humane renewal of the social enterprise itself and is also thus "the redemption of solitude."⁴ Religion promotes the survival of the State by relativizing it, thus preventing or at least opposing political totalitarianism.⁵

In terms of social development, religion "promotes change in the direction we call progress."⁶ Here, Hocking alluded to the prophetic aspect of worship: "Every critic of the existing order is at heart a revolutionary; but worship is the radical and deliberate cult of revolution."⁷ Religion is also progressive; it promotes the growth of civilization by eliciting the condition for the appearance of the State

¹ MS 429.
² Cf. "INR" 575f.
³ MGHE 13 - 14; "INR" 568; TIMF 145 - 46, etc.
⁴ MGHE 404; LRNF 27; CWC 73, etc.
⁵ "DCSNR" 43.
⁶ MS 430.
⁷ Ibid. Cf. MGHE 364.
as a "circuit of wills": morale, the willingness to co-operate in forming an international human family. Religion here functions as a cultural universal, present more or less effectively in particular religions as a "world faith." But as a particularizing agency, religion also preserves national and regional differences, supporting the co-existence of world religions, not their amalgamation or abolition.

Hocking's evaluation of religion was obviously positive and optimistic. In this, he was at odds with many influential philosophers who held that religions as particular had, if anything, exerted a retrograde influence on civilization (the Marxist critique and Dewey's). He likewise differed from those of his more conservative co-religionists for whom society and religion were antagonistic, not antithetical or collaborative agencies (Barth, Kraemer, et al.).

A final assessment of the value of religion for society is not, of course, available. But Hocking's case for religion as the fuller development of human experience, based upon an analysis of religion as a collective (universal) phenomenon, a culturally particular entity, as well as an individual experience, has proved to be sufficiently seaworthy to have weathered various storms of controversy.

1 Cf. MS 430; CWC 153.
2 Cf. LRWF, passim; "RF" 366.
3 Cf. CWC 150 - 54.
4 Cf. the articles by Van Dusen, Wieman, Horton,
It would be tempting to fault Hocking as being overly sanguine in his endorsement of religion except for two facts. First, he was well aware of the historical failings of organized religion despite a tendency to underestimate them. Second, he was articulating a descriptive theory of religion based on its general manifestations; he was searching for the meaning of its purpose, process and effects, not attempting to assess every respect and detail of religious history, much less to exonerate it. In concluding that in general religion proved to be a positive and constructive agency in the making and remaking of Self and Society, I believe that Hocking established a convincing case. But he also fully realized that an analysis of religion in its ordinary manifestations, culminating in the religious institution, was incomplete on both the individual and social levels of experience.

We have already noted that to the extent that mankind, individually and collectively, wills to preserve its religious insights, values and achievements against the encroachments of time, it resorts to institutions -- systematic ways of acting, thinking and valuing which are given corporate permanence in the form of customs, traditions, scriptures, monuments, etc. From these embodiments, the sagging reli-

Kraemer, Slater and Radhakrishnan in PRCWNC as well as the citations in the works of Wach cited above.

1 Cf. MGHE 11, 459; "MS" 190 – 92; LRMF, passim.
gious spirit can and should be able to draw new energy, being brought again by their mediation into the ambience of the Holy.¹ But the very qualities which insure their permanence also doom institutions to a diminishing capacity to renew religious feeling, to mediate the Holy to new generations. And thus mankind collectively and individually must sometimes revitalize the source of the institutions themselves -- by the personal rediscovery in experience of the meaning of the original insights, values and achievements which are worth handing on to the coming generations.

In the sphere of specifically religious institutions, those who purport to have, and who demonstrably have had, the original insights, appreciation of value and ability to achieve lasting works are, for Hocking, the mystics:

Religion is kept alive by the presence in the world of those who have known what religion is, and who interpret it to us; and of these interpreters we have to say, as the old Greek saying had it -- many are the thrysus-bearers, but few are the mystics.²

Everyman may be a mystic at heart, but as in art and science, so too in religion, genius is infrequent. But genius there has been.

As the explicitation of the nuclear dialogue of the Self with God mediated by Nature and Society, religion thus looks back on the varieties of ordinary experience and ahead

¹Cf. MGHE 519 - 24; LRWF 48 - 49.
²"RF" 345.
to its own further explicitation in the mystical dimension of experience. There the social origin and goal of religion, as well as the immediate awareness of the presence of God, receive their highest and fullest expression and must find their ultimate evaluation. There too the deficiencies of religion can be expected to find their supplement.
CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF MYSTICISM

INTRODUCTION

Mysticism was not a mere variety of religious experience for Hocking, but rather its culmination as the full development of worship. For worship, the chief act of religion, embodies the conscious recognition of the bond between men and God expressed as an I-Thou communication. As the epitome of this consciousness, mysticism makes salient the principal features not only of religious experience, but also those of experience as such in its essential structure and deepest meaning. For as we have seen, religious experience is the manifest development of the nuclear structure of all experience.

Consequently, in its explicit form, mysticism provided Hocking with an empirical testing-ground for his formulation of the meaning and value of religion, as it had for James. Hocking's particular genius lay in recognizing that in order to produce valid "fruits for life" -- which always means life shared with others --, authentic religious experience and, a fortiori, mysticism must originate in a form of social experience (intersubjectivity) as well as eventuate in constructive social action.
As the essence of religious experience and as such the ground of all experience, the mystical dimension of experience was constituted for Hocking by a direct and immediate encounter with God which is nevertheless mediated in its explicit form by natural and social factors. Thus in the investigation of mysticism, we again and definitively encounter Hocking's two-fold philosophical agenda: to account for intersubjective experience as well as for the awareness of God as a direct factor in experience.

By investigating mysticism as practiced, Hocking undertook to determine whether or not his positive appraisal was in fact borne out in experience. The importance of his study lay in the fact that by the logic of his own dialectic the final validity of his case for the social meaning and structure of human experience depended upon the conclusion of this examination.

In this chapter I shall argue that as articulated by Hocking mystical experience must be considered an intrinsically social phenomenon, that is, in its origin, development and consequences. Further, mysticism constitutes practical evidence for the awareness of God immediately and directly present in human experience. I shall also argue that Hocking correctly concluded that as an extension as well as the inner meaning of religious experience, mysticism cannot be considered essentially extraordinary or exceptional, but
must differ from ordinary experience in degree and incidence rather than in kind. Nor can mysticism be reckoned an esoteric, elitest form of religious indulgence, but must be judged to represent a dimension of experience accessible to everyman.

An important corollary of the preceding theses is that religious experience is not only fundamentally mystical, but, conversely, mystical experience is fundamentally religious -- an encounter with God (excepting those experiences which are illusory, pathological or, in James' words, diabolical\(^1\)). The basic distinction between types of mystical experience is, then, between "true" and "false" mysticism, not that between "religious" and "non-religious" mysticism.\(^2\) This equation of religion and mysticism raises a difficulty for an empirical theory of religion in so far as there are those who claim to have mystical experiences which are not theistic.\(^3\) Hocking's solution to this problem rested on his theory of interpretation as well as on his view of


\(^2\) Cf. MGHE xxviii.

implicit experience: without a minimally adequate concept of God, an experience of God will hardly be interpreted theistically. Interpretation, accordingly, is a necessary element in all explicitly religious experience. Conversely, one can have an immediate and direct experience of God without recognizing it as such. Indeed, for Hocking God is always present in the pre-conscious "depths" of experience, that is, implicitly.

The dynamic transition from nuclear experience to developed mysticism (i.e., God-consciousness) is, I believe, what Hocking meant by "the dialectic of experience." This process of making explicit the implicit presence of God in nuclear experience is systematically cultivated by the mystic, who in this differs from the ordinary religious devotee content with the undeveloped consciousness of God's presence or its spontaneous occurrences, or who is unable to develop them further. Begun in acts of physical, mental and moral discipline which the mystic deliberately undertakes, this interpretive effort aims at conscious union with God. As the apex of mysticism, however, contemplative union involves an element of human passivity which allows for the free action of grace. Hocking was no Pelagian. Moreover, he

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2Cf. MGHE 538.
respected the value of spontaneous or undeveloped experiences of mystical encounter as distinct from the deliberate cultivation of mystical states, especially with regard to the "very ordinary experience" of everyman, himself included.

In elaborating the meaning and structure of mystical experience, Hocking faced two major obstacles. Each had not only the accumulated force of two centuries of anti-mystical sentiment, but also vocal and articulate representatives at hand in Hendrik Kraemer and others. The first, the "protestant" objection, held as we have seen that mysticism is radically anti-social, a privatized form of pseudo-religion based upon a flight from the real world to the untroubled recesses of "inner experience." Against this position, Hocking contended that all authentic human experience, including mystical experience, is not only radically intersubjective but also inevitably social in expression. The second objection maintained that mystical experience is essentially extraordinary, differing from ordinary experience in kind rather than degree and characteristic of a few, elite souls called to a life of religious perfection denied to the majority of mankind. Opposing this "catholic" objection, Hocking claimed that God was a direct and immediate factor in all human experience and, as a consequence, that all human persons were at least latent mystics.

Hocking met the first position by incorporating it
into his dialectic of experience, showing that social withdrawal was but a preliminary, negative phase of the mystic's fuller involvement in society. He met the second objection by acknowledging that while religious genius was rare, the accomplishments of the saints presupposed a foundation common to all men. If not everyone in fact reached the heights of mystical development, all were nevertheless capable of reaching as high as they desired and sincerely strove for. In effect, Hocking not only enlarged the scope of mysticism temporally, he extended it socially. In thus democratizing mysticism, as I shall argue in the concluding chapter, Hocking not only reclaimed the venerable tradition of classical Christianity, but concurred with and even anticipated the contributions of later exponents of mysticism.

From a philosophical viewpoint, it can be concluded, then, that mystical experience entered Hocking's philosophical thought not as an illustration as Rouner asserts,¹ but as the instance upon which the validity for his case for the social dimension and theistic basis of experience rested. Hocking's insistence upon the philosophical importance of mysticism was the expression of a life-long study of both. In Types of Philosophy, he devoted four chapters to mysticism as the seventh and final type of philosophy, the synthesis of the most important features of the others. The

¹Rouner, WHE 243. See above, p. 8.
mystic is definitely a member of the academy, indeed a special if reticent one: "the mystic, in the history of philosophy, is the initiate, one who has attained a direct vision of reality, a vision which he is unable to describe."\(^1\) However, as we shall see, the mystic-philosopher is not without interpreters. He is especially fortunate to have had in Hocking an interpreter who was a philosopher-mystic.

\(^1\)TP 255.
I. HOCKING'S CONCEPT OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

As developed over a lifetime of reflective analysis, for Hocking mystical experience consisted of a direct and immediate apprehension of the presence of God mediated by one's own psychic objects, Nature and Society. In other words, it was an explicit awareness of God as the Field grounding the elements of what Hocking called "nuclear experience" -- the structural relatedness of "I," "It" and "Thou." Mysticism, the practice of the presence of God, is thus the cultivation of mystical experience, a practical development of this field-awareness in relation to the realities of everyday life.

Hocking held that mystical experience had two phases -- first, a primordial, constant but subliminal experience of God's presence underlying our nuclear experience of Self, Nature and Society, and, second, the explicitation of that presence in moments of feeling-charged insight, whether as spontaneous occurrences or in the form of deliberate shifts of attention from the objects of daily experience to their ground in the World as a whole, conceived of as a medium of the divine presence. These moments range in explicitness from a simple awareness of the underlying unity of the world to a more or less continual and intense consciousness of union with God.

Hocking also held that developed mysticism as the
cultivated practice of such explicit consciousness always tends to find expression in action. Hence, structurally, mysticism was also a temporally dynamic social process which alternates between the inward pole of God-consciousness and the outward pole of prophetic activity. For Hocking, mysticism was thus essentially dialectical, manifesting itself processively in action and reflection according to the fundamental principle he called the "law of alternation." The prophet is the mystic in action; the mystic is the prophet in reflection and worship.

Overall, Hocking's understanding of mystical experience was achieved by a long process of progressive articulation. The fundamental concepts of his earliest writings remained influential throughout his life-long exposition of the meaning of mysticism. But these, like his concepts of experience and religion, underwent development, widening from a predominantly psychological concept to include a more social dimension and ultimately finding metaphysical expression. In his later years, I believe that Hocking came to identify mystical experience with religious experience in its highest realization as the explicit manifestation of the systematic interrelationship between Fact, Field and Destiny. Hocking's "final" conception of religion coincided with his developed concept of mysticism.
1. Fundamental Conceptions of Mysticism

From the beginning Hocking approached mysticism not as "the 'speculative mysticism' of the textbooks," but as "a practice of union with God, together with the theory of that practice."¹ He did not deny the theoretical dimension of mysticism, but "let its metaphysics come as a resultant, an inference, a presupposition."² Mysticism was more than an experience, it was a practical art:

the fine art, almost the lost art, of worship. Historically, the mystics are those who have carried the common art of worship to the degree of virtuosoship, they are those who have won eminent experimental knowledge of the way to God. And their technique, which is the refinement of worship, often the exaggeration of worship, is at the same time the essence of all worship.³

Here in a stroke Hocking not only severed his ties from what Royce called "speculative mysticism,"⁴ but established his own case for mysticism as the pragmatic extension of religious experience in the form of developed worship.

Worship, as Hocking came to view it, essentially

¹MGHE xxviii.

²"MM" 39. He added, importantly, "There is a minimum of theory without which mysticism cannot develop even as an experience, -- perhaps this: that God is one, and that it is possible to be one with him. Beyond this minimum, it is a community of experience that unites the mystics rather than any community of explicit doctrine." Cf. MGHE 352.

³Ibid.

⁴Cf. "MM" 40.
amounts to an effort to "attain union with God in a mystical experience, other than in thoughtful attention to the mysteries of self-consciousness and existence..."\(^1\) And thus, "mysticism and worship do stand or fall together."\(^2\) The connection between worship and mysticism as the practice of the presence of God is a function of immediacy; in worship, God is recognized and addressed in the vocative case. He is "there" as personally present. Our response is no less personal, that is to say, intersubjective:

we recognize here an other-than-theoretical relation to our object, a relation which surmounts objectivity without destroying it, and which is seen quite simply in that transition in consciousness from "he" to "thou" and from "thou" to "we."\(^3\)

Mysticism brings to clearer manifestation that which all worship intends in a less "transparent" manner. The agent of transition is the whole-idea, the working concept which, as that which we think the Whole with, constitutes the "equipment" which shifts attention from the particular objects of

\(^1\)MGHE 356.

\(^2\)Ibid. Cf. 352: "the agreement of the mystics lies wholly in the fact that, prior to doctrine, and wholly coextensive with religion, the practice of union with God [is] a special act of worship."

\(^3\)MGHE 343 - 44. In "MM" he had written, "The mystic is he who, finishing his philosophy, or more frequently, anticipating its conclusion, breaks through the film of objectivity involved in the theoretical relation and adopts towards his God the vocative case. In that new relation lies all that is distinctive of mysticism." (p. 41.) Note the allusion to consubjectivity in the transition from "thou" to "we." Cf. also MGHE 279 - 80.
experience to their ground. By means of it, worship directs our concern to the whole of things; it "places" life in the context of ultimacy. Thus "whatever recovers the worth of living by recovering the natural vigor of the whole-idea is worship, or a part of worship."¹ But mysticism makes salient what in worship is found only as a general tendency. It also leaps beyond the Whole to its ground:

Having been using the word mystic in a somewhat loose and generalized fashion, I now return to the mystic in our special sense, the man whose particular dissociation is between the whole of the system of things temporal on one side, and on the other the heart of the eternal, which he hopes to make empirically present to his consciousness.²

The "wholeness" of mystical experience rebounds to both the mystic and his society as a promise and lure of ultimate integrity. It is in this sense that Hocking was able at a later date to identify mysticism with his original conception of religion as an anticipation of attainment:

To discern that one is in presence of a goal, though not the final goal, is a remedy for despair; and such "anticipation of attainment," which I take to be the essence of religion, is an achievement which the practical mystic reports and undertakes to make available.³

¹ MGHE 419.
² "MM" 52. It should be noted here that Hocking distinguishes God, "the heart of the eternal" from the Whole. Mystical experience is a passage from the Whole to God as the field of experience. Cf. also 54 and MGHE 477ff.
³ "SSP" 399 - 400. Cf. MS 424: "In proportion as worship is successful, the will is elevated and transformed as
Summarily, mystical experience as the manifestation of the relationship between the Self and God as the Ground of experience mediated by natural and social objects represents the further development of worship as the chief and characteristic act of religion. Moreover, as the extension of religious experience, it is the further explicitation of the nuclear structure of all experience, the I-It-Thou triad with its ground in the divine presence as the Field of experience. The mystic's perception of the "Thou" present within himself as well as in the midst of the world as the Ground of both constitutes the essence of his experience:

The nuclear Thou-art (whose encounter is the theme of the mystics of all ages, and whose dialogue with the self has been described with such discerning power by Martin Buber) is never experienced merely as a co-subject, but as a creative will sustaining my own being (hence caring for my existence), an activity inviting a response, a launch as of "animal faith," a summons to by every vision of surpassing worth: it achieves not a finished perfection but a contact with perfection, a 'union with God' in which the quality of attainment lies at an infinite distance." It is because the ultimate goal still lies ahead that the mystic becomes the prophet: "The mystic insight demands embodiment: the concentration and energizing of the will must be made good in action." (Ibid.) Cf. also MGHE 439: "the meaning of the mystic experience is prophetic. It anticipates an attainment still to be won; it can be held only by proceeding to that winning."

find in experience directives that indicate "this way lies your fulfillment, your task, your destiny."¹

Consequently, mysticism is to be understood as an integral aspect of human experience, rather than an exceptional and possibly dispensable option, much less a tangential oddity. It must be seen as heightening and thus presupposing a prior if less clearly defined awareness of God's presence in Nature, Self and Society.² The dialectical process by which the nuclear awareness of God's presence is raised to direct and immediate consciousness is therefore a function of mediation.³ God reveals or communicates himself through the World. Religion interprets this communication; worship provides the appropriate response. Mysticism is the epitome of both.

More specifically, both spontaneous and cultivated instances of mystical experience involve some element of Self-

¹MGHE xiii. This passage from the 1963 edition also reflects Hocking's later notion of mysticism. Cf. also xxii, "MGHE" 65, GL Mar. 18, 1938, "MS" 190, MIHE 241 and SMN 218.

²Cf. "MS" 189: "The characteristic assertion of mysticism in all its forms is that there is a vitally important and non-conceptual experience of God available to men who meet its conditions. The simplest and most usual expression of this thesis is that all men at all times are directly dealing with God, whether they know it or not."

³Cf. "MS" 190: "The principle of the mystical consciousness is the transparency of intermediaries. Vital awareness deals with what intermediaries represent. And if the Real is God, it is with God that we have to do from moment to moment of daily living. For each action the world concentrates itself into a point of resistance and support; and that point is a Thou, not an It."
awareness -- such as finitude, immortality, worth, goodness or depth; of Nature -- such as beauty, goodness, power and order; or of Society -- such as love, duty, sacrifice and compassion. It is not so much that things or even persons as such reveal God to us but that in our experience of them we become aware of another dimension indicating something (or Someone) within yet beyond those things, events and persons not only grounding our relations with them but also calling and responding to us through them. In this way, God "becomes" present not only as the Other (He) but as Thou: through the intermediary agencies of common experience which are discovered to be "transparent" by a shift in awareness from the part to the Whole.

As noted previously, this transition from the part to the Whole, and the further transition from the Whole to God, is one of the more controversial aspects of Hocking's metaphysics of experience. As one of his critics objected, "We never face the Whole that Hocking is concerned with." Hocking would agree that in thinking the Whole, we are unable to form an adequate concept of it. "Our thought," he maintained,

1Hocking provided several examples of such mediation, some from his own experience, such as Nature, Time and Space, Self, Other Selves, Love and Duty. Cf. MGHE 272 - 73, 297, 429 - 35; CWC 73, 93, 99, 138, 183; MIHE 96 - 97, 216; "FFD" 546 - 47.

"is never, in point of time, adequate to its total object."\(^1\)

We are nevertheless aware of it.

Here Hocking had in mind the consciousness of the context of objects as experienced, a psychological fact long subject to study by Gestalt psychologists and investigated by philosophers such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Dewey.\(^2\)

We are not "faced" by this Whole, as if it were something apart from us, but are rather placed in it. It is, simply, the World as total context of experience: "In thus nuclear experience there are always three factors, an I, a Thou and a common subject matter, let us say an It. Taken in its totality, this It is simply the world in which the I must work out its life."\(^3\)

The Whole is not simply "given" in experience -- it must be discovered and can be discovered by a shift in attention from the objects of our consciousness to the "object" of consciousness in general, that is, the inclusive World, reality. Thus while there can be no concept fully adequate to the Whole as such, our awareness of the holistic quality

\(^1\)"SSP" 397.


\(^3\)MGHE xii.
of experience (and of reality) is actively cognitive -- our "whole-idea" is what we think the Whole with. As such, it depends upon an experience of the Whole, however marginal in consciousness, just as the God-idea depends upon an experience of God but is not a concept of God.¹

Further, God is not equivalent to the Whole; to assert which would entail pantheism. On the other hand, God is never found as an object among other objects.² Nevertheless, the Whole can be a medium of God's revelation to the Self just as can any particular object. For the Whole mediates God's presence as the Field of the Whole, the "frame of the universal."³ In short, God is related to the universe of our experience just as he is to discrete objects in our experience -- both transcendentally and immanently, that is, not contained by our experience although present within it.

The inductive movement of consciousness from the part to the Whole has its correlative in the deductive movement from the Whole to the part, as noted before. God is mediated

¹Cf. MGHE 129ff., 408 – 12.

²Cf. MGHE 321, 323; "MGHE" 62.

³"Whole" in this sense need not be taken to connote more than "intact," "entire," or "full," as in "of a piece, sound," indicating unity or integrity. (Cf. OED 3768 – 69.) It need not refer to "totality" in the sense of "all-encompassing" or "the totality," meaning that there can be nothing outside it, thus requiring God to be contained within the Whole, which is exactly what Hocking does not want to say. Cf. in this regard, Levinas, op. cit., passim.
in Hocking's view by both the Whole and the part. But the whole and its parts are mutually entailed; every experience of God mediated by a particular object is virtually an experience of the Whole, that is, implicitly given with it. Not surprisingly, the equivalence of the part with the Whole is a fundamental element in the mystics' theory of reality, their metaphysics.

It must be noted here that some ambiguity exists in Hocking's treatment of the Whole. Long an item in the philosophical lexicon of Idealism, "the" Whole connotes an aspect of the Absolute -- primarily its unity. As such, it is ostensibly an ontological category. As frequently used by Hocking, and certainly as used by the Gestalt psychologists, Dewey and more recent scientific exponents of mysticism,\(^1\) the Whole is a psychological category, a percept by which the unity of the experienced world becomes heightened.\(^2\)

Our real knowledge of the world, that is, of Reality

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\(^2\)Fischer, art. cit., p. 902, thus comments: "During the 'I'-state of daily routine, the outside world is experienced as separate from oneself, and this may be a reflection of the greater freedom (that is, separateness or independence) of cortical interpretation from subcortical activity. With increasing ergotropic and trophotropic arousal, however, this separateness gradually disappears, apparently because in the 'Self'-state of ecstasy and samadhi, cortical and subcortical activity are indistinguishably integrated. This unity is reflected in the experience of Oneness with everything, a Oneness with the universe that is oneself." Cf. p. 901.
in its most inclusive aspect, is surely founded on an ex-
perience of the Whole in this sense-- the fact that things
"hang together." Despite black holes in space, quarks and
positrons, all known phenomena conform in essential respects
to our mathematics, even in those cases in which mathemati-
cal development preceded these discoveries, as is clear in
the confirmation of non-Euclidean geometries used by Ein-
stein in elaborating his theories of relativity.

Thus, attending to the Whole means the disengagement
or de-investment (Deikman) of attention in the manifold,
discrete objects of daily concern and becoming aware of real-
ity as the total environment, that-which-is. This is the
state, for instance, of the Zen Master as described by Deik-
man and others. It is the object of a true perception, not
merely a concept or an inference. It has, moreover, ontolo-
gical as well as psychological implications for the mystic,
who feels and knows that he is in contact with the deeper
wellsprings of being, not merely beings.

Hocking, I suggest, concerned himself more with the
empirical aspect of the Whole, the "Whole-idea" or percept
which we think the Whole with, rather than with the Whole as
a concept, the "Idea of the Whole." Nevertheless, in the
psychological sense of the term, it can be held against Kri-
korian that we indeed "face" the Whole Hocking is concerned
with, but not with reflexive adequacy.
2. Reconceptions of Mysticism: Realism and Action

Between 1920 and 1940, a period which began with a shift in Hocking's interests toward social issues and activity and ended with the series of prestigious lectures in America and abroad, Hocking's understanding of mysticism likewise expanded to include a greater social dimension. He studied the incidence of mysticism in non-Christian religions, often at first hand, assessing its function and value in society. He similarly investigated history, appraising the first manifestations of mysticism in society. He also ventured beyond the psychological theory derived from mystical experience and began to expound the mystics' teachings about the nature of the world.

His fundamental concept of mysticism as the practice of union with God was carried over into this period of development. He elaborated upon the basic notion, however, characteristically describing the mystical experience as an awareness of the presence of the "Real," which is typically revealed in terms of an all-pervading unity:

For the realist eye the values of experience run down and he [can] only restore them by reverting to the One. With recovered simplicity he might then recur to the particular tasks [of life], and with new efficiency. Life was an alternation, whose denouement was a grasp of reality in its fullness.

This infinite task [is] sustained by the mystic's certainty that the Real, in its immediacy, was present throughout the entire adventure. It was only the mystic
realist who could realize the infinite as an operative factor in the finite, and live the life of reason in presence of the irrational and obdurate facts.¹

By "Real," Hocking fundamentally meant that which exists independently of the human mind.² As seen above, Hocking further identified the Real in its ultimate expression with God. By employing the less obviously religious term, he was able to avoid the need for theological distinctions based upon religious differences. As he would in later accounts, he was also reaffirming his fundamental contention that the mystic perception was a common and universal endowment:

The mystic is indeed definable as the self aware of a unity in objective being, and of his own unitedness with that unity. But he is not an uncommon person. He is every man who uses the definite article in referring to "the world"; for he implies thereby that the real world is one and identical, and, as such, an immediate deliverance of experience for all alike. My heresy here, if it is one, is that I -- interpreting every man -- hold "the Real" to be always present in experience, the ultimate subject of predication, even while it is, in its full character and description, endlessly sought.³

¹GL Mar. 18, 1938. Cf. "MGHE" 65 and "ABN" 93: "The history of religion in the West is not wholly alien to the search for realization, though it has been inclined to regard such seekers as a separate and somewhat eccentric group, the 'mystics,' for whom worship is an experience of participation in the ultimate real." Cf. also "HA" 433, 437 - 38 and GL Dec. 10, 1938.

²Cf. MGHE 150, 161, 198, 269n. 1, 303, 308 - 10, 436, 489, 502, 562, 568, 571. It was, of course, much more as well.

³"RPK" 280. Note Hocking's virtual identification of himself as a mystic in this passage.
Perceived as the Real and as the source of the unity of the World, God represents the "object" of mystical experience, whether explicitly identified as "God" or not. As such, God is ingredient in every perception of reality, prior to distinctions between theism and atheism and among competing religious traditions as to "what" God is.

During this "middle" period, Hocking further sharpened his case against the adequacy of any conceptual knowledge of God, finding in that denial the heart of the mystic's epistemology and his meditative discipline:

the mystic believes, as the agnostic does not, that the quality of the Real, though not describable, can be experienced in a sort of direct knowledge which is far more satisfactory than the remoter knowledge of concepts, just as acquaintance with a person is more satisfactory knowledge than the best description.¹

Mere intuition, however, does not give positive knowledge of what, but rather, that the One is. Moreover, mystical experience is not merely intuitive knowledge of:

There is, so to speak, another stage of intuition, in which the sense of other-ness drops away and the knower realizes that he is identical with the inner being of his object. At least, such is the view of... mysticism, which teaches the absolute unity of reality. If reality is one, we can only know it truly when we merge with it; that is, when knowledge in the objective sense of knowing something not myself ceases.²

¹ TP 262 - 63. For a further description of the analogy between mystical experience and intimacy, see below, pp. 234ff.

² TP 254 - 55.
Mysticism thus surpasses mere intuition in so far as "intuition, which perceives the whole unique being of its living object with sympathetic intelligence, may still hold the object as different from the one who knows it." ¹ Mysticism characteristically teaches the unity of subject and object,² and this theory of knowledge leads to a theory of being. Although an epistemological dualist, holding to the identity-in-difference of the knower and the known, the mystic is an ontological monist:

The mystic is persuaded that the Real can be whole and entire in the minutest being, just as the salt-quality can be complete in every smallest drop of sea-water, or as one who is injured, however slightly, may truthfully say "I am hurt," -- I, the whole Self, am identified with the part that is injured.³

The many thus participate in the One by a kind of metaphysical synecdoche, recalling the hermetical principle of antiquity, All is One. And hence arises the problem of the predication of attributes, which Hocking attempted to resolve by distinguishing between essence and existence.⁴ But what God is has less immediate importance to the mystic than

¹TP 254.
²Cf. TP 255: "Realism separates object and knower; idealism holds that all objects belong to some knower; mysticism holds that the objects and the knowers belong to each other, -- they are the same reality, they are one."
³TP 260. See below, p. 272.
⁴Cf. MGHE 142 - 43.
that God is; existence precedes essence in the priorities of mystical experience.¹ This mystical existentialism is both theologically and pragmatically motivated. Faced with the inadequacy of the theistic concept of what God is and the atheistic denial that God is, "The mystic has something beyond nature to keep thinking about, to gain approximate or symbolic conceptions of, and to live by."²

The main thrust of Hocking's writings on mysticism during this period concerned the mystic's prophetic activity, his "return to the world." New to his exegesis of the mystic's practical career was attention to the ethical content, the mystic's "code of action for the world." He summarized: "the principle of all mystical codes of ethics may be stated in this simple form: Be what you are. That is, be in action what you are in reality."³

¹Cf. TP 261.
²TP 262.
³TP 273. He added, emphasizing the more-than-theoretical intention of the maxim, "This masterful attitude toward types of conduct which have the name of virtue fits the mystic to be a moral originator, a reformer of laws and customs. He has so often filled this rôle that it would be interesting to enquire whether any great reform had occurred in history without some mystic at the bottom of it." Many significant ethical ramifications of Hocking's writings on mysticism could be profitably explored but extend beyond the limits of this inquiry. As Alford Professor at Harvard, Hocking was professionally concerned with social ethics. Several of his major and minor works deal explicitly with that subject, especially its foundations, such as Morale and Its Enemies, Human Nature and Its Remaking, Man and the State, The Lasting Elements of Individualism and Strength of Men and Nations.
The principal achievement of the mystic's ethical code concerns the formation of conscience which, in one instance Hocking clearly identified with mystical experience itself:

In [Socrates] conscience appeared as an unanalyzed sense of wrongness warning him away from certain courses of action which he was inclined to adopt. These actions were incongruous with some inner standard of whose nature he was hardly aware. That inner standard, we may suppose, is simply the persistent mystical sense of unity with the Real; and conscience is the intuitive recognition that a proposed course of action is, or is not, consistent with that unity.¹

Consequently, as Hocking assessed the function and value of mysticism, the "negative path" of mystical discipline "would be understood as the process of renewing the sensitivity of conscience."²

In his comparative study of religion, Hocking similarly addressed the active phase of the mystic's career in terms of the development of religions. Referring to the work as "a concluding chapter" of his magnum opus "which remained unpublished," he noted that he had been attempting to present a realistic mysticism, one which turns its back on circumstance and the world's concerns believe that a strong connection exists between Hocking's ethics and his mystical vision, but this, too, lies beyond the scope of the present study to explore.

¹TP 272.
²Ibid.
only to find the Real, and thereby to renew energy and
grit for the particular task, and to regain certitude
in action, that detailed action whose integral sum is
history. ¹

Stated in its simplest terms, Hocking's contention
was still that "Some notion of God lies in the line of devel-
opment of any mysticism; and mysticism is the common coin of
all great religions."² The social dimension of mysticism re-
mained a function of the principle of alternation, but its
ramifications were now seen to lie primarily in two direc-
tions -- the mystic's need for the community and the communi-
ty's reciprocal need for the mystic.³ Here Hocking brought
into conjunction the individualistic perspective of his ear-
lier writings with the social consciousness of his "middle"
period.

Having found concrete corroboration in his Asian in-
vestigations for the mystic's necessary return to the world
in order to complete his development, Hocking concentrated
on the mystic's motive in a somewhat different light than he
had before: "There are signs that the mystic feels at times
that salvation cannot be complete in solitude -- as if the
sin and lostness of other men penetrated one's own security."⁴

¹ LRWF 7.
² LRWF 190.
³ Cf. LRWF 41 - 51. See below, pp. 256, 261ff.
⁴ LRWF 41. Cf. 40.
The mystic's essential solidarity thus provides the incentive to work for the salvation of all:

Unquestionably, the religious impulse in its more powerful representatives lifts personality into a region where the walls of moral isolation between man and man grow thin. And where such a sense of community in sinfulness exists, it must lend a deeper gravity to the disposition to spread righteousness.¹

As noted before, the mystic's return to the world is also motivated by a sense of destiny, the factor of "cosmic demand": "the total world, there, expects something of me, and my effort becomes a response...."² Destiny would figure pre-eminently in Hocking's later writings, in which he brought his concept of mysticism into conjunction with his more metaphysical interpretation of the concept of experience. Less explicitly developed, the notion of Destiny here figured in Hocking's concluding evaluation of the development of world religions into a loose "world faith" organized upon the fact of everyman's access to God in the World and in his own psychic depths. As he looked ahead, he again saw the function of mysticism as one of unification in the emergent structure of history:

If men are to keep their hearts, they must have some way of seeing the non-futility of the futile! They have to

¹LRWF 43.
be assured that there is another reckoning in which what they have done and what they are has its effect, is known, comes to the centre. They need to know that what they have done to the least and in the least corner of the unsurveyable swirl of world-happening, they have done to the highest. [...] History must have a peculiar structure in order to realize such a condition. The Whole alive in every conscious part; the One somehow present in the interstices of happening, aware like some all sensitive Karma-principle of every intent, every purpose there flashing into being, and linking it somewhere with its due effect.¹

Such certitude, based on experience of the One-in-every-part, the Real, is the mystic's contribution to society.² To be sure, every man must experience the Real for himself to acquire such assurance. But for Hocking the intimate presence of God within each person was the condition for just that possibility. Confirmation of that presence and its consequences must be sought and, for Hocking, could be found, not only in the rapport between mystics themselves and their appeal to those attentive to them, but also in the facts of history.

In his Gifford Lectures, Hocking retraced his outline of history, noting with regard to the "discovery of the Absolute" in the mystical phase of Indian religion that it was the demands of social existence which led to the passage beyond mystical withdrawal: "The spell of this absolute quiescence is broken (1) by the necessities of daily living, which it cannot differentially aid; and (2) by the attempts of the

¹LRWF 266 - 67.
discoverers to expound and promote it."¹

Here we encounter the principle of alternation applied not only to the experience of individuals but to the lives of whole peoples. The theoretical articulation of the Absolute is corrected by adverting in experience to the needs of further experience. The limitations of the Absolute are initially empirical, not speculative -- its value for life is restricted and must therefore be overcome in the name of better meeting the world. The mysticism of contemplative absorption thus passed into the no less mystical activity of prophetic work and teaching.

The mystic, in transcending the limitations of mystical experience by a dialectic of contemplative absorption and prophetic action more fully realizes himself and, in so doing, brings to fuller realization the values of religion in society and history. For Hocking the perfection of mysticism did not consist in abandoning it for a life of action, but in the dynamic rhythm of alternating phases of withdrawal and return in which mystical awareness expresses itself as prophetic action in turn demanding meditative reflection and evaluation.

¹"HA" 434. He continued, "They can only pass beyond silence into speech and action by a descent which appears to involve a non sequitur if not outright inconsistency. It was necessary that history find its Absolute. It was also necessary that it pass beyond it."
3. Final Conceptions

The major development in Hocking's final reflections on mysticism concern, I believe, its experiential embodiment of the elements of Fact, Field and Destiny. In this, the two strands of thought centering about the ultimate meaning and structure of experience and religion are synthesized in a final conceptualization of the meaning and structure of mysticism, particularly with regard to its social dimension. In arriving at this confluence of concepts, Hocking also brought into sharper focus the essential theses, as I see them, of his case for mysticism as both a direct and immediate experience of God and a fundamentally social phenomenon.

In The Coming World Civilization, Hocking continued the line of development inaugurated in Living Religions and a World Faith. A possible world community must have a common factual basis in shared experience which can provide men with sufficient assurance and incentive in order for them even to attempt bridging the chasms dividing person from person and nation from nation. This common factor is the presence of God in individual, corporate and historical experience.¹ The mystic represents the future citizen of the coming world civilization as an embodied "anticipation of attainment." He is the prophet of a world brotherhood united not yet along political lines, but in spirit.

¹For "corporate mysticism," see especially "MS" 194.
In so far as the mystic represents all men, then all must be mystics, at least potentially. Further, as Hocking had proposed before, mystical experience is thus a common element in human existence and history itself:

the "mystic" here is simply that "any man" in any religion who opens the door of his self-built enclosure, and sees the world, perhaps for the first time, in his own experience, as not his alone but God's world, and therefore every man's world, as held in God's care, the ego's personal entity included.

And hence, mystical experience cannot be isolated, extraordinary or bizarre:

Such seeing is not a rare and privileged event; it is not unnatural; it is a passing from the unnatural to the natural and true. It is present in some degree in every wakening of the mind to love, and every opening of the eyes to beauty.

Ordinary experience, interpreted by religion raised exponentially by the mystic's acquired and native sensitivities, is the medium of the mystical encounter with God.

Again, Hocking singled out the mystic's discipline,

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2 CWC 101. Later, he clarified this point: "what I mean by 'the true mystic' is simply the person who in the course of his own experience has in some moment become aware of the nature of things as supreme good." "Such vision may come wholly outside the lines of formal religion.... Or it may come in the way of meditative discipline.... Or still more simply and widely in the waking of the mind to love and the opening of the eyes to beauty, when these experiences are, as they may be, entrance gates to the nature of Being." (CWC 138 -39.) Here Hocking is largely restating his principle of the transparency of intermediaries with an eye to his reconception of
the practice of union with God, rather than any shared doctrinal tenets as the basis of a possible world faith which alone could ground a humane world civilization. But he perceived an even deeper foundation than their practices for the mystics' concurrence: "Whatever their departures from one another in practice and theory, there is a tendency for the mystics in various traditions -- selectively -- to understand one another." Further, the long history of mysticism indicated to Hocking that "The several universal religions are already fused together, so to speak, at the top." And accordingly, "The primary identity involved in recognition of mystic by mystic is the essence of the religious world view, the perception of Being as beatitude -- God is, and God is One." Such a vision is neither specialized nor reserved to a few: "With this final and universal truth, whatever is implied in it, and that is much, is already implicitly the possession of every believer within his own faith."

mystical experience as a heightened contact with the Real, that is, God as Being itself.

1Cf. CWC 140 - 41. Cf. above, p. 190 n. 2, 193 n. 2.

2CWC 141. Cf. Evelyn Underhill, quoting Claude de St.-Martin, "All mystics... speak the same language and come from the same country." (Mysticism [New York: World Publishing Co., 1955 ed.], p. xiii.)

3CWC 149.

4Ibid.

5Ibid. Cf. also p. 142.
The common faith of the future, as anticipated in the religion of the mystic, would find its natural expression in action, the work of love and justice governed by the rhythmic excursions and withdrawals of the Law of Alternation. But the mystic-prophet is not simply regulated by the alternation of contemplation and action. He is driven to manifest his vision of the unity of all-in-one in concrete deeds whereby his ultimate attainment is anticipated in actual experience and also to reflect on his deeds. Accordingly,

To "love one's neighbor" would be to deal with him, not blindly but with responsible provocation, on the basis of his favorable possibilities as creatively discerned by you, including therein that not actual but potential divinity which your deed may elicit. Then one understands that startling statement, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Since the finite self already participates to some extent in the infinite life, the true mystic finds his deity not alone at the end of the negative path, as the Absolute-that-is-not-the-finite, but also there on the highway,

Where move in strange democracy
The million masks of God.¹

The mystical path, essentially a practical way of living, not only comes to realization in action, it finds therein its ultimate verification. Hocking concluded, returning to the theme of the unification of history as he had in his two major works on religion:

these ministerings of man to man are not merely items of creature comfort bestowed on passing needs; they are acts

¹CWC 184. Cf. MIHE 232.
of transforming this human history into the pattern of a divine community through changing the relational schemes of its units.¹

Such a vision is less an assessment of the historical structure and present meaning of religion than a sanguine estimation of its potential and ideal function in a somewhat optimum future. Nevertheless, Hocking's prediction was based upon a critical study of the actual tendencies at work in world religions. History itself will prove his prediction right or wrong with respect to the eventuation of a world faith, even a pluralistic one. But as with his 1959 forecast of the Soviet-American détente (as he called the coming post-cold war thaw) in Strength of Men and Nations, recent events, including the ecumenical movement and the attention of the Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church to "non-Christian religions," have seemingly borne out his expectations.

Hocking's emphasis on the role of action in a maturing world faith has been similarly echoed in the pastoral concern of international religious organizations as well as the

¹CWC 184. A. R. Luther's otherwise excellent discussion of mysticism in Existence as Dialectical Tension (op. cit., pp. 55 - 60, 108ff.) is marred by his failure to consider the mystic's motive in returning to the world. Consequently, the rhythm of alternation appears to be a mechanical oscillation in which the mystic is not so much guided from within as regulated by the pressure of external forces. As a voluntary activity, the mystic's return is imperated by both love and duty -- a passion to save souls and to remedy the lack of integrity in the social fabric by fostering communication, justice and well-being.
Vatican Council. His historical principle, moreover, has a greater ring of truth after almost two decades of sluggish, top-level efforts to affect fuller religious and political co-operation. The pattern of history can only be modified overall by pervasive change in the relationships among individuals as expressed in, not engineered by, changes in the social systems and structures. Ecumenical agreements among denominational leaders and professional diplomats remain ineffectual if repugnant to their constituents -- a lesson unlearned despite efforts to unite Eastern and Western Christianity since the thirteenth century.

As the prophet of religious community and world harmony, the mystic does not in fact remain content with the immediate certainty of life's ultimate meaning in the consciousness of God's immediate presence. In The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience, Hocking argued again that mystical assurance, which is neither lasting nor directly communicable, is confirmed only in action: "immediate certainty is not enough. If living were so much its own always available and sufficient apology there would be no reason for a program of action and change."\(^1\) The mystic, then, is often by necessity (or, in more experiential terms, by Destiny\(^2\)) a man or woman\(^3\)

\(^1\) MIHE 160.
\(^2\) Cf. MIHE 161.
\(^3\) Consider, e.g., Catherine of Siena, Joan of Arc, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Genoa, Dorothy Day and others.
of action, characteristically a tough-minded realist:

He commonly finds himself, in practical affairs, a strenuously effective individual, like some Savonarola or Eckhart or Loyola. Sometimes he concedes to this "realism" with an uneasy sense of duplicity, as if he ought to be an alien in this world of fact. More often he perceives that the art of life must unite, in some fashion, its realistic with its mystical phases, and seeks some further understanding of this union. As a matter of practical program, we all tend to alternate between the two.¹

The mystic is not wholly comfortable with the World as it is. His vision unflinchingly encompasses Fact, but extends also to possibility, to what can be and should be. Further, the mystic feels a call to realize that possibility in personal action. Thus, as an element in the pattern of full mystical development, the characteristic return to the world of the true mystic manifests the necessary aspect of action as the completion of that process. Again, the mystic experiences this "call to action" not as an externally imposed task, but as an inner compulsion corresponding to a summons from beyond which is so closely integrated with both his self-understanding and the exigencies of the situation that he can only refer to it as his "destiny," his proper vocation in history. Importantly, Hocking also reminds us in this passage that the dialectical structure of the mystic's life of action and reflection is rooted in the pattern of al-

¹MIHE 160.
ternation characteristic of all experience worthy of the qualifier "human."

In a passage dating from 1957, Hocking amplified his growing understanding of the importance of the sense of destiny and with it a measured reticence in the life of the mystic. Here, I suggest, he brought his mature concept of experience into alignment with his final formulation of the meaning and structure of mysticism. He had already identified destiny as an interpretative schema employed by the mystic to account for the impetus to historically appropriate action.¹ Anticipating "Fact, Field and Destiny," he continued,

Many people have a feeling, perhaps a superstition, that they have a specific function to fulfill, which has been assigned to them in the deeper councils of the world. They do not know what the function is. But they are in search of it, kept from a sense of meaninglessness by a conviction that it exists.²

This intimation of purpose in life is part of the nuclear awareness which makes all of us at least latent mystics, as noted before: "Let us designate such persons as the mystics. They are at a disadvantage in giving an account of it."³ The mystic's reticence thus results from a non-articulate sense of destiny. Nevertheless, he is rarely content merely to acknowledge the feeling, finding in it, rather, an

¹ Cf. MIHE 161.
³ MIHE 96 - 97.
the mystic has to find and decipher his own secret instructions. These strange souls demand that human action shall bear a stamp of cosmic appointment, and if they do not perceive that stamp in the actual present task, they are willing to continue its lead through a long pilgrimage, persistently expecting the day of recognition: "This is the thing for which I was born."¹

The mystical life is a quest for meaning as purpose in life -- less as understood than as achieved in action. It is this prophetic element of a pragmatic destiny only dimly understood which found further expression in Hocking's last metaphysical statement, "Fact, Field and Destiny." In this important article, the strands of his religious and metaphysical doctrine were brought together in a surprising concatenation -- surprising in so far as the words mystic and mysticism found no place in it. Nevertheless, the mystical element tacitly dominates and guides the entire essay thematically.²

Hocking's "last word" on destiny and mysticism was contained, however, in a posthumous article. In it he reiterated several themes he had developed as early as 1912, rounding off his career with a return to the beginning. In discussing the value and achievement of true individuality, he ad-

¹MIHE 97.

²Cf. "FFD" pp. 545 - 47, discussed above, pp. 99ff. The mystical content of the article and its connection with the Gifford Lectures are discussed further in the Appendix, pp. 381 - 86.
verted to society's inability to nourish the uniqueness of the person despite the necessity that it be done:

Individuality is born at that moment -- and only at that moment -- when the soul in its loneliness sees its life in society -- necessarily under a system of rules -- as subject to a goal-seeking beyond these rules.

This goal is commonly the unspoken treasure of religion, conveyed to the seeker as a privately won vision. The individual is the potential prophet. His experience may be called mystical, not in the sense of a subliminal blur, but in the sense of a directive, seeking embodiment, including the corrective function of the Socratic familiar spirit.¹

Religion and its mystical aspect still functioned for him as an anticipation of final attainment, guided, as he added, by a sensitized conscience. Mysticism likewise preceded prophetic action for him as the condition for true individuality, the ability to make a difference, a contribution to human history no one else could add.

4. Summary and Conclusion

From his earliest to his last writings, Hocking consistently maintained that the essential element in mystical experience is a direct and immediate apprehension of God culminating in its fullest expression in an experience of union with God through a free act of grace.² Such experiences admit of a range of explicitness, from a somewhat different

¹"ABN" 93.

²Cf. MGHE xxviii, TP 257, "MS" 190.
fuse awareness of an aspect of the perceived world, such as its underlying unity, total goodness or absolute beauty, to an intensely focused consciousness of God's presence, including a consubjective sense of oneness. But all such experiences are various modes of God's constant presence mediated either opaquely or transparently through the Self, Nature or the demands and delights of social existence. Thus all experience is at least radically if subliminally mystical, latent in everyman's "dim awareness" of the divine Thou grounding all intersubjective as well as objective experience. Developed mysticism ensues when the latent mysticism of nuclear experience is raised to consciousness, especially in those persons peculiarly sensitive by nature, nurture or grace to the meaning of these experiences. No one, however, is barred by temperament or intelligence from the ranks of the mystics; fundamentally, all are mystics for all are directly dealing with God whether they know it consciously or not in every authentic experience of Self, the World and other selves. Further, mystical experience may be particular, corporate or historical, depending on the level of its manifestation in

1Cf. "MM" 56, "WDPS" 42, TP 314, CWC 138 - 39; TP 314, CWC 101, 139.


3Cf. "MGHE" 65, "HA" 433 - 34.

4Cf. TP 314, "MS" 189, CWC 101.
human experience. ¹

In view of the preceding analysis of Hocking's treatment of mystical experience, I propose the following overall definition of that experience: The Self directly and immediately meeting God, both subliminally in nuclear experience and consciously as explicitly mediated by Nature and Society. By meeting, I here mean an active as well as receptive encounter, a "dialogue" conditioned by a shared field of experience -- in this case, God himself.

Having followed the genetic development of Hocking's conceptions and reconceptions of mystical experience, we can now turn to a structural analysis of mysticism as he understood it.

¹Cf. "MS" 194.
II. THE ELEMENTS AND STRUCTURE OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

Hocking's philosophy of mystical experience was not systematic. Yet by thematically compiling and comparing relevant texts from his many writings on the subject, the outline of a system can be disclosed. For mysticism as Hocking came to view it was not a miscellaneous congeries of unconnected events, but a developmental process regulated by discernible principles or laws similar to those fundamental to all human behavior. Further, he detected a variety of constant factors in mysticism, both in its historical manifestations and in individual experience. Accordingly, by more systematically articulating these principles, elements and structures as found in Hocking's more descriptive and exploratory presentations, the coherence of his doctrine can be more readily assessed and the cogency of his fundamental theses can be more easily evaluated.

In the following section, I shall present, first, a phenomenology of mystical experience, that is, a profile of its essential characteristics as found in Hocking's writings. Second, I shall articulate the fundamental elements, structure and functions of mysticism and the principle which regulates them according to his account. Third, I shall investigate to a limited extent his treatment of the theoreti-

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1By "phenomenology" I mean simply a descriptive analysis of the manifest features of an experience.
Finally, I shall consider briefly the role of interpretation in the process of structuring mystical experience.

1. The Essential Characteristics of Mystical Experience

In his effort to define the meaning of mysticism descriptively, Hocking sought to determine the essential characteristics of mystical experience, drawing on personal reports as well as the work of James and other researchers. While little inclined to reflect on methodology, in his earliest article on mysticism he nevertheless made a noteworthy distinction between the psychological characteristics of mystical experience and its objective or metaphysical content:

What I want to point out is that these words, unitary, immediate, ineffable, which at all events apply to the mystic's experience, are precisely the words which the metaphysician applies to the mystic's doctrine. And I suggest that the misinterpretation of mysticism here in question is due to the fact that what is a psychological report (and a true one) is taken as a metaphysical statement (and a false one).

For Hocking, although neither the subjective nor objective aspect of mystical experience exist separately, each should be distinguished logically and described separately. Consequently, although the initial description of mystical experience will refer in some sense to both psychological and ontological aspects, these aspects must not be confused.

1"MM" 43. Here, Hocking had Royce in mind. Cf. MGHE 352.
The phenomenological unity of mystical experience thus not only precedes but also warrants the division into its psychological and ontological-theological components.

For Hocking, mystical experience, like the religious experience of which it is the extension, reveals in sharper relief the essential characteristics of all experience, as we might expect. Nevertheless, it manifests certain specific qualities which differentiate it (not in kind but in degree) from experience in general and ordinary religious experience in particular.

As we have just seen, while mystical experience is associated with unity, immediacy and especially ineffability, these attributes are shared to some extent by all experience:

Probably all experience in its immediate quality is incommunicable; but the arts of communication draw infinite material from the region nearer and nearer the heart of this immediacy. Immediacy and idea are not disparate stuff, they are different stages of the same stuff, the same meaning and the individuals historically most active and fertile in this ideal exploitation of immediacy are none but the poets and mystics themselves.  

1 An epistemological realist, Hocking maintained the irreducibility of subject and object while no less strenuously maintaining their inseparability. Cf. TP 255, cited above, p. 202 n. 2.

2 "MM" 44. By the same token, mystical experiences are thus not "purely" or "absolutely" immediate, for through an intrinsic relationship to ideas, the mystical state "is never so complete as to be wholly without fringes..., some awareness of the empirical self remains." ("MM" 46.) For unity, cf. "MM" 43, 52, 56; MGHE 404, 419, 522; MS 427; "HA"
Although common to all experience, the quality of ineffability had, however, given the word mystical its significance.\(^1\) The mystic is one who is "mum," who cannot or will not speak out.\(^2\) From a psychological perspective, Hocking would later refer to this character of mystical experience as the mystic's "reticence."\(^3\)

Faced with the paradox of the alleged ineffability of the mystics' experience as well as their notorious volubility in describing them, Hocking's insistence on distinguishing

\(^1\) Cf. MGHE 348: "It is this difficulty of communication, this separation from the mass of people in thought and habit, this embarrassment of speech, which has embodied itself in the word mysticism." The alienation from ordinary people experienced by the mystic is a consequence not of a fundamental difference in the kind of experience had, but in the intensity. The mystic is rendered speechless by his experience; he is also driven to seclude himself, temporarily, from his fellow citizens. But all experience difficulty in describing experience, just as all must occasionally withdraw from societal transactions in order to renew their energies for work. The mystic merely extenuates these aspects of common experience.

\(^2\) Cf. TP 255. The etymological origin of the word is the Greek verb muein, which means "to close" or "to shut."

\(^3\) Cf. especially LRWF 69 - 71. Hocking eventually acknowledged that reality itself is also ineffable; it cannot be adequately described. Cf. TP 255ff.
the characteristics of subjective experiencing from the object(s) experienced would later permit him to save both the validity of the mystics' descriptions as well as his own commitment to rational inquiry without either compromising the intimate mysteriousness of the mystical encounter or indulging in cryptic and premature metaphysical analysis. He wrote, "there is nothing in the mystic experience not expressible in idea, except the experiencing itself."\(^1\) In one respect, Hocking was thus truly a rationalist, if he also acknowledged the ultimate incomprehensibility of the act of experiencing in its moment. Mystical experience might be, as a consequence, inexhaustible (like all experience), but it remained subject to rational investigation and descriptive interpretation.\(^2\)

For Hocking as for James, then, there was present in mystical experience a distinctively noetic character.\(^3\) This Hocking sometimes described as "immediate insight," "realization," or, ultimately, "revelation," that is of some truth about the world.\(^4\) Mystical experience, like all experience, is in some sense cognitive. It eventuates in ideas about the

\(^1\)MGHE 451.


\(^3\)Cf. MGHE 361 - 62, 428; TP 255f.; LRWF 166; "MS" 192. Cf. also James, op. cit., pp. 293ff.

\(^4\)Cf. MGHE 362, 428.
nature of reality, out of which the mystic elaborates a world-view or metaphysic, a feature of mysticism which Hocking only gradually came to appreciate, owing, perhaps, to his rejection of Royce's "speculative mysticism." Less conceptual than aesthetical and practical, however, the noetic element in mystical experience is typically manifested in certainty and praise of God and in creative activity.¹ That is, rather than elaborating a scheme of abstract concepts, the mystic expresses his insight in song and poetry.² Nevertheless, even this intuitive and immediate grasp of reality can be rendered conceptually intelligible by interpretation.

With respect to certainty, Hocking (like James) found the mystics' assurance to be largely incommunicable; each must experience it for himself.³ As such, the mystic's experience is not subject to fundamental doubt. However, the mystic's certitude in existential and pragmatic rather than theoretical. He is certain that, rather than what God is -- more accurately, that he is in immediate contact with God. Further, mystical certitude was for Hocking neither derived nor circumstantial, but immediate.⁴

¹Cf. MGHE 460.
²Cf. MGHE 452.
³Cf. James, op. cit., pp. 311, 323ff.
⁴Cf. "MM" 52; MGHE 296, 449f.; LRWF 7, 220; "MS" 192; MIHE 156; "ABN" 95. See above, pp. 108ff.
A creative or novel element in mystical experience is found both as a quality and a function. What is new to the mystic is not only the ever-original awareness of God, "revelation" in the customary sense, but the perceived character of the World as well, to which he is awakened by the breakdown of habitual modes of perception, thought and action. This sense of "newness," of being at the origin of things, becomes manifest in the mystic's subsequent behavior as freedom.

Alternation is reflected in mystical experience in two respects: the active and passive phases of the experience as well as its character as continuous despite a fundamental discontinuity. Passivity was a quality of mystical experience emphasized by James. For Hocking passivity occurred developmentally as the culmination of active efforts to

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1Cf. especially MGHE Chapter 31, pp. 462 - 84. Cf. also "MM" 54; MGHE xxviii, 424, 460; TP 271; "MS" 192ff.

2Cf. MGHE 457: "Of this new knowledge, we have here to say that it comes to the mystic in the course of his return to the world, unsought by him. He has known God from the standpoint of the world; now he begins to know his world from the standpoint of his new experience of God. As after every new experience the familiar experiences to which one returns are lit up with unfamiliar light, shining out strange and reborn: so as the mystic resumes his occupation with the many things, he finds that 'all things have become new,' and this novelty he will learn how to distil into the stock of human wisdom at large."

3Cf. James, op. cit., p. 293.
achieve union with God:

Various as the ways are which mystics in different ages have used in approaching their god, their resemblances run deep. In all of them there are efforts of the mind fairly described in the medieval terms, purgation and meditation. And in all of them these active efforts are brought to a close by a voluntary passivity.¹

This voluntary passivity is of course a form of activity and thus never "pure" in itself, for the mystic actively attempts to become passive.² Ultimately, voluntary passivity is transformed into involuntary passivity "when God accepts and lifts to himself the prepared soul. Its history [i.e., that of the 'negative path'] is that of an activity of self-suppression which must itself be suppressed."³

If Hocking avoided Pelagianism by stressing the necessity of passive perfection by God's grace, he avoided Quietism by an equal if not greater stress on the active phases of the mystic's preparation and his return to the world for the completion of his own and society's development.⁴ The active and passive moments of mystical development thus constitute a dialectic of withdrawal, transformation and return.

¹MGHE 371 - 72. Elsewhere he remarked, "the attempt at worship, in so far as it depends upon the mystic's own active efforts, is impossible." (MGHE 381.)

²Cf. MGHE 383 - 86.

³MGHE 386. Cf. also "MS" 190.

⁴Cf. Hocking's critique of M. Guyon, MGHE 425ff. A failure to see passivity as a penultimate rather than ultimate stage of mysticism mars Furse's otherwise excellent study of mysticism as a pattern of behavior (op. cit.).
The mystical dialectic is also manifest in the alternation of continuity and discontinuity, especially in the transience of mystical experience. By discontinuity I mean the mystic's disconnection from social ties, values and even physical presence, the withdrawal from the social world into solitude.\(^1\) This break in experience is but a more deliberate explicitation of the natural tension and relaxation of human pursuits, however:

For the mystic, strictly speaking, is the man whose disconnection is made between the whole system of things and ideas temporal on one side and the heart of the eternal on the other; whereas the subdued "mysticism" of our ordinary life merely flits from one body of ideas to another within that world system.\(^2\)

The transiency of mystical experience similarly amplifies the in-built disconnection in the structure of ordinary human experience, the temporal limitation of sustained activity of any kind.\(^3\) All experience has its endings: "if union with God were the whole story of mystical experience, there could be no reason why that moment should pass. The mystic himself knows very well that his vision cannot last, so long as he remains a human being."\(^4\) Alternation signifies the overcoming of this limitation by successive, reciprocally

\(^1\) Cf. "MM" 54; MGHE 401f.; CWC 140f.
\(^2\) MGHE 401.
\(^3\) Cf. James, op. cit., p. 293.
\(^4\) MGHE 390.
reinforcing phases of activity and withdrawal which permit intermittent progress rather than eventual and final termination. Religiously, this alternation is experienced as the dialectic of worship and work.\(^1\)

Discontinuity on one level of experience allows for a deeper continuity on another, however. This is most dramatically reflected in the mystic's return to the social world and action.\(^2\) For the mystic withdrew from a world whose essential and manifold impress upon him was carried into his temporary retreat. Not least in this regard is the stock of ideas and values which the mystic rethinks and clarifies and which perdure through his active and passive purgations. In this respect, mysticism can be described as society's way of renewing its most valuable spiritual resources while modifying and correcting them in the experience of its most sensitive members. The spiritual history of humankind, while allowing for revelational novelty, is thus basically continuous just as is religious experience in the personal history of each man and woman: "Whatever religion adds to human wealth is not poured in, as an extraneous gift: it comes in

\(^{1}\)Cf. MGHE 426: "The whole of human experience falls into two phases, work and worship; the domain of duty and the domain of love, respectively."

\(^{2}\)Cf. "MM" 49, 52, 56; MGHE 392, 478ff., 483, 511, 514; MS 424; TP 189ff., 270ff.; LRWF 43, 46, 51; "HA" 434, 437; "MS" 192; CWC 139, 182ff.; MIHE 159.
continuity with what that individual has known before."¹

Thus mystical experience is characteristically a social phenomenon, despite its interlude of solitary transformation in which the mystic is but better prepared for his creative role in the social world.² Religion is not merely what man does with his solitariness, but in both its lesser and greater realization "the redemption of solitude." For it returns the individual to his world more an individual and more a social being than when he left it.³

Further, this mystical interlude of solitary "soul-making" is not the prerogative of some spiritual elite; in its essential structures and functions, mysticism is both common and ordinary. Hocking clearly insisted that mystical experience was not limited to those who by temperament or situation were somehow superior to the rest of mankind. Despite the fact that such experience admits of degrees of intensity, "The mystic is simply the person who does consciously and with the whole man that which we are all doing spontaneously and in fragmentary fashion in every moment of our effective living."⁴ As such a universal factor in all experience,

¹MGHE 478.
²Cf. LRWF 43f., 49; "MS" 191; "ABN" 93.
³Cf. MGHE 414, 522.
⁴MGHE 404. Cf. 361: "...note well that while the mystic of genius is a natural product, the mystic impulse is not a matter of special temperament. For there are mystics in all
whether latent or manifest, the mystical dimension is neither extraordinary, unusual or esoteric.\textsuperscript{1} The great mystics develop to full explicitness what we all experience in at least rudimentary form.

Finally, whether in a pervasively indistinct form or in a sharply focused realization, mystical experience for Hocking was essentially \textit{theistic}. It is the consciousness of God's presence, recognized as such or not.\textsuperscript{2}

While not wholly original, Hocking's elaboration of the characteristics of mystical experience, thus abstracted and somewhat systematized, is nevertheless unusual in its scope and richness. For Hocking, however, not even fourteen major characteristics adequately distinguished mystical from other forms of experience without taking into consideration the mystic's psychology, especially the factor of motivation.\textsuperscript{3} Similarly, the theoretical content of the mystics' reports of experience serve to differentiate mysticism from other regions of experience, if -- once more-- not entirely. The mystic will find his interpretation of reality in surprising congruence with the reports not only of poets but of scientists.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. \textit{MM} 41, 55; MGHE xxviii, 352, 356, 448; MS 424.
\textsuperscript{2} Cf. \textit{MM} 50.
\textsuperscript{3} In this respect, cf. LeShan, op. cit. and Fritjof
The practical and theoretical elements of mysticism consequently provide a framework in which to sketch the fundamental structure of mystical experience as revealed in a preliminary fashion by the phenomenological description of its essential characteristics.

2. The Fundamental Structure of Mystical Experience

The basic structure of mystical experience, as Hocking stated in the 1962 preface to his *magnum opus*, is the triadic relation of the Self to God through the natural and social World. The dialectical transition from the implicit awareness of nuclear experience to an explicit consciousness of a personal relationship with God is accomplished on the mystic's "negative path" through a progressive clarification of intermediaries. These media of God's self-disclosure are manifold. They can be grouped generally in the categories of Self, Nature and Society, as we have seen. Specifically, these include certain experiences of time, of one's own individuality and, pre-eminently, the love of other selves which, beyond the more "ordinary" channels of derived knowledge of God, usher us into his very presence.¹

The mystical experience itself may be of low intensity, analogous, as James had also observed, "with our occa-

sional experiences of realizing more or less suddenly the meaning of words, sayings, points of view, which may have been familiar and empty possessions for a long time."¹ Hocking also noted that "the commoner mystical experiences begin, I believe, with the concrete occasion, only suggesting or foreshadowing the universal meanings which they have."² Knowledge of ourselves may strike with a keen stab of recognition and significance. But it is primarily with respect to the often sudden discovery of the individuality of another person that we are provided with the mystical paradigm par excellence: "at times we are granted something like a mystic vision: it seems to us that we have come into the presence of the individual and have seen the miracle as such."³ Love penetrates beyond the individual's vision, beyond his interests in the outer world, to what Hocking had before called his "substance."⁴ Such love is one key to the meaning of mystical experience inasmuch as it is "a revelation like that of the mystic, full of significance. For in finding the individual, one has indeed found the individual's idea."⁵

¹ MGHE 428; cf. James, op. cit., p. 294.
² MGHE 428 - 29.
³ MGHE 432.
⁴ Cf. "MM" 55 and MGHE 409 for Hocking's descriptive analysis of personal knowledge.
⁵ MGHE 433. Hocking added, "This is the central fact of all mysticism: namely, that the discovery of the individual is always a discovery of truth, of a powerfully syn-
An "idea" in the sense that Hocking here employed the term is far more than a mental image of someone loved. Although he did not amplify the point, it can safely be surmised that by idea he meant the cognitive-and-emotional awareness not merely that the beloved is, but what -- or, rather, who -- the beloved is, the essential character constituting individual personal identity; one's essence.

Such analogues point to the meaning of mystical experience: "For what is the mystic experience but finding the idea of the whole, as love finds the idea of a person?"¹ Hocking added, however, that "These other experiences are not only analogous to the mystic insight; they are, as we have said, parts of it."² Whether in experiences of temporal existence, self-consciousness or the perception of another's individuality in love, it is nevertheless God who is encountered also, however dimly perceived. For "wherever the individual is recovered, there is in some degree also a vision of God. God is the One of all these plural loves and pleasures; and it is the love of God which naturally includes and places all the rest."³ Thus, "What the mystic knows is, theistic idea, and yet not by way of effortful thinking. That interest in another soul which we call love is not an interest in his idea as a matter of theory: it is an interest in him as an individual substance, a being which knows and is more than its knowledge."

¹Ibid.
²MGHE 434, emphasis added.
³MGHE 434 - 35.
first of all, that which he intends to know, namely God: and in so far as he is a mystic pure and simple he knows nothing else than God."¹

Such knowledge is, however, not generally -- if ever-- a matter of "pure" mysticism, for by virtue of the integral structure of nuclear experience, the World is necessarily present as the background of our awareness of God, and, it may be added, that of our Self as well:

We must remember that in these experiences, to which we give the name of mystic simply because in them the individual finds himself consciously at one with the whole of things, the world is not absent: it is with one's world-knowledge that one now knows his world-unity or God. The system of ideas is in no sense abandoned, but rather in the liveliest use, though not thought of.²

Hence it is that developed mysticism heightens the awareness and explicitates the meaning of that dialectical triad which constitutes nuclear experience. From the viewpoint of the dynamic process of temporal existence, the meaning of mysticism derives from the drive toward the World as the field of the mystic's love-in-action, now felt as an imperative: "the meaning of the mystic experience is prophetic. It anticipates an attainment still to be won; it can be held only by proceeding to that winning."³ And the

¹ MGHE 448.
³ MGHE 439.
mystic returns to the World "not less a lover of men, but rather a lover in more intense and human fashion, because it is only the true worshipper who can find the world genuinely lovable."¹

The mystic also returns creative. By means of the personal re-integration made possible by the purifying and reconstructive efforts of the "negative path," the mystic contributes a creative impulse to society which is similarly re-integrative.² And as the mystic experienced the dissolution of habitual modes of ideas and conduct, as well as an opening to novelty in his relations with God, other persons and the World itself, so also he becomes a critic of society's "habits" -- its customs and institutions. He returns a reformer.³

In this highly condensed summary, we can conclude that for Hocking the fundamental elements of mystical experience are the Self, the World and the personal Other together with God as their Field of reference or Ground. The relations

¹MGHE 439 - 40.
²Cf. MGHE 440ff.
³Cf. MGHE 484. Cf. also 511: "The prophet is but the mystic in control of the forces of history, declaring their necessary outcome: the mystic in action is the prophet. In the prophet the cognitive certainty of the mystic becomes historic and particular; and this is the necessary destiny of that certainty: mystic experience must complete itself in the prophetic consciousness." Cf. also TP 273.
among these elements are various, but chief among them is their binding unity, love. Taken together, the three elements, their Ground and the manifold of dynamic and static relations among them constitute the structure of mystical experience.

As an extension of nuclear experience, mystical experience is temporally dynamic, an historical process whose characteristic operations can be described in terms of certain constants. Furthermore, regulated by a dialectical principle or "law" of alternation, the active and receptive phases of mystical development serve to facilitate the explicitation in consciousness of God's presence as the Ground or Field of experience as well as the unifying Goal of history. The characteristic function of mysticism is thus to make salient the divine Field of experience, differentiating it as an implicit dimension of all experience from other forms of experience by intensification rather than segregation.

Conceived in terms of a temporal dialectic, mysticism can also be seen to possess an intrinsic social dimension, its major cadence being reiterated in the lesser, repeated alternations of activity and repose which result from and continue it. Both the greater and lesser manifestations of the principle of alternation are dialectical, that is, reciprocally progressive; the difference lies mainly in the
frequency of the latter in contrast to the more probably single occurrence of the former.

The emergent pattern of individual and social mystical development is modified, however, by the exigencies of particular human psychologies, natural and social situations and the historical nature of the encounter with God. While these exigencies will be manifest in varieties of mystical experiences, nevertheless constancies can be found in these varieties. In order to discover and elucidate these common factors, Hocking investigated mysticism both in its historical manifestations as well as in particular instances in the lives of mystics East and West.

The "deep structures" of mysticism, especially in its developmental phases, concern us next. The common theoretical aspects of the mystics' experience, both their psychology and their cosmology, will warrant briefer attention, in so far as the fundamental structures of mysticism are primarily of the practical order. Still, the theoretical concurrences are important philosophically and bear upon practice, as Hocking gradually came to realize. For such conceptual ramifications of mystical experience inevitably guide further experience by becoming schemas for the interpretation of experience, especially as preserved in formal traditions. The social dimension of mysticism is found not only in the world of action, but in patterns of thinking and behavior dialecti-
cally intertwined with action.

3. The Dynamics of Mystical Experience

Hocking treated of mysticism both in its individual manifestations and as an historical phase in the development of religion in a variety of cultures, especially with regard to the mystical teachings of outstanding representatives which were institutionalized into traditions, schools and literature. Individual and "historical" mysticism are, of course, interrelated. "Particularized" mysticism appears in the lives of individuals generally within a mystical tradition of one of the world's great religions, although not necessarily so. Further, while distinct phenomena, individual and "social" mysticism were at least structurally homologous for Hocking. As the withdrawal from the social world in individual mystical development finds completion in the mystic's return to society, so, too, mysticism historically passed beyond the stage of unworldly absorption with the Absolute into an active, prophetic stage. The pattern in both forms of mysticism is so remarkably similar in this respect that it is no distortion of Hocking's thought to say that individuals continuously and approximately recapitulate in their own de-

1 Some of the great modern mystics such as Thérèse of Lisieux, a Carmelite, and Rufus Jones, a Quaker, thus either gravitated toward existing mystical communities or developed within them.
velopment the pattern of the historical emergence of mysticism, thereby perpetuating and also modifying it in the course of subsequent history.

i. Historical Mysticism

Mysticism appeared historically, as we have seen, as a response within the major religious traditions to the perception of God as "the Absolute," that is, the discovery of the supreme sovereignty of "the One." Individual mystical experience undoubtedly preceded the emergence of socially recognizable mysticism in so far as any person was aware of the personal nature of the god he discovered in his experiences of his own existence as a Self or, more likely, in experiences of Nature, social obligations and love -- a living presence attentive to him and whom he could address as "Thou."

Thus, animism and even polytheistic religion were a prelude to mysticism. But the development of what we now recognize as mysticism was dependent upon the appearance of personalistic monotheism and the possibility that the "dim awareness" of the presence of God could be raised to explicit consciousness by "everyman," an ability at least in part socially conditioned by the availability of interpretative schemata and the sanction of the community. The actual shift from poly-


2 Cf. LRWF 45 - 51, "HA" 433.
theism to monotheism and the attendant belief in the possibility of achieving union with the One was a widespread phenomenon dictated by the structures and dynamics of human consciousness itself:

Such changes were bound to occur, through the constancy of the need for integration in the human spirit; and they everywhere took the direction of bringing unity out of plurality.

The logic is much the same everywhere: the many gods cannot be independent; and a subordinate or dependent god cannot be the supreme Reality.¹

Hocking pointed to India as the locus of breakthrough with regard to the development of true mysticism:

It was in accord with the genius of India that this logic [was] pursued relentlessly to its conclusion in the doctrine that the Real is absolute unity, whereas such unity rejects description: the One, as inexpressible, culminates for our thought in Mysticism. What we may describe as the discovery of the Absolute marks, I believe, the most important cultural achievement of antiquity.²

The realization that God is One, together with the belief that it is possible to be one with him, constitutes the historical condition for the explicit manifestation of mystical religion, both in theory and in practice.³ But the full development of mysticism awaited the "passage beyond the Absolute":

¹"HA" 433.
³Cf. CWC 149, "MM" 39 and "MS" 189.
the moment of discovery is never final: it marks a dividing line between two struggles: first the prior struggle out of Polytheism; second, the subsequent struggle beyond the absolute poise of the mystic to a recovered relevance to effective living, a more concrete realism.

With respect to the general thrust of religious consciousness, therefore, "the Mystical -- shall we say watershed -- with its relative absence of leadership for the masses of mankind must foretell a further stage of historical advance." 2

Hocking instantiated his contention by pointing to the impact of movements begun by the fifteenth century Chinese sage, Wang Yang Ming, by the Buddha and by Jesus. Even Greek and Roman religion had refused to sacrifice the historical particular despite an overriding concern for eternal truth and beauty. 3 Nevertheless, the critical event in the ancient phase of religious history was the encounter between "the realism of Rome and the Realism of Jesus in which the Jewish revoler lost his life, and apparently his cause." 4 But the execution of Jesus concealed a victory which rested upon the identification of the universal and the particular, the infinite and the finite, the eternal and the temporal in one, unique historical event: "the realism of Rome in full power is absorbed in the Realism of the prophetic conscious-

1 "HA" 434; this passage has no correlative in the Herald text.
2 "HA" 434 - 35.
3 "HA" 435.
4 Ibid.
ness of the Crucified.\textsuperscript{1}

Beyond the quiescent contemplation of the Absolute, even beyond union with it, there lies the completion of the process of religious development in active involvement in the World. Thus the greatest examples of religious genius are found promoting reform, attending to the needs of the poor, the diseased, the ignorant, the dispossessed and forgotten of every kind. The social legacy of mysticism is found not only in a magnificent body of literary remains and religious orders, but in schools, orphanages, hospitals, charitable agencies, social reform, peace and brotherhood.

And thus for Hocking the mystical propheticism of Christianity historically represented an advance over the mystical absolutism of India by dint of the pragmatic criterion of "better meeting the world." The adequacy of this comparison of world religions is, of course, open to serious objection. The reforming efforts of Hindu and Buddhist saints is well known -- a point which, if anything, reinforces Hocking's major contention concerning the active phase of religious development. But in his defense, it can be said, I believe, that the corporate commitment to social betterment institutionalized in Christianity has in Asian religions never passed far beyond the stage of individual efforts or a general commitment to compassionate solicitude such as is

\textsuperscript{1}"HA" 437.
found in Buddhism. In terms of concrete achievements, Christianity may not rank higher than Buddhism philanthropically. But with respect to an explicit tendency in the religious ethic toward improving the general lot of mankind, no religion has proved as conscientious -- or, perhaps, as meddlesome -- as Christianity. Writing as a Christian, Hocking may have betrayed some bias; as an historian, he was generally on secure ground.¹

ii. Individual Mystical Development

In particular instances, the transition from the latent mysticism of nuclear experience to explicit mysticism repeats the pattern characteristic of the historical evolution of mysticism. The discovery of the Absolute in multiform experiences of Self, Nature and Society comes to ex-

¹In so far as the role of Jesus Christ is even and perhaps especially that of the historical mediator between God and mankind as God-made-man, the "human face of God" (LRWF 228; "What Is a Lost Soul?" Chicago Theological Seminary Register, 23 [March, 1933], p. 10), Christianity is, for Hocking, the natural culmination of religious development, the "final" religion. There is, however, no developed Christology in Hocking's philosophy, and it is consequently difficult to assess his conception of the role of Christ further with regard to mystical theory. But as an historical fact, rather than an element of belief, the Christian religion is of course subject to philosophical scrutiny, and in so far as it might be shown to best satisfy criteria for effective living religiously, could be considered "final" in a purely philosophical context. That, however, lies beyond the scope of this study to examine. (Cf. HNR, Part VII; "HCCBFR" passim; LRWF 229 - 62; CWC 108ff. For commentaries on Hocking's "reconception" of Christianity, cf. Rouner, WHE 256 - 86 and Andrew Reck, Recent American Philosophy [New York: Pantheon Books, 1964], pp. 64ff.)
press awareness through worship and its enlargement by mystical asceticism, eventuating in greater social participation. Wide variations are, of course, possible (and indeed actual, as Hocking well knew) in the ways and means by which the mystical potential of "everyman" is realized. But the overall pattern or structure of development appeared to be relatively constant in East and West over various temporal periods.¹

The temporal structure of mystical experience takes the form of a dialectical pattern of three stages: withdrawal from the world or "conversion," transformation or re-unification and, ultimately, action or return to the world. In his *magnum opus*, Hocking also adverted to the classic characterization of the stages of development -- the purgative, illuminative and unitive "ways," but without elaboration.² What is important is not their designations but the fact that it is possible to discern certain distinctive phases of development in the mystic's career. Hocking himself proposed the following description, which also correlates well with the stages of the mystical life as described by St. Teresa of Avila. First, the "overall moral character of the process in the ideal of the 'pure heart' which is recognized as the condition of finding God in worship."³ Second, the

¹Cf. "MM" 39, MGHE 352.
²Cf. MGHE 373. Note the lack of reference to action in the classical description, which terminates with union.
³MGHE 387.
"simplification of consciousness," usually attained by a process of mental discipline and prayer.\(^1\) Third, the "repudiation of effort," in which, as we have seen, God can freely give himself to the mystic prepared to receive him.\(^2\)

whether called purgation, illumination and union or (with St. Teresa) the Prayer of Quiet, the Prayer of Simplicity and the Prayer of Union, the more significant stages of development in the mystic's life were not embodied for Hocking in discrete periods but in the dialectical interplay of various depths of experience distinguished by a tension of opposition but also united by a central thrust toward expansion and creativity. Further, a major difference between Hocking and the classical description concerns the phase of activity, the return to the world. While evident in the lives of the mystics, this stage of development received no explicit reference in their descriptions. Whatever the reason for this, the omission is not only striking but serious:

This, at any rate, is what has impressed me in mysticism: That the turning away from the world in the negative path of worship (together with the mystic experience itself which marks the limit of the upswing) and the turning back again constitute a normal rhythm or alternation which has many analogies, and a vital function in the human mind capable of psychological expression.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Ibid. Cf. also 438.

\(^2\)Ibid. Cf. 385ff.

\(^3\)MGHE 392.
These alternating currents of world-love and God-love are not merely antithetical. They are reciprocal:

We may say that beyond the limits of the mystic experience itself, the love of God takes on the form of human ambition; that these motives are, so to speak, allotropic forms of the same. They alternate with each other, as the hour glass is turned,—each one in turn becoming the life of the other. With the idea of God, one loves the world; and then with the idea of the world, one loves God again,—and the two loves, or ambitions, are of one substance, though they involve alternations in the history of the empirical will.1

Thus it becomes necessary to correct the traditional designation of the stages of mystical development to the extent that beyond the purgative, illuminative and unitive phases, or, rather, framing them, are the dialectical movements away from the world and back to it. The negative aspect of mysticism finds its positive meaning not only in the transforming union with God, but dynamically in the return to the work-a-day world where the social meaning and value of mysticism becomes manifest. Thus both the "three ages" of the mystical life as classical conceived and the "Prayers" of St. Teresa belong to the second phase of mystical development as articulated in terms of Hocking's widened view of the process. Likewise, Hocking's three-fold description of the purification of heart, simplification of consciousness and repudiation of effort similarly refer to the "inner" stages of mystical development, the "negative path." Conse-

1 MGHE 424.
quently, **five** distinct moments can be discerned overall: withdrawal from the world, purgation, illumination, union and return to the world.¹

(1) Practical Mysticism

In his earliest writings, Hocking adverted to the dual aspect of mystical experience, its practice and the theory of that practice.² This was extended in his later career to specific statements about the nature of reality as experienced as well as the nature of the experience in its subjective aspect.³ Thus disengaging the objective from the subjective aspects of the theory of mystical experience was a major development in his thought, one which took Hocking closer respectively to James and Royce in spirit if far beyond them in content.

Hocking's "theoretical" mysticism was never merely speculative, however. The empirical origins of the mystic's metaphysics as well as his psychology always exercised a critical function in his approach to mysticism. The true mystic was an empiricist; his practice preceded theory. Consequently, Hocking's attention to the practical aspect of myst-


²Cf. MGHE xxviii.

³Cf. TP 260, "MS" 187.
ticism preceded and always outweighed his interest in the theoretical aspect. The unanimity of the mystics themselves, he consistently maintained, pertained primarily to elements of discipline rather than to theories about reality or even God, if perhaps less so than Hocking believed at the initial stages of his comparative study of mysticism.¹

This discipline or pattern of life, as Hocking abstracted it from a variety of cases, involves a movement of withdrawal and return to the world, as we have seen, between which occurs a period of development he called "the negative path." This "path" includes the purgative and at least parts of the illuminative and unitive "ways."

This first phase of the mystic's development once he has withdrawn from the world of ordinary life to pursue a greater intimacy with God, is negative in so far as it consists mainly of voluntary efforts to detach oneself from the customary habits of thought and action of the world.² It is characterized by two cardinal elements to which we shall turn briefly: renunciation and meditation.

The mystic characteristically withdraws from society not so much in terms of physical relocation as by a more or less voluntary renunciation of socially conditioned ideas, norms, values and behavior, including notions of "what" God

¹Cf. "MM" 39, MGHE 352.
²Cf. MGHE 386.
is. By "more or less voluntary," I mean that the budding mystic may only dimly perceive the need for and nature of the disengagement from conventional attitudes and only reluctantly undertake surrendering them. But the process of dishabitation will occur despite initial resistance, for attaining the desired purgation of desires, habits and preferences entails some "unlearning" of habitual modes of social participation.¹ A reflexive awareness of the process by which this occurs is not necessary for the acquisition of detachment, however.

Thus the mystic is gradually "mortified" in body, mind and spirit -- reduced, that is, to the state of feeling utter dependence on God alone. This is accomplished by actively and passively stripping oneself of all worldly attachments, not because they are evil, but because they are not God. ² But the path of negation occupies only half of the mystic's method of purification and advancement. All turning away is also a turning towards; all detachment is for the sake of reattachment:

the active part of worship still remains a path of negation. For the god whom the mystic seeks is in fact something other than any given natural object of pursuit; and since we are always better aware of what our absolute is not than of what it is, the note of negation

¹Cf. MGHE 372 - 73, HNR 27.
²Cf. MGHE xxix.
must remain predominant. But meanwhile, worship has its positive side also; the mystic has always in some way recognized the fact that passion can be cast out only by some greater passion.¹

Here is the positive foundation of Hocking's doctrine of asceticism, which has its analogue in "mundane" experience in the discipline, critical effort and hardships entailed in artistic and scientific method.² Without the positive upswing of affirmation, the mystic's path would end in mere nihilism, which is of no value to the person or society. Negation is necessary but neither sufficient nor final. As we shall see, the mystic, like the scientist and the artist, acquires by his negative discipline a new and powerful appreciation of the common world, finding therein whole realms of meaning and value unnoticed before and yet unfathomed.

Considering the role meditation plays in mystical experience, the mystic's attitude toward the world could hardly be totally negative. Even the purgative phases of his path has its positive aspect. Hocking briefly but pointedly asserted that

¹MGHE 376.

²Like the mystic, the artist and the scientist must undergo rigorous training, learning to perceive the elements of the common world differently, effectively "stripping" themselves of socially conditioned modes of perception, attitudes and behavior which exercise a kind of divine but dulling power over social existence. For a contemporary examination of the role of "unlearning" habitual modes of behavior, cf. Arthur Deikman, "Deautomatization and the Mystic Experience," Psychiatry, 29 (1966), 324 - 38.
pleasure, recreation, friendship, the companionship of men and women, beauty — all these recall the outgoings of ambition and moral effort, and reunite a man with his natural appreciation. Something in common these all have with the quest of the mystic, and with the mystic experience itself. And worship is the whole which includes them all.¹

Purgation, which encompasses the efforts traditionally referred to as "renunciation," "mortification" and "detachment," concerns both "outer" and "inner" experience, that is, both the body and the mind. By no means enamored of an anti-corporeal spirituality, Hocking clearly saw the underlying function performed by the obviously negative bodily restraints characteristically undertaken by those entering upon the mystical way:

in all acts of the will, the body plays its part; and it is the physical side of all mental acts, whether one sets himself about thinking, or enjoying, or praying, which is most directly controllable. In proportion as the inner process is subtle and evanescent, the physical preliminaries must be extensive.²

The body, for the mystic, is the symbol of the soul.³

The greater stress in the mystic's effort to prepare himself for the encounter with God is more likely to be placed on mental discipline than on physical control, how-

¹MGHE 418; cf. 422.
²MGHE. 372.
ever. Indeed, the concentration on the body is a means to
greater command over the spirit and mind. This "inner" disci-
pline is traditionally referred to as meditation.

In turning away from the world, the mystic has always
needed something to turn toward; in all his purgation
there has been an element of "meditation." He has done
what he can to find his own positive ultimate will, to
make real to himself what it is that he most deeply
cares for. He has tried to remind himself of his abso-
lute good.¹

The positive achievement of learning to direct the mind's at-
tention by acts of restraint is "a condition of powerfully
directed attention. Such as the term 'contemplation' sug-
gests."²

By training the mind to withdraw from the multitude
of objects of attention ordinarily preoccupying conscious-
ness, the mystic learns how to advert to the whole of reali-
ty, and in that shift of attention to become aware of the
infinite field of reference mediated by that Whole. The mys-
tical "vision" achieved by the art of meditation is a form

¹ MGHE 376; cf. 378 - 79, RM 45f., LRWF 227, CWC 138f.

² MGHE 371. Hocking also noted the connection between
the contemplative dimension of meditation and the stage of
involuntary passivity which marks the mystic's final period
of development: "'Contemplation,' as used by the medieval
mystic, implies that the effort of 'meditation,' in which
one holds the object before the mind by force of will, gives
way to a state in which the object attracts and holds atten-
tion without further conscious effort." (Ibid.) This de-
scription of contemplation can serve as a working definition
of the term for present purposes.
of intuitive knowledge which attains to the Whole by withdrawing attention from the "parts" -- that is, particular objects of concern. It is thus an induction leading to a contemplative experience of God by means of the God-idea.¹ This "working concept" of God, the pre-reflexive awareness of God present within us and in the World, is, like the whole-idea, beyond our ability to articulate conceptually. For all ordinary concepts are, as expressible, particular, limited and therefore inadequate to represent either God or the Whole. In this sense, Krikorian was right in his observation that "We never face the Whole that Hocking is concerned with."² And thus the mystic remains certain but unable directly to convince anyone who has not "seen" what he has seen, as James had observed.

Yet in his quest for meaning, the mystic not only attempts to reach further clarity in his "conception" of God, he also persists in trying to share his vision. His "accounts with reality" are never closed. His openness to experience is thus assured by his awareness of the inadequacy of all concepts and all expressions. His method, his "prayer of union," tends to approximate to a wholly non-effortful receptivity to God in which his concepts (which he must think with if he is to think at all) must play the most minimal role. While no stranger to theological reflection, his

¹Cf. MGHE 129ff.
²Krikorian, art. cit., p. 274.
own way is one of "unknowing." His openness to experience is likewise an openness to God's grace.2

Paradoxically, the fact that the mystic has a "true" concept of God or the Whole determines his inability to articulate it. Thus the problem of verification arises, the real thrust of Krikorian's objection. Simply speaking, it would seem that Krikorian is right, as James had admitted: immediate verification by "objective" or external criteria is ruled out by the mystic's inability or refusal to articulate his vision. The mystic, of course, is less interested in verification than in experience, and of his experience he is certain. He is not concerned to convince others that his concept is accurate, but to persuade them to join him in his vision, to follow his way, that is, to experience it for themselves. The mystic needs the community to confirm his ex-

1 The Dionysian strand of "unknowing" (agnosia) so marked in Hocking's treatment of mysticism had its origins in the remote ages of Christian antiquity, perhaps as derived from Philo. It was strongly influenced by Neo-platonic thought from the third to the sixth centuries, finding expression as early as the writings of Clement of Alexandria (fl. 200) as well as those of Sts. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and Athanasius among the Greek Fathers and Augustine in the West. Reaching a peak of development in the Mystical Theology of the Pseudo-Areopagite, the "way of unknowing" passed into the medieval period with the translation of this work into Latin by Erigena in the ninth century. On the Pseudo-Dionysius, cf. MGHE 355 and 395, n. 2; on Plotinus, cf. MGHE 329 and 395; on Bonaventure and High of St. Victor, cf. MGHE 371 and 379, n. 1.

2 Cf. "MS" 190. While mentioned here and implicit in other places, there is no developed concept of grace in Hocking's thought.
perience, primarily by following his example, not by verifying his doctrine.¹

Thus mysticism entails immediate, personal experience; it is not found in books. In so far as it is knowledge, it is knowledge of, not knowledge about. It is also democratic; each must see for himself, and consensus indicates "truth." Whatever else he is, the mystic is a radical empiricist.²

The highest stage of the mystical "ascent" and the culmination of the negative path is reached in the conscious experience of union with the divine presence. The mystic has raised to its highest level of awareness the ordinary nuclear experience of God's presence and now, surrendering his own efforts to become one with God, he can be "graced" with a special mode of that presence not exigent upon any effort of his own. But the mystic has not reached the end of his path with the transition to the positive experience of God's presence.

The voluntary and involuntary passivity of the unitive phase of the mystic's spiritual transformation gives way to renewed social activity -- both voluntary and, in the sense of an irresistible inner compulsion, involuntary. Manifesting the dialectical influence of the principle of alternation, the mystic returns to the world. This stage of mysti-

¹See below, pp. 263ff.

²Cf. LRWF 40, 44 - 46; CWC 182.
cal life, often overlooked by the mystics themselves in describing their development, is nevertheless an integral part of the structure of mysticism viewed from a social perspective. Hocking's signal accomplishment in the study of mysticism lies, I believe, in his exposition of the fact and meaning of this phase of the mystic's career. For the concluding social phases of mystical experience not only complete the dynamic process of individual development but accounts for the mystic's role in society, apart from which mysticism appears to be merely an episode of religious alienation. Above all, Hocking's analysis revealed that mysticism is in its deepest structure a social process, finding in society both meaning and value beyond that which it has for the individual. Further, this social dimension of mysticism contains the clues which helped him resolve some of the perplexities mysticism had caused many of its thoughtful critics.

Hocking did not discover the reciprocal relationship between action and contemplation, which found expression even in the writings of Aristotle and has antecedents in the work-rest dialectic of the Jewish Sabbath.\(^1\) This dual element of spirituality was a fundamental principle of medieval and later theologians, not only Thomas Aquinas, but throughout the West.\(^2\) Hocking, however, in realizing that the re-


\(^2\) For Aquinas' teaching, cf. his Summa Theologiae,
lationship between action and contemplation was dialectical and that the character of activity following upon the contemplative development of the mystic was significantly different from that which preceded it, contributed a valuable and original insight to our understanding of the spiritual life. Further, Hocking was able to express this insight structurally and to use it to integrate the active phase of mystical development into an overarching description of the mystical life without subordinating it to the contemplative phase as a perhaps necessary but regrettable interruption. This he was able to do by showing that the dialectic of active involvement in the world and contemplative reflection were the mystical expression of the principle of alternation which regulated all human operations. 1

II-II, Q. 188, a. 6 and Q. 182, a. 1 ad 5 and ibid., a. 3.

1 The significance of action has been approached from an historical viewpoint with regard to Ignatian mysticism by Joseph de Guibert, S.J. in The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice (William J. Young, S.J., trans. and George E. Ganss, S.J., ed. [Chicago: The Institute of Jesuit Sources and Loyola University Press, 1964]). While recognizing the necessary connection between love and action in the mystical life (p. 58), De Guibert does not develop these connection theoretically nor does he explain its genesis in terms of psychological motivation. He denies, further, that Ignatius' mysticism was one of union and transformation (pp. 178 - 79) despite the evident experiences Ignatius enjoyed of God's presence (pp. 32, 45, 55, 59) and his personal spiritual transformation (p. 28). This might be taken to imply that in Ignatian mysticism the contemplative aspect is subordinate to action rather than a complementary phase of development despite the clear affirmation that Ignatius was "a contemplative even in the midst of action" (p. 45, citing Jerónimo Nadal). However, following de Guibert himself, the life of
For Hocking the mystical interplay of action and contemplation provided the dynamism of the spiritual life of the individual as well as that of society, both of which move forward in time and advance in "maturity" as a boat advances by tacking -- sailing obliquely in a zig-zag pattern rather than sailing directly into the wind. The initial contribution of mysticism to society is thus a function of reflection: re-evaluating, re-thinking and re-organizing with respect to the structures, values, ideas, institutions and goals of state and church. But only in action can such reflection find its value for life and thereby its meaning. In applying his reconceptions in the world, the mystic becomes the prophet: critic, gadfly, truthsayer, reformer.1 His task can be described as a struggle to overcome evil in the world,

Ignatius can be seen to provide a paradigm of the stages of mystical development as outlined by Hocking: withdrawal from the social world (pp. 24 - 27); a period of renunciation and purgation, the "negative path" on which the mystic undergoes a complete personal transformation (pp. 28, 66 - 67, 72 - 73); meditative and contemplative exercise of the mind and will, culminating in experiences of the direct and immediate presence of God (pp. 32, 45, 55, 59ff.); and a return to the world and a life of heroic service (pp. 32 - 33, 58, 73, 177 - 78). Ignatius' mysticism was neither "nuptial" (p. 55) nor Dionysian (p. 59), but it nevertheless conforms to the classical pattern of Western tradition, particularly with regard to its expression in action. (Cf. MGHE 361, quoted below, p. 473). For a more recent study of Ignatius' mystical development, cf. Harvey D. Egan, S.J., The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1975).

1Cf. MGHE 473; TP 131 - 32, 271; MIHE 160 etc.
but this is only the negative aspect of the mystic's positive contribution. He will be found at the bottom of reforms, agitating for greater justice and more charity, a spokesman for the poor and oppressed, an originator of new movements for co-operation and peaceful co-existence (as Hocking was in his own life). In all of this, the motive of the mystic's return and the on-going source of his rekindled efforts is an imperative sense of duty and especially of love.\(^1\)

Hocking was careful to point out that the alternation between action and contemplation which governs the mystic's development and subsequent career is not a natural cycle, although analogous to one. Its period is regulated by voluntary and historical factors as well as by the inner dialectic of the mystic's development as a member of society:

> whatever the psychological phenomena associated with mysticism may be, the thread upon which they are hung is -- as I must insist -- the mystic's intention; and if that intention is at all fairly conceived as an intention to worship, it involves an occupation of attention which in the nature of the case must alternate with attention to other affairs. I am driven, therefore, in the search for a psychology of mysticism, to look for further analogies among those normal alternations such as sleeping and waking, work and recreation, competition and co-operation, the hungers [for beauty, society, solitude, etc.] and satisfactions already referred to, conception and gestation, etc.\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Cf. MGHE 424, 507; CWC 183.

\(^2\)"MM" 50. He continued, "Every detail of physical operation shows this method of action. Attention is a rapidly alternating current, perpetually withdrawn from its object and instantaneously replaced: but in the instant of withdraw-
For Hocking, therefore, the alternation that obtained in the reciprocity of action and contemplation was not a mere biological rhythm manifested psychologically, but rather a harmony of active and receptive phases of experience that characterized many vital functions. It was a method of maximizing the available energy of a system. More than that, it was a description of the nature of cognitive experience from a philosophical perspective: "at the bottom of the psychological alternation there lies an epistemological principle, which deserves to be called the Principle of Alternation."¹ The actual alternations of attention Hocking was concerned with fall into two categories, that between the part and the whole which defines the structure of the knowing process, and that between activity and receptivity which characterizes the structure of experience. In short, the principle of alternation is the regulative aspect of the dialectical character of experience in all its modes.

In his later writings, the social dimension of mysticism remained a function of the principle of alternation, as we have observed above,² the mystic's need for the community, having recovered a better poise and a steadier termination, having wiped away the film of relativity with which self and object had begun to infect each other." Thus the mystic "only does consciously and totally that which we all are continuously doing in the minuter movement of psychical life, that which we all resort to in fragmentary and instinctive manner." ("MM" 55.)

¹"MM" 55.
²See above, pp. 205ff.
and the community's reciprocal need for the mystic.¹

First, the mystic discovers that he has a need for the community "with all its particular marks in order to complete his religious selfhood."² This need is primarily or at least initially satisfied by the mystic's gathering about himself a band of disciples. "It is not that the mystic confirms in his disciples what he is already sure of; it is rather the negative side of this -- if he had no capacity to persuade, he would have to suspect himself."³ Consequently, verification represents confirmation by the community through its representatives gathered around the mystic. This is but a partial satisfaction, however. A greater need lies in the continuity of experience, which is also a social exigency:

the mystic is a bearer in his own person of the questioning out of which he was born. When he joins his community in worship, he joins in its questioning -- for worship when it is alive contains a new grouping of the soul, not a wearing deeper of old ruts. And if he finds an answer, he must bring it back into the context of the questioning to which the answer belongs. He must vest his insight in that particular historical campaign.⁴

The third and deepest need pertains to the decline of individual religious feeling and to the character of ritual.

¹Cf. LRWF 40 - 43, cited above, pp. 205ff.
²LRWF 43.
³LRWF 45.
⁴LRWF 46.
For feeling runs down in religion as elsewhere: "Religious feeling, underlying all others, is in the same case: it, too, runs down; savedness does not last; the passion for righteousness needs to be renewed." ¹

The religious need of the mystic for the community is therefore to renew his religious feeling, his awareness of value and meaning. Such a renewal takes place normally in the ritual of worship: "As feeling, religion takes the shape, for the community, of ritual." ² Thus the mystic not only receives his original stock of ideas and values from his community, he also replenishes religious feeling at that store. ³

Fourth, the mystic also needs the community in order to achieve the prophetic potential of his experience, "the prolongation of his deed" in history:

The spread of righteousness is a task which cannot be limited by the reach of an individual either in space or in time. So far as his "work" deserves to continue, it can continue beyond his personal scope only if there is a community to continue it. ⁴

¹LRWF 48 - 49. Hocking explained, "If we say that feeling is our cognizance of value, or that feeling is the report of consciousness that value is present, it becomes a truism that without feeling life is valueless. But feeling, the most important element of experience, is also the most intangible. It cannot be conveyed from mind to mind in its own character: its expression necessarily is in another medium.... Further, feeling is evanescent." For him, feeling was also "a natural response to the meaning found in an actual situation." (p. 49.)

²LRWF 46. Cf. also 49.

³LRWF 49.

⁴LRWF 51.
Not only does the mystic need the community for the completion of his development; the community also needs the mystic, as Hocking had first proposed in his *magnum opus*. Hocking consistently maintained and positively expressed this relationship as the mystic's value to society: his renewal of society's values and meanings in the crucible of personal recreation. In his later work, Hocking's point of view widened from the nature of the mystic's contribution alone to include the limits and deficiencies of society: "While the mystic is building up his own inner group, as a sort of leaven within the wider secular community, this wider community relies on such work as his for certain qualities which it cannot produce for itself."¹

The principal social need is for continuing *morale*: "The community depends for its indispensable morale upon the mystic and his findings."² Religion and its inner power to revitalize -- the mystic's experience of God, provides the basis for sustained social co-operation. Society in turn can be expected to favor "that mode of religion which is most nearly in harmony with its own moral direction."³ For this reason, of course, the danger of co-optation is great -- perhaps more so than Hocking was willing to recognize in 1936,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³LRWF 53. And hence, "The community must cultivate its mystics." (LRWF 52.)
despite the worsening situation in Europe. (Oddly enough, he all but ignored the mystical-prophetic function of critical dissent at that time.)

Convinced that society depended upon the mystic for its essential well-being and development, Hocking's original rejoinder to those who pitted prophetic social action against mysticism was to assert their fundamental connection, indeed their identity. For him prophecy was the extension of mystical awareness in action: "The mystic in historic action is termed the prophet: in a study of the prophet we may span the final term of religion's work in the world."¹ Prophecy is thus not merely a mode of social interaction, but the ripe fruit of a mystical encounter with God rooted deep in the meaning and structure of human experience.²

Consequently, prophecy should not be limited to a type of knowledge such as precognition. The transition from awareness to active social intervention is inevitable, given the prophet's mystical impulse toward communicating what he has experienced despite its ineffable character, as well as toward leaving behind a permanent contribution to the world's

¹MGHE 484. Cf. 511: "The prophet is but the mystic in control of the forces of history, declaring their necessary outcome: the mystic in action is the prophet. In the prophet, the cognitive certainty of the mystic becomes historic and particular; and this is the necessary destiny of that certainty: mystic experience must complete itself in the prophetic consciousness."

²Cf. MGHE 503, 511.
worth, as he feels he has been charged to do by a mysterious destiny:

Prophetic power is the final evidence to each individual that he is right and real; it is his assurance of salvation; it is his share of divinity; it is his anticipation of attainment. Hence it is that the greater mystics have been great founders, great agitators, and have if not a heavenly immortality yet unquestionably a mundane immortality. There are no deeds more permanent than those of Buddha, of Mohammed, of Jesus. And innumerable lesser deeds of equal validity have completed the substance of these mighty frames. The deeds of the mystics constitute the hard parts of history; the rest has its day and passes.¹

So it is that in the accounts and orders and sects left behind by the great mystics, the supreme values of society, refined and renewed by the personal transformation of the mystic who embodies them, are readjusted to their institutional form and thus rendered more accessible to those less prone or able to endure the stresses of the negative path, but who share the same nuclear experience and the same fundamental values. Prophecy is to that extent conservative. Perhaps even more importantly, new values are also discovered, clarified and expressed by means of the mystical adventure, and thereby the race moves slowly and raggedly but definitely forward toward the unification of history in a common spiritual vision. And to that extent, prophecy is progressive.²

²For further discussion, see below, pp. 294ff.
Hocking's belief in the unanimity of the mystics East and West regarding the practical elements of mysticism may strike the reader armed with a half-century more of studies in comparative religion as somewhat naive. And yet, as these very studies have shown, despite real divergence, there is wide-ranging agreement on many major issues, including the necessity of social and physical renunciation, meditation, the suppression of conceptual thought, and some form of social action -- elements which Hocking recognized as being virtually universal. ¹ In this respect, agreement lies less in the details of practice than in the more general patterns and underlying structures of behavior. Hocking saw clearly that despite the universal character of mysticism as a function of nuclear experience, because of the historico-cultural particularities of peoples and nations, mysticism would be as variegated as were the religious traditions out of which it emerged and into which it flowed. ²

As noted in the introduction, within Christianity itself, there is widespread disagreement as well as agreement


² Cf. MGHE 407, CWC 141 - 42, 180.
regarding the status of mystical experience and mysticism as a way of life. Given such a range of opinion, it is perhaps safe to say that while differing in particulars, a majority of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox theologians have traditionally considered mysticism to be in some way consonant with essential Christian beliefs and practices. Possibly the most common points of agreement include the belief that in mystical experience God comes into close personal contact with the human spirit not as the result of human effort alone, but as a free gift of grace which the mystic has been disposed to receive by voluntary efforts as well as by involuntary or "passive" purifications. Protestant writers such as Harkness are wont to stress the notion of communion with God rather than union, especially in the sense of ontological absorption. Further, greater emphasis is placed upon the sovereign role of grace and the inadequacy of human efforts to attain such communion. But in either case, the awareness of God’s immediate presence is held to be a transitory state, characterized by intense love for God and human persons, but ineffable as regards conceptual expression. Such a state is also held to be experienced after a progressive development of the spiritual life and presupposes a high degree of moral refinement.

Reports of Catholic and Protestant mystical experiences are similarly comparable and in many respects similar,
particularly with regard to a persistence of individual personality during the state of ecstatic union. But it is important to observe that contemporary thought, much like Hocking in his own development, has come to discover that the fundamental areas of agreement among the mystics are not limited to practical issues, but extend to significant areas of belief. Comparative mysticism also has a theoretical side.

(2) Theoretical Mysticism

While adverting to the mystic's "theory of reality" in his earlier writings, almost seventeen years elapsed before Hocking undertook, almost hesitantly, the articulation of a mystical metaphysics based on his analysis of important Eastern and Western sources. Even then he subordinated theory to practice, consistently with his original view. Three principles and their corollaries represent the major elements of the mystics' metaphysics of the person and the reality encountered in mystical experience:

I. That Reality is One, an absolute unity;

II. That it is possible to reach an intuitive knowledge of or union with this absolute One by an effort which is primarily moral rather than theoretical;


\[2\] Cf. MGHE xxviii.
III. That all oppositions are reconciled in the One; the extremes coincide.  

In arriving at these principles, the statements in "The Meaning of Mysticism" can be taken as Hocking's point of departure: "that God is One, and that it is possible to be one with him." Implicit in this "minimum of theory" is

1. The original statement of the theoretical content of the mystics' teaching is found in Types of Philosophy, from which I have taken the three major principles and several corollaries (by which I mean subsidiary principles which can be subsumed under one of the major principles). Other corollaries are taken from later writings.

2. "MM" 40. Note the brief ramification in CWC: "God is and God is One." (p. 149; cf. also "MM" 39.) It should be noted in respect to the ontological character of these propositions that, consistently with Hocking's idealistic outlook, "God" is taken to be equivalent to "Being" and "the Real" in the sense of Ultimate Reality, that is, in so far as his reality is absolutely independent. (Without the capital, "reality" seems to refer to the factual world existing more or less independently of the human mind.) Hence the assertions "God is One" and "Reality is One" are broadly equivalent although distinguishable by the context, namely the religious frame of reference. (Cf. "MS" 187.) For Hocking God was always "the heart of Fact." (CWC 198.) Further, whatever else God was, he was "the Absolute." (Cf. MGHE 206.)

The persistent influence of idealistic language here evident is not unproductive of some fogginess, betraying the fact, as many of his critics pointed out in their reviews of his magnum opus in particular, that Hocking was insufficiently cured of Absolute Idealism. Hocking was no pantheist, but in equating "God" with "Reality," he could be mistaken for one. In his defense it can be said that if God can be called "real" as he can be called "good," he can also be called "Reality Itself" as he can be called "Goodness Itself" — here following the medieval via eminentiae as employed, for example, by Thomas Aquinas. (Cf. Summa Theologiae I, Q. 13, aa. 1 - 12.) On the basis of the identity of essence and existence in God, God "possesses" attributes substantially which are "accidental perfections" in creatures. Thus, while men are good, just and loving, God is Goodness Itself, Justice Itself. Although sanctioned by tradition and represent-
an ontology, an epistemology and an ethics which, although limited by the mystic's circumscribed interests, are nevertheless both weighty and extensive.

The force of the first principle is that "No pluralism can be a final metaphysic."¹ The underlying problematic here is the tension between the One and the Many. The mystic is not blind to the reality of the Many; he merely asserts that beyond all plurality is a fundamental unity which is in some sense divine.² Several corollaries flow from this ontological axiom. First, that all of Being is present in each of its instances. Thus the part can stand for the whole: "In the world of minds, the part can include the whole, and is continually engaged in doing so, however partial a member it may be of any whole to which it belongs."³ A kind of "metaphysical synecdoche," this ancient principle has its moral implications: "In so far as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."⁴

The second corollary is that Reality (i.e., God) is

ⁱ"FFD" 525; cf. TP 256.
²Cf. TP 256, "MS" 188, "FFD" 525, "RPK" 280.
³MS 368; cf. TP 260.
thus inescapably present to all, although we are generally only "dimly aware" of that presence.¹

Third, Reality is identical with the human Self. In its strong form, as in Vedanta, this refers both to the Absolute and to the universe. In its softer form, such as that proposed by Hocking, this is taken to mean that "the Universe [i.e., the World] is a self," and "the world is kindred to" the Self of the mystic.²

Fourth, Reality is ineffable (indescribable). This applies both to the One and to the "equally indescribable essence of the human self...."³ I am led to suggest here that the ineffability of mystical experience is the product of the indescribability of both the subjective experiencing and the objective reality experienced, which are equally and perhaps infinitely mysterious. The "reticence" of the mystic is, in other words, traceable to the inexpressible immediacy of experiencing but also to his immediate and therefore ineffable awareness of Fact, the certainty of which outstrips his conceptual ability adequately to conceive or to express as meaning.⁴ Hence, the mystic chooses not to say anything

¹Cf. "MGHE" 65, MIHE 156.
²GL Mar. 18, 1938; Cf. TP 257, CWC 138.
³TP 257; cf. "MS" 187.
⁴Cf. "MM" 44, quoted above, p. 223.
or else to utter paradoxes.¹

As a consequence, fifth, all concepts of the One are inadequate and "all the predicates or descriptives which we apply to it are somehow in need of correction...."²

Finally, "in so far as the One eludes definitive characterization, the sphere of the clearly definable remains plural and open toward future experience."³

As the first principle is largely ontological, the second is mainly psychological, or, more accurately, epistemological. It also stems from "The Meaning of Mysticism": "it is possible to be one with him [God]" and vitally important to be so.⁴ But whether conceived of as "an intuitive knowledge of, or union with, this absolute One," this oneness is the result of an effort primarily if not wholly moral.⁵ Inasmuch as it asserts the radical inadequacy of all conceptual knowledge of God, mysticism is thus voluntaristic and cognitively agnostic, renouncing the attempt to fathom God intellectually in order to find union with him in love, surrender and obedient service.

¹ Cf. LRWF 69 - 71, MGHE 234, TP 315, "SSP" 397.
² TP 257; cf. "MS" 187.
³ "SSP" 397.
⁵ TP 257, 264; cf. LRWF 280, "MS" 180.
Conceptual knowledge is not simply abandoned by the mystic (as is all too clear from their writings). It is radically subordinated to action, which for Hocking as for those other students of mysticism, James and Bergson, is a function of the will. But as we have seen, the inadequacy of conceptual knowledge does not mean that the mystic does not know God. For he has another way of knowing, an intuitive grasp of the existential fact of God's presence.\(^1\) Mysticism as a way of knowing transcends mere intuitionism, however. But as such it is a consequence of loving union in which the awareness of differentiation between the lover and the beloved is lost in a sense of corporate identity. The cognitive "object" of mystical knowledge is neither I nor He nor even Thou, but We.\(^2\) God is known from within.

Several corollaries may also be added to the second mystical axiom. First, obstacles to the realization of a union with God more profound than that of conceptual knowledge or the "dimly felt" nuclear experience can be overcome to an extent by the "right discipline"\(^3\) of the body, mind and spirit, mainly by renunciation and meditation.\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Cf. above, pp. 201ff.

\(^2\) See above, pp. 201, 257. For consubjective experience, see above, pp. 49, 58ff., 74ff., 149 and 190.

\(^3\) "MS" 188.

\(^4\) Cf. "MS" 189 - 90.
Second, however, all voluntary activity and even voluntary passivity -- the paradoxical renunciation of all effort, the voluntary sacrifice of the will -- are insufficient to attain to perfect union with God. Such union is a free gift of grace requiring involuntary passivity, the absolute surrender of Self, else God would not remain free.¹

Yet, third, in so far as freedom is a function of actual willing, i.e., the voluntary realization of personal possibilities, then because conscious union with God is a deliberate development of the theistic ground of nuclear experience, such union must be freely willed if it is to be a human experience at all.² Theologically, Hocking thus asserted the paradoxical necessity of both free will and free grace for salvation.³

¹Cf. MGHE 380 - 86, "MS" 190.

²Cf. SBF 173: "Freedom can grow great only as hope can find its possible good an object of genuine belief. Hence the life of freedom depends intimately on the validity of the mystic's worship."

³In addressing this traditional theological paradox, Hocking simply pointed out "that there comes a stage of effort in which effort must be set aside in favor of a purely receptive attitude." The mystic "must render himself passive and wait in hope that God will vouchsafe to reveal himself." ("MS" 190.) Involuntary passivity, as we have seen, represents a stage of development in which the mystic does not even try to receive the gift of grace, being simply content to receive. Freedom and grace are not antagonistic principles; in the dialectical unfolding of the mystical life, they are, rather, antithetical: equally necessary but equally incomplete. Their ultimate reconciliation occurs in the experience of union, the mystic's freely willed but purely receptive acceptance of God's self-communication. By locating grace and freedom
The third major principle represents the dialectical tension preserving the real difference of the One from the many, subject from object, infinite from finite, whole from part—while paradoxically maintaining their basic unity. The philosophical articulation of this principle is as old as the Hermetical writings and the speculations of Ananagoras. To the Greeks it was enantiodromia. To the late medieval Platonists such as Nicolas of Cusa, it was the coincidentia oppositorum. 1

The principle of reconciliation tempers the mystic's metaphysical monism; all things do not constitute a unity of uniform identity, a "block universe," but one in which related elements are balanced in an equilibrium of dynamic tension. The many may well be aspects of the One, but they are real aspect. The Self—thus both is and is not the Universe, the part both is and is not the Whole. Hocking's own position was that the One and the many are equally real. 2 Thus

within a dialectic, Hocking did not resolve the classical dilemmas of theological speculation about God's freedom and human responsibility. He nevertheless made a significant contribution by thus illuminating the non-contradictory character of apparently exclusive principles when related dynamically rather than statically.


2 For Hocking, however, the One was ontologically prior to the many: "The One we believe in must be a One which needs and is able to produce the many." (TP 276.) On-
he and most Western mystics with him escape the dilemma of pantheism versus atomism by postulating a form of participation in which many particulars share a common or universal character. The mystic remains a realist to the extent that he must deal pragmatically with the world of discrete facts in which he exists. To the extent that the mystic upholds the felt unity of the world, he remains an idealist. In mystical experience, the partial perspectives of both realist and idealist are reconciled not in terms of conceptual harmony but in terms of experience itself.

In our experience, things do fit together; natural law describes all known phenomena. So much so, I might add, that Einstein's dream of a unified field theory describing all possible physical-energy transactions in the universe is not far from a realized possibility nor from the mystic's vision. Yet this is no block universe. The parts are real parts and their "fit" is not always perfect. There are loose
tological dependence, however, does not render the many less real than the One. Conversely, Reality is constituted by the reciprocity of the One and the many; apart from each other, neither is real: "The Real cannot be either the absolute One of the mystic or the absolute Many revealed by realistic analysis." (Ibid.)

1 Cf. TP 274 - 75.

2 Cf. TP 276. Hocking qualifies the monism of the first metaphysical principle by means of a realistic criterion: the social dimension of mysticism, the return to the world, contains in its call to action an intrinsic corrective for the idealistic phase of mystical metaphysics. I am convinced that Hocking's own "objective idealism" was tempered by such a dialectic.
strings and left-overs as well as novelty, development and loss which cannot be left out of account in any adequate interpretation of experience. But here, I think, Hocking's commitment to rationalism and idealism may have betrayed him into too tight a scheme of things, even granting his "tentative pluralism."

Certain elements of experience do not fit together well. Absurdity is also a fact of life, at least on the human, macrocosmic level. Further, we do not grasp how certain elements of experience fit into some larger context, even though they might well do so. To be sure, Hocking's tentative pluralism could be taken to represent a confession that the underlying unity of the world is not only inaccessible to us in its nether depths, but that it may well be evolving. That is, the dynamic aspect of being, becoming, necessitates a modified monism as well as a modified pluralism.

The mystic, on this reading, is one who has been enabled to experience the deep unity of all things as parts of a developing Whole. Process is, in that sense, absolute, even though there may well be a foreseeable term. Unity is thus as much a promise as a fact, or even more so. The mystic's vision of the Real is thus prophetic: it is a virtual unity, the actualization of which is the goal which leads him to spend himself bringing history to full expression as the King-

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The mystic's metaphysical allegiance remains to unity rather than to pluralism because his experience has been one of unity. His pluralism remains tentative not as a capitulation to mystery, but as an obstacle to be overcome. He is not attempting to create a block universe, however, but a community of love and justice.

As I read Hocking, the tension between the One and the many is thus resolved in terms of the second theoretical axiom. The real but as yet non-evident unity of all can be brought to mind, first, by a conscious shift of attention from the part(s) to the Whole, a shift which can occur spontaneously but is more commonly, perhaps primarily, voluntary and thus moral. The mystic's metaphysics is in this sense voluntaristic: the will is the human principle of unity. Second, the concrete and manifest unity of human society and the world of nature can be realized within history by action. Unification is a process as well as a task and a vision; it is achieved in time as well as seen in the depths of being opened in the moment of mystical revelation. Importantly, action, like attention, is also a function of the will. Ultimate integrity on both the individual and social planes of experience is a matter not primarily of cognition but of love.

Several corollaries likewise pertain to the principle of reconciliation. First, that space and time, for instance,
exist both as all-pervasive yet independently plural fields united by a Self as a "field of fields."\(^1\) Second, that all religions possess a fundamental and universal character but are nevertheless historically and culturally particular; they are united "at the top" while rooted in the irreducibly plural soil of human differences.\(^2\) Similarly, religious experience is fundamentally universal; it is no less discretely particular in the lives of individual persons.

The third corollary is that the individual and the community are co-equally important and mutually implicated in all experience.\(^3\) God and the World, fourth, are also intimately associated but not identical. God is neither Nature nor Society; yet God is in the World, which thus becomes a medium of his presence. Finally, as distinct, God and the Self are "Thou" to each other. Yet as united, God and the Self constitute an inclusive and unitive "We."\(^4\)

While not all these interpretations of reality might be found in any particular mystical work, they represent the theoretical foundation of the mystic's reflections on his experience. But whether or not these principles accurately encompass the mystical worldview even as articulated by Hocking,

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\(^1\) Cf. "FPD" 541 - 42; MIHE xv - xvi.

\(^2\) Cf. CWC 141 - 42, 149; "MS" 190 - 91.

\(^3\) Cf. LRWF 44ff., 49, 52.

\(^4\) Cf. MGHE 344, "MS" 194.
the fact remains that interpretation is structurally integral to mystical experience and thus warrants further attention.  

4. Interpretation and Mystical Experience

By abstracting, organizing and presenting even a sketch of a coherent metaphysics based upon the experiences of the mystics, Hocking was clearly engaged in hermeneutics. In calling attention in his magnus opus to the distinction between the mystic's description of his experience as a psychological account and his metaphysical statements about the nature of reality, he was similarly engaging in critical interpretation.

While not prone to methodological discussions for the most part, Hocking felt strongly enough about the need and place of interpretation with regard to mystical experience to devote explicit attention to it in several works. Significantly, he urged in his magnus opus that the mystics' own interpretation, their "account," should be given sympathetic attention prior to any effort to re-interpret their experience. He thus not only raised the issue of the place of interpretation within mystical experience, but he also anti-

1Cf in this regard LeShan, Stace, Furse, Capra as well as the article cited above by Bertrand Russell. While agreeing neither with each other nor with the mystics themselves in many respects, these authors testify to the simple fact that mysticism contains at least the germ of a cosmology.

2Cf. MGHE. 352 - 53 and "MM" 43.

icipated Smart's distinction between "auto-interpretation" and "hetero-interpretation." He wrote,

we shall not do well to impose at first our own language upon the mystics. We must give ourselves over for the time to their guidance, to their modes of expression, and even -- so far as we can -- to their sentiments; realizing that they are laboring with conceptions not wholly literalized, and that we shall be able in due course to win our own freedom and our own interpretation.

Meaning and truth have their democratic aspects: the mystic will attempt to communicate his vision in order to corroborate, judge and evaluate it pragmatically. Should it care to do so, society must therefore be able to interpret it in turn. But the mystic himself is as much in need of interpretative skills in order to understand his own experiences as well as to (or rather, in order to) make them accessible to his community. For the meaning of his experience may well be concealed in symbols, physical events or even visceral promptings that require patient efforts to understand. In any event, all such experiences of God's presence


2 MGHE 369. Elsewhere he noted "We must allow the mystic the first word in reporting, and also in interpreting, his experience. But while he dwells upon its unique, superlative, indescribable aspects, psychology helps our understanding of that experience by finding what is not unique about it, what analogies it has in more commonplace experiences, undertaking thereby both to describe and to explain it." (MGHE 389.)

3 Cf. "MS" 192.
and purpose are mediated in some way and thus require interpre-
tation.

Hocking was well aware that the relationship between experience and interpretation was fraught with problems on the level of both individual and social experience. For example, the alleged ineffability of mystical experience and the subsequent hesitance of the mystic to endorse any positive predicates of the One (despite a propensity nevertheless to do so) create an initial philosophical problem of classi-
cal proportions.\(^1\) On the other hand, if the mystic's account of his own experience and his hesitant description of what he has encountered are extrinsic structures imposed upon his experience, as Dewey proposed,\(^2\) and thus lacks an intrinsic connection with the experience itself, this would suggest a radical discontinuity between experience and interpretation which precludes any valid objective reference. Interpretation on this understanding would represent merely what one recent scholar of mysticism calls "superstructures" -- "considerations" which are "laid over" experience from outside -- being generated by belief-systems adhered to for a variety of non-
related motives.\(^3\) Such superstructures can easily be disen-
gaged and discarded as excess baggage, especially those con-

\(^1\) Cf. MGHE 142 - 43, "MS" 191. See above, pp. 277ff.


taining any metaphysical assertions, as Bertrand Russell re­
commended in his 1917 essay. ¹ Mystical experience would thus
be reduced to a description of various inner states of con­
sciousness which can be described but have no necessary "ex­
ternal relations" with reality outside the mystic's own mind.

In this respect, Hocking came down unhesitatingly if
cautiously on the side of a mystical realism in which inter­
pretation was part of experience and as a consequence objec­
tive references were not merely superimposed upon reports of
subjective or "inner" events. For him mystical experience
was, after all, an extension of religious experience, both
of which have their roots in ordinary experience -- not only
in the Field grounding all experience, but in the concrete
events of history and in the particular development of indi­
vidual persons. Such experience is integral, not riven into
separate realms which operate independently as "subjective"
states of consciousness and "objective" reality. ² Experi­
ence is intentional. It is experience of something by some­
one met together in a common field of reference. Nevertheless,
as we have seen, Hocking distinguished interpretation from
experience.

As different, interpretation and experience are relat­
ed as dialectical moments in a whole-part process which pro­

²Cf. TP 255, quoted above, p. 201.
duces understanding or insight. But for Hocking, interpretation was not a separate kind of mental activity co-ordinate with intuition and reason, as he felt that Royce was proposing, but an intermediate stage between them:

In his last series of Gifford Lectures, Professor Royce defined "interpretation" as a method of knowledge taking its place beside perception and conception (or, let us say, beside intuition and reason) as a third type. This is a suggestion of large promise; and its bearing upon mystical knowledge will be immediately evident if we regard interpretation rather as a mode of transition between intuition and reason than as a co-ordinate form of apprehension. Intuitions are not positions of stable equilibrium; they must submit to interpretation. In being interpreted, they become conceptual systems, and subject to all the mortality to which rational defenses of religion have always been exposed. But the destructive criticism of any interpretation does not (on this understanding) do away with the cognitive side of religion, as the critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries too hastily assumed. It leaves standing two things: the original intuition, which is irrefutable, and the interpreting process, which is infinite. The mystic, on this understanding, will not resign his certitude, from which an entire world has taken courage; nor will he, to retain his certitude, evade the ordinary canons of judging truth.¹

As a form of cognitive activity intermediate between intuition and reason, interpretation for Hocking shared in the characteristics of both to some degree.² That is, interpretation was not simply inferential, unless divorced from the immediacy of direct apprehension. Although a rational activity, interpretation likewise possessed an inner connection

¹"INR" 588 - 89. Cf. also 81 and "ORE" 61.
²Cf. "INR" 81 and "ORE" 61.
with the process of perception or apprehension, if only in so far as all experience is mediated and mediation requires interpretation.\(^1\) Without the element of rational judgment, however, interpretation shades into intuition.

Such a position was logical and indeed inevitable for Hocking given his understanding of mediation. For interpretation functions as the subjective correlate of the objective function of mediation in experience. Hence experience can be described operationally as interpreted mediation. Needless perhaps to point out, interpretation and mediation also include dimensions of experience beyond the immediate subject-object relation. Interpretation is laden with structures funded by past experience: selective attention, interest, patterns of perception, biases, etc. Likewise, mediation brings with it a host of external relations, for every object is situated in a context. Thus every interpretation bears with it the latent history of an individual in a particular culture and behind every objective mediation lies not only the intention of the mediating agent, but the full character of the mediator or medium, including, ultimately, the world-system as a whole.

\(^1\)Cf. MGHE xxix, CWC 99. The immediacy of mystical experience does not constitute an exception for, as we have seen, experiential immediacy precludes the possibility of meaningful understanding. And thus "The immediacy of any experience must submit to interpretation by what is outside it and related to it." (MGHE 354.)
It seems necessary here to advert to Hocking's distinction between levels or degrees of "auto-interpretation" in that interpretation not only partakes of the immediacy of conscious experience by providing a structure for thought, but represents as well a reflexive, conceptual scheme for further cognitive activity: inference. In brief, interpretation is part of the structure of experience but also distinguishable from it and susceptible to modifications which do not change the original intuition. That is to say, further interpretations may well alter the understanding or meaning of an experience, e.g., a slap on the face, when new information is acquired, such as the motives of the agent and the effect on the recipient. The fact of the slap remains unaltered. Misrepresentation, while not inevitable, always remains possible in experience because of the variable factors in interpretation. But interpretation always remains corrigible by further interpretation. ¹

As any connecting medium between minds may be construed as either transparent or opaque, permitting or obstructing communication, interpretation can likewise be viewed as either a bridge across or a barricade before the psychological and metaphysical chasm between minds and between minds and reality. ² On one side of this issue stand the realist and the "objective idealist"; on the other the skep-

¹ Cf. MGHE 66 and "INR" 588 - 89.
² Cf. MGHE 266.
tic and the subjective idealist, still imprisoned by the "ego-centric predicament."

For Hocking the integral function of interpretation as an element in mystical experience was to render the meaning present in the encounter available for understanding and communication, both individually and socially. Despite the fact that extraneous factors can enter into the interpretative process and to some extent always must, distorting or enriching meaning, there remains a nucleus of "truth" in any interpretation in which the factual character of the world is accurately reflected. Thus, in the art of hermeneutics, the primary condition for the attainment of truth is a moral one: the willingness to see what is there, to be "objective," to face the facts squarely and to render as honest an account of them as possible.

The objectivity of mystical experience as a process and the integral character of interpretation within it thus become susceptible of "verification" by a comparative study of mystical reports, not only of the paths proposed but also of the character of the goal attained. Actual widespread consensus among the mystics of East and West, including mem-

1"The position of mankind toward the whole wonderful history of mysticism would be vastly improved if attention were given to the extent to which the reports of the great mystics corroborate one another and indicate a common nature in the paths proposed; and it were further shown how deeply the more extraordinary varieties of mystical experience are akin to very normal and, indeed, inescapable experiences of men everywhere." ("MS" 201.)
bers of various traditions, cultures and periods, might not prove the mystic-realist's case beyond a reasonable doubt, but it would at least pose a serious problem for the skeptic and the reductionist. Whence comes the agreement? Why are the evinced structures of consciousness and the character of the reality experienced so similarly elaborated?

Summarily, interpretation is a structural element of the process by which nuclear experience is explicitated in mysticism. All experience is mediated -- by ideas of Nature, Self and the social Other. As the subjective correlate of mediation, interpretation is a meaning-giving process of thought, corresponding to the objective aspect, the self-revelation to us by God through the mediation of the World and the Self. To put it differently, no experience, including mystical experience, is "finished" until it reaches the level of interpretation (or at least the first level of interpretation, here excluding inference) and is confirmed in action.

Thus, as Smart proposes, there are many levels of interpretation which are more or less integral to the act of experiencing as such. These range from the minimal structuring of recognition, which conditions the possibility of having a truly conscious experience at all,\(^1\) to reflection in

\(^1\)Cf. in this regard Roland Fischer, art. cit., p. 899: "experience can be said to consist of two processes: the programmed (subcortical) CNS [Central Nervous System] activity;
the sense of immediate inference based on direct presence, to the abstraction or remotion of conceptual analysis in which all objective immediacy has been lost or never occurred, e.g., acts of pure fantasy. Only the first level of interpretation is an intrinsic part of experience, supplying the relatedness necessary for that mediation without which only pure immediacy and therefore no conscious experience would prevail.

5. Conclusion: The Mystical Dialectic

The dynamic structure of mystical experience in individual history is, then, the process by which the fundamental and immediate structure of all experience is raised to further consciousness by an interpretative shift of attention away from the details of everyday life toward the Whole of life. It reveals the presence thereby of God as the Field of experience mediated by the Self, Nature and Society. From a social perspective, this dynamic is an intrinsic moment in a process of withdrawal from and return to social interaction, both in the lives of individuals and in the history of peoples. The shifts of attention involved in contemplative meditation and the withdrawal from and return to society are both governed by the principle or "law" of alternation which describes the dialectical movement by which a system advances and the symbolic or perceptual-behavioral (cortical) interpretation, or metaprograms, of the CNS activity."
by reciprocating activity and passivity, that is, by extension and reflexion (excursion and reflection).

As a more or less self-regulating system of social interaction, mysticism does not terminate in a burst of activity, but continues the dialectical alternation of action and contemplation both in the life of the mystic and to a limited extent in the history of religions. Here, however, the analogy between individuals and religious traditions tends to be weak; the social history of mystical withdrawal and prophetic action in Hinduism and Christianity, for example, is much harder to trace than the ebb and flow of contemplation and action in the life of a mystic such as Gandhi or Hammarskjold.

There are other problems worth noting in Hocking's treatment. His portrayal of the historical development of religion, especially the emergence of the prophetic consciousness in Christianity, tended as we have seen to rely heavily upon large, general strokes of characterization, almost of caricature. He likewise smoothed over the factual wrinkles and scruffy details that admittedly and confusingly obscure the contours of history. Further, his occasional tendency to exemplify an entire religion historically in terms of a specific characteristic, such as the Absolute-mysticism of India and the prophetic consciousness of Christianity, represents, I believe, a regression to an interpretation of religious
olution unacceptable by more modern standards of evaluation. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the evolution and character of religions are more complex and various than Hocking might have suggested, the historian of religion still often employs a dialectical model which accommodates the tension of action and contemplation without resorting to a strict typology encompassing the "character" of an entire religion. Moreover, Hocking's description of types of religious experience have been widely and favorably cited among scholars of religion in this regard, both in terms of the action-contemplation dialectic as well as of the universal-particular polarity.

1 Cf. for example GL Dec. 10, 1938 and "HA" 433ff. For an instance of a more complex approach to religions based on linguistic structures and "logical strands" of doctrinal development, cf. Ninian Smart, Reasons and Faiths, op. cit.

III. THE FUNCTION AND VALUE OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

One of the principal advances of Hocking's approach to mysticism was placing it and assessing it in its social context, as James had suggested but had not carried out. ¹ Like James, Hocking evaluated the effects of mysticism on the individual, but he also realized that to the degree that society is constituted by the interactions and relations of individuals well or ill-equipped to promote the common welfare, a social dimension of mysticism is not only entailed but acquires a special significance and importance.

The criterion Hocking employed in gauging the social function, value and therefore meaning of mysticism were similar to those of James: whether mysticism actually promoted social well-being.² That is, the ability of society's members to live well in a difficult natural and social environment, meeting the challenges and risks of daily life as well as furthering the highest ideals and goals of the race, such as the appreciation of human dignity, the worth of life, beauty, moral excellence, social harmony and co-operation.

1. Individual Functions and Values

The mystic's withdrawal from society, his period of negation in which social ties are severed and social values

¹Cf. James, op. cit., p. 35.
²Ibid., pp. 308, 326.
apparently rejected, would invite an equally negative judgment on the worth of mysticism if that were all there were to the mystical path. However, history shows clearly enough that, despite exceptions to the contrary,\(^1\) at least the greater mystics were far from social liabilities. The social study of mysticism also shows that the mystic's negative path is completed by a positive turn back to the world.

With regard to the individual, the overall social function of mysticism requires alternating phases—both negative and positive—to accomplish its purpose: integration, independence, originality and growth. (It is important to note that Hocking was describing the ideal function of mysticism based, to be sure, on concrete historical facts as well as on real tendencies present in all true mysticism. He was not merely idealizing mysticism in the sense of projecting a utopian situation or indulging in wishful thinking.)

i. Individual Integration

Many positive values of mysticism are embodied in those "negative" functions grouped under the general category of renunciation, that is, those of the "negative path." As we have seen, the effect of these activities is positive

detachment aims at re-attachment, disengagement aims at re-engagement and withdrawal aims at return. But a difference has been made by the specific function of negation. Hocking generally referred to this function as "breaking down" or "through" habitual modes of perception and behavior.¹

Detachment from reliance on a single set of socially-determined and sanctioned patterns of perception and behavior enables the individual to acquire greater psychological independence from society. His viewpoint is to some extent (if never totally) "decentered," enabling him to recognize social norms more readily and to evaluate them as well as the institutions which embody and perpetuate them. The mystic thus enjoys greater freedom to see, judge and act.² This freedom is reinforced by an assurance of self-worth and hope.³

The mystic's vision is clarified with respect to the facts of experience. By "cleansing the doors of perception," he gains and communicates "a recovered sense of proportion,"⁴ a "sense of the whole."⁵ He "renews the ever-ebbing values of the daily task by restoring the amplitude of horizon to the detail of living."⁶ He achieves a new awareness of the values of things.⁷ He is more sensitive than before to their

¹ Cf. MGHE 364, 570; TP 318, 274; CWC 138.
² Cf. MGHE 440, SBF 173, TP 274.
³ Cf. MGHE 451, SBF 173.
⁴ CWC 140.
⁵ TP 274.
⁶ MIHE 163.
⁷ Cf. TP 274.
individual qualities and their goodness. But he is also more objective -- he sees things as they are, he "faces facts," thus contributing to the development of science and art. This occurs in three major areas: "First of all, the power of plain scientific observations" or objectivity. For "the chief conditions of truth-getting are moral...." This includes "simplicity and open-mindedness," the "love of the thing." Second, "the mystic recovers the power to appreciate facts of the qualities of things, achieving a new innocence of the senses...." Third, "he acquires or recovers the power to face the facts of social intercourse, and thus to extend his capacity for friendship." The mystic widens and deepens the scope of experience itself by the negative discipline of renouncing conceptual knowledge as a means whereby to attain union with the Absolute, restoring feeling and will to their rightful place. He has a renewed appreci-

1 Cf. TP 275, 314; CWC 138.
2 Cf. TP 274, 320. The interrelationships between mysticism, science and art constitute a theme running through most of Hocking's writings; cf. MGHE 513, "LRT" 43, SIG 113, "ORE" 63, "BIC" 281, CWC 139.
3 TP 274.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 TP 275.
7 Ibid.
8 Cf. MGHE 451; HNR 410f.; "RF" 365; TP 318; "SSP" 397;
ation of the positive role the body plays in the spiritual life.

Morally, the negative path sensitizes the mystic's conscience; he is better able to perceive both justice and injustice. His ability to face the facts of social intercourse also increase his capacity for friendship and love.

ii. Individual Growth

Growth and development constitute the most positive phase of the dialectical process of the mystic along his path toward full individuality. Having endured the systematic disintegration of his artificial self and its world (i.e., both Weltanschauung and Weltbild), and successfully having reintegrated them in the light of his deeper insight into the religious foundations of social existence, he returns to society a "new man." His creative capacity has been enlarged as a result of the greater freedom he enjoys with regard to perception, evaluation and action. His refusal to declare adequate and therefore closed the stock of concepts culturally available to describe experience renders him uniquely open to future experience. The prophetic aspect of

"MS" 188; MIHE 127.

1 Cf. TP 272; MS 429.

2 Cf. TP 275, CWC 101.

3 Cf. "SSP" 397.
"realized" mysticism, its directly social relevance, is characterized by innovation, creativity and originality as the positive aspects of dissent and reform: "The vital function of mysticism is origination, the creation of novelty."\(^1\) What the mystic discerns to be lacking in society, the prophet can and will create, if need be.\(^2\)

2. Social Functions and Values

The individual contributions, values and therefore meanings revealed by the actions of the mystic-prophet accrue of course to society because he is a social being. But there are also particular social values which mysticism as such contributes to society. Hocking did not claim that only mysticism can make these or more individualized contributions. Rather, the mystic realizes in a distinctive manner what many other members of society also value and strive to effect.

As in the case of the individual mystic, the social body is affected in areas which can similarly be divided into integrity and growth, i.e., social cohesion and progress. Again, this description is characteristic of the positive tendencies present in mysticism and actualized more or less evidently in history. It does not refer as such to specific

\(^1\)"MM" 54.

\(^2\)Cf. TP 273.
i. Social Cohesion

By gathering a band of disciples around himself, the mystic inaugurates a movement potentially capable of reorganizing society completely.¹ For the values expressed by the mystic are the deepest values, the ideals, of the social group to which he belongs, purged, however, of customary excrescences and raised to a new level of awareness. The mystic thus "reminds" society of its truest and deepest character. This "conservative" function of mysticism is expressed negatively as a critique of institutions, laws and customs -- society's "habits." The purpose of this critique is constructive: the recapturing of the original purpose of these institutions, laws and customs in the lives of the people they are meant to serve. The mystic as prophet brings society back to its original values by calling for and even instituting reforms. More positively yet, the mystic increases social cohesion by providing for society what society cannot provide for itself: morale, the will to co-operate.

Co-operation is achieved in part by a "meeting of the minds" on both a civil and a religious plane of social encounter. Historically, mystics have been pre-eminent peacemakers, often at the cost of initial and even lasting con-

¹Cf. MGHE 518ff.
lict.\textsuperscript{1} No less is this the case in the distinctively religious sphere, where even in originating new movements and sects, the mystics have not only tended to preach universal brotherhood but generally have attempted to practice it. They have sometimes united whole cultures and civilizations in their embracing outreach, e.g., the Buddha, Jesus, Francis of Assisi, George Fox, Ramakrishna and Gandhi. The ecumenical impetus of the coming world faith, Hocking proposed, will also be a mystical contribution, both among Christians but also between Eastern and Western religions.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{ii. Progress}

Finally, the "liberal," even revolutionary impetus of the mystic-in-action is realized in the form of social progress as a function of creative innovation. The mystic often tends to anticipate the direction of social growth, acting as both a spur and a guide, creating a way where there seemed to be none: "the religious will tends to create the conditions for its own success."\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Cf. "INR" 573 - 77; MS 426 - 27; TP 275; "Foreword," Mukerjee, op. cit., p. vii; CWC 141. Catherine of Siena, Gandhi and Dag Hammarskjöld immediately come to mind in this regard.

\textsuperscript{2} Cf. "MS" 190f.; CWC 141 and LRWF passim. For concrete examples, one need only think of Thomas Merton, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Vivekananda, D. S. Suzuki, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and other "missionaries" of both East and West.

\textsuperscript{3} MGHE 517. Cf. 518: The prophet "must find in the
3. Conclusion

By this evaluation, Hocking obviously identified mysticism and religion functionally in terms of their own social consequences. This is but another way of indicating that for him mysticism was a fuller expression of the religious impulse, not a distinctively different kind of experience.

As idea, the meaning of mysticism is revealed in the dynamic structure of nuclear experience as it is explicated by a social dialectic of individuation: the mystic's withdrawal, purgation, integration and creative return to the World -- a process wherein God, heretofore hidden as the Field of all experience and the aboriginal partner in dialogue, becomes manifest as the intimate companion along life's way -- both that of the individual and of the race. The personal revelation of God as the "intimate, infallible associate, present in all experience" and guiding the course of history but with whom fully conscious union is possible, is thus the essential meaning of mysticism.

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1 See above, pp. 171 - 75.

2 MGHE 224.
As function, the meaning of mysticism is the achievement of individual and social integrity and development, the creation of a world community founded on universal peace, love and justice by means of union with God and its effects, the "unification of history" among them. Viewed socially, the specific religious purpose and value of mysticism is the renewal of the vital spirit in religious and therefore of all social life. For over time, as we have noted, institutionalized religion tends to lose its vigor, its ability to relate men to God experientially and meaningfully. Hardened by custom, law and doctrinal conservatism, it no longer touches the hearts of ordinary people. Mystical movements, conversely, are those which precisely claim to relate men directly to God, that is, in immediate experience. Hence, as a function of religion, mysticism serves to break through the encrusted forms stifling the religious impulse by means of its critique of institutions, its call to personal experience, its recovery of values and its creative development of the historical traditions.

Hocking's exploration of the meaning and structure of religion and mysticism supports their functional identification in terms of their progressive realization of ultimate values. In this respect, mysticism is not only continuous with religion but its inner meaning and fullest mani-

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1 Cf. MGHE 515 - 24; LRWF 266f.; CWC 184.
festation. With this conclusion, we turn to the specific theses which this study is concerned to defend.
IV. THE MEANING AND STRUCTURE OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

According to the preceding analysis of Hocking's writings, the central dialectic of mystical experience is the transition from the implicit dimension of nuclear experience, the I-It-Thou relationship with its divine field of reference which undergirds all human experience, to the explicit dimension of developed mystical consciousness and its expression in prophetic activity. In this dialectical movement, God becomes consciously present in ever greater intimacy, even to the limit of felt communion with the human spirit. The dialectical transition is accomplished during the interval between social withdrawal and return. At that point, the common experience of worship, whether latent in the waking of the mind to truth, goodness, beauty and love, or manifest in prayer and religious ritual, becomes deepened, clarified and enriched by the discipline of renunciation and meditation. The realization of affective union with God then expresses itself socially in activity. That is, the unitive dimension of mystical experience tends toward diffusion to others by teaching, example and direct social intervention. Further, prophetic action and mystical contemplation continue to alternate in the mystic's life in an on-going dialectical process, enabling him to meet new situations creatively while preserving the highest ideals of the past.
This idealized and somewhat abstract schematization points to the overall character of mystical experience as a process within a social context. It is, in sum, a self-regulating and open system of transformations by which civil and religious life is revitalized on both an individual and collective level. From this perspective, it is possible to develop the argument of this dissertation in a series of connected theses based on the foregoing structural and functional analysis and systematic reconstruction of Hocking's teachings.

The whole thrust of Hocking's thought was aimed at establishing the essential social relevance of mysticism, which he did, I believe, by showing that (1) developed mysticism is rooted in and the explicitation of the fundamental intersubjective relation which grounds all experience as social (i.e., nuclear experience), and (2) that mysticism not only arises in a social situation but incorporates as a structural element a social dimension in the form of prophetic action.

With regard to the first part of this proposition, Hocking argued that if experience is ever truly social, it is always social. That is, experience is intersubjective in origin as well as social in its effects. The principle underpinning this argument is, as we have noted before, the classical axiom actus prior est potentia.¹ Mysticism is that ¹See above, pp.52f. Hocking's statement of this prin-
manifestation of the religious dimension of primordial inter-subjectivity, the I-Thou dialogue with God grounding the possibility of consciousness, which comes to later awareness as the sense of the presence of God disclosed through the manifold media of Self, Nature and Society. The same reasoning holds here: if experience is ever mystical, it is always mystical. That is to say, if God is ever found within human experience, it is because in some way he was already there. Various "degrees" of consciousness of that presence are possible, including a heightened form which human effort alone can never fully actualize. Thus the possibility of the free gift of grace is left open. However, the native and radical capacity for union with God is disclosed by this token as a characteristic of the human person as such; grace, as the ancient theology insisted, does not destroy nature but perfects it. Further, this radical capacity for union with God provides the logical basis for Hocking's thesis that all persons are at least latent mystics and hence that all mystical experience is "ordinary."

Moreover, just as all experience is radically social, i.e., an interpersonal transaction, so also it is social in its expression. In the scope of actual life considered in its integrity there is no purely private and subjective ex-

ample is found in MGHE 274 - 78.
perience. Thus mysticism, the epitome of solitary experience, is in fact "the redemption of solitude,"¹ finding its natural outgrowth in social activity. (The classical axiom operative here would appear to be agere sequitur esse -- what is, for instance, social in principle will be social in expression.)

Both arms of this case have empirical minor premises: the fact of social experience in the first instance and the fact of mystical experience in the second. What Hocking needed to clarify perhaps more than he did was the difference between social experience and intersubjective experience. As he used the term, social experience is clearly a wider notion and empirically subsequent: actual social experience is a development of radical intersubjectivity. Briefly, intersubjective as a quality of experience refers to the "I-Thou" awareness (or at least a dim version of it) -- a more or less direct and immediate but not necessarily reflective apprehension of the Other as "Thou." Social, on the other hand, includes some reference to the totality of human relationships in society, including the I-It relationships which refer to other persons indicatively. The syntactical difference here points to the distinction between social experience as a function of one dimension of the nuclear triad (Self-World) and true intersubjective experi-

¹Cf. MGHE 404, etc.
ence (Self-Thou). Social experience also connotes, contextually, the quality of experience as determined or influenced by institutions, customs, values, goals, etc. which reflect human interactions in a remoter sense.

Thus not all social experience is intersubjective, but all intersubjective experience is social. Nevertheless, and more importantly, the possibility of any social experience in the broader sense is dependent upon the prior fact of a special mode of intersubjectivity. The consubjective "we-consciousness" constituting true community on whatever level is the condition necessary for the emergence of society both in the history of the race and in the life-history of each person. Hocking's distinctive contribution in articulating the concept of intersubjectivity, as noted by Marcel, is that there is an intersubjective ground necessary as the condition for the first instance of human "I-Thou" relationships. This is the relationship between the Self and the divine Field of experience, the "intersubjective Thou-art" which establishes the possibility of any and therefore of all communication. All experience is therefore both theistic -- related to God as its ground, and dialogical -- a dialogue with God as Thou. Hence also the characterization of mystical experience as an extension of the ordinary act of worship.

Other theses flow from Hocking's main contention, i.e., that mysticism has an integral, social (intersubjective) dimension, raised to explicit consciousness from a primordial but dim apprehension of God's presence in the depths of the Self and the World.

First, God can be both directly and immediately experienced in mystical encounter even though all experience is mediated. For immediacy as existential space-time proximity is not antagonistic to mediation by idea or feeling. Thus God could be immediately and directly present, for instance, in the burning bush without being the bush. God can be no less present in the consciousness of one's own psyche or in experiences of Nature or in the awareness of social obligations, love, etc. "Natural" religion is therefore not only possible, but the prior condition for the possibility of revealed or "supernatural" religion.¹ That is to say, the religious capacity must be present in the World as well as in the Self before explicit consciousness of God can become meaningful. This capacity is the radical presence of God in the depths of the human Self and also in the structures of the World, including the social world. All mediation, as a form of communication, presupposes a common field of reference.

Second, if mysticism can accurately be described as

¹Cf. MGHE 390 - 91, CWC 99ff.
the development of nuclear experience by means of the interpretation of the various media of God's self-disclosure, then mystical experience cannot be intrinsically extraordinary, as Rouner, for instance, occasionally asserts. As argued by Hocking, mystical experience has precisely this origin as the basis of its manifest forms. In fact, all manifest experience is rooted in the manifold, grounded I-Thou-It relationship. Extraordinary instances of mystical experience, that is, unusually intensified or otherwise exceptional states of God-consciousness, serve mainly to point out the triadic and mystical dimensions of ordinary experience.

In stressing this point, Hocking found himself in accord

1 But not consistently. Thus: "...the experience of the classical mystics of whatever religion is extraordinary, and the whole point of Hocking's 'mysticism' is precisely its ordinariness. It is the basic, common experience of everyman to which he appeals." (Rouner, WHE 242.) "Hocking's appeal," he adds (ibid.), "is not to some esoteric, specialized mystic vision." However, in earlier treating of James' influence on Hocking, he wrote, "The religious experience of the mystics... is therefore not to be regarded as an aberration, radically distinguished from the religion of Everyman. It is rather the 'original source' of ordinary, conventional religion." (Ibid., p. 23.) Hocking, he went on, argued "that the 'true mystic' is the one most acutely aware of the 'original sources' of Everyman's knowledge of God." (Ibid. Cf. also pp. 123, 242, 302.) If Rouner means by extraordinary merely "most acutely aware," then his characterization of mysticism as extraordinary in intensity is accurate enough if somewhat misleading. To pit that against Hocking's "ordinary" mysticism is, however, erroneous. If Rouner means "of a different kind," then he is plainly at odds with Hocking. It seems to me that Rouner in fact uses the term in both senses somewhat indifferently, thus rendering his argument at least ambiguous.

2 Cf. MIHE 216.
with the major trend of Western and many Eastern traditions for which raptures, ecstacies, visions and the panoply of strange physical and mental phenomena commonly associated with mysticism are considered to be of little value if not downright harmful.

Third, and for the same reasons, every human person is potentially a mystic, for God is always present in human experience.¹ The media of God's self-disclosure are the common inheritance of the race: self-consciousness, the World of Nature and Society, and especially felt obligation and love. More specifically, the "occasions" of mystical experience, even in "extraordinary" cases, are found in fact to be both ordinary and common, such as friendship, music, prayer, sickness, bereavement, flowers, animals, the sea. All experience thus has a mystical dimension or capacity. Further, every person has the ability to develop that native capacity given the will and the opportunity to do so. Accordingly, mysticism can only be incidentally elitest and esoteric. History shows that, in fact, most mystical movements were widely catholic.²

Fourth, in so far as nuclear experience comes to full awareness in the common experience of worship as an explicit dialogue with God (which can be mediated in any number of ways), mystical awareness is an extension of ordinary reli-

¹ Cf. MGHE 402ff., CW 73.
² Cf. MGHE 398, "HS" 189.
gious experience, differing in degree rather than kind. For worship is not only the chief act of religion, the explicitation of the personal bond between the Self and God as "Thou," it is also the basis of mystical experience in its implicit form, as we have seen. That worship involves a dialogical relationship with God should be evident from considering any basic definition of prayer, such as "the raising of the mind and heart to God." That mysticism is a heightened form of worship should also be clear inasmuch as the objective of the mystic's quest is communion or even union with God, that is, transcending the objective consciousness of the Self in an intersubjective experience of personal immediacy and intimacy, possibly eventuating in the undifferentiated consciousness of consubjectivity.¹

This conclusion implies that all mysticism is fundamentally religious. The explicitation of the religious dimension of experience is a social contingency, however. That is, it is dependent upon culturally available and personally acceptable categories of interpretation. Thus, a given interpretation of mystical experience, influenced by social "pressure" or personal decision regarding, for instance, the antecedent improbability of the existence of God, may well eventuate in a form of "atheistic" mystical experience. Such

¹In this regard, Hocking directed a new generation of readers to the works of his younger contemporary, Martin Buber. (Cf. MGHE xiii.)
forms have been defended by philosophers such as Stace, Russell, Huxley, Scharfstein and others, as we have seen.

For Hocking, however, such an interpretation, while deserving respect, need not be definitive. For as contingent, all interpretation is corrigible, although the "original intuition" remains unaltered as a fact.¹ From his metaphysical viewpoint of mystical experience as the explicitation of the encounter between God, the Self and the World in nuclear experience, there is no room for non-religious mysticism. But from an empirical viewpoint and especially by conceding to the mystic the first word in interpreting his experience,² Hocking would seemingly leave open the possibility of non-religious interpretation of mystical experience. This he does by adverting to the "dimness" of the perception of God in our on-going experience. The "God" encountered in such experiences may be anonymous, that is, unrecognized in religious terms, but does not thereby cease to be God.

Given Hocking's fundamental position regarding the structure of experience, then all mystical experience, indeed all experience, remains an implicit encounter with God, whether brought to consciousness as such by the mediation of religious concepts and symbols or not.³ Thus while not all

¹ Cf. "INR" 588f.
² Cf. MGHE 369, 389.
³ Cf. "MS" 189.
mystical experience nor mysticism need be explicitly reli-
gious, both remain structurally theistic and thereby im-
plicitly religious.

Having established the cogency of Hocking's argument
for the social character of mysticism as a common and ordi-
nary dimension of human experience, we can now turn in con-
cluding this study to the question of Hocking's own mystical
status. In the light of his analysis of the meaning and
structure of mystical experience, we shall also evaluate
his teachings on mysticism with respect to contemporaneous
criticisms and other, more recent investigations of mysti-
cal experience.
CHAPTER IV

HOCKING RECONSIDERED: AN EXPERIMENTAL FAITH

Having considered Hocking's teachings on mystical experience by analyzing its characteristics, elements, structure, meaning and value, two questions remain for us to consider: whether Hocking was a mystic himself and whether he was correct in his appraisal of mysticism, that is, whether his concept was at variance with the received notion of mystical experience as Rouner implies.

Consequently, in this chapter I shall evaluate Hocking's major theses as I have articulated them in terms of his own status as a mystic, other contemporaneous views of mysticism, critical objections and a representative selection of more recent investigations. It is my contention that Hocking was a mystic and that his philosophy was substantially mystical. Further, his views on mysticism, while deficient in some respects, nevertheless possess considerable classical as well as modern support. Moreover, I believe that Hocking not only recovered the classical Western concept of mysticism but also anticipated many later "discoveries." As a consequence, his dynamic model of mystical experience represents a valuable instrument for organizing past findings and directing future explorations into the field of mystical experience and mysticism.
I. WAS HOCKING A MYSTIC?

As noted earlier, denials that Hocking was a mystic and that his philosophy was in any substantial sense mystical have been issued by various commentators.\(^1\) While somewhat tangential to the central argument of this dissertation, these denials are nevertheless relevant for they implicitly challenge the adequacy of Hocking's understanding of mysticism, his self-understanding, and his understanding of the intention and character of his life's work.

Against these views, I contend that Hocking was indeed a mystic according to his own definition and by his virtual admission. Further, Hocking should be considered a mystic on the basis of the experiences he related as significant in his own life as well as in regard to his teachings. The latter, as I shall substantiate, incorporate important elements he identified as mystical and conform in major respects to mystical teachings identified by other investigators.

Among recent commentators denying Hocking's mysticism, Hal Bridges simply dismisses the issue on the basis of an alleged cognitive bias.\(^2\) However, he fails to provide even minimal grounds for his claim. Consequently, given Hocking's emphasis on feeling as the "most important element in experi-

\(^1\)See above, pp. 8ff.

ence," and his explicit rejection of the adequacy of conceptual knowledge in the apprehension of God, Bridges' claim can be dismissed as beside the point. Leroy S. Rouner, while not in doubt that Hocking's philosophy included a great many references to mysticism, also denies, if as we have seen somewhat ambiguously, that Hocking himself was a mystic or that the mystical element in his philosophy was more than incidental. For although able to admit that Hocking could be called a mystic in some sense, Rouner claims that it is not the ordinary sense, which is to say as extraordinary. Here, clearly employing a concept of mystical experience at variance with Hocking's, he writes (cleaving mysticism from prophecy) that

The mystic is a key figure in the dramatis personae of [Hocking's] religious dialectic -- along with the prophet. The mystic is, if anything, even more important to his philosophy of history, for it is the mystic who best apprehends the emerging elements of world faith. Hocking himself had one or two experiences of extrasensory perception, and he did indeed have a good old-fashioned conversion experience when he was a boy. But the experience of the classical mystics of whatever religion

1LRWF 48. Cf. MGHE 64 - 72, 137.

2See above, pp. 8ff., 311.

3Cf. Rouner, WHE 51 - 52: "In spite of his 'mysticism,' or perhaps because of it, the thrust of Hocking's meaning is always toward the specific and the concrete." In his dissertation, Rouner was less equivocal about Hocking's mystical status: "If I labor the significance of prophecy in his thought it is because I think it is easily missed in concentrating too exclusively on the fact that Hocking is a mystic." (Op. cit., p. 105.)
is extraordinary, and the whole point of Hocking's 'mysticism' is precisely its ordinariness. It is the basic, common experience of everyman to which he appeals.¹

Claiming (but without substantiation) that Hocking's interest in mysticism was not intrinsic to his philosophy, Rouner goes on to question whether he was a mystic at all:

Despite the fact that Hocking has written a great deal about mysticism there is no developed mysticism in his own philosophy. I think Hocking had moments when he would have liked to have been a mystic; those times in his own experience when insight became a "searing flame" helped him appreciate mysticism as "a momentous thing." But he remains an outsider to the mystic vision.²

As noted before, Rouner's argument is at least ambiguous. For in order ultimately to claim Hocking as "a Methodist, not a mystic,"³ he is forced to fall back on a concept of mysticism explicitly rejected by Hocking. That is, Rouner believes classical mysticism to be essentially extraordinary and an elite kind of religious experience opposed to the common experience of everyman. He thus misses the whole point of Hocking's teaching on mysticism with regard to the

¹ Rouner, WHE 241 - 42; emphasis added. He continues, "Hocking's appeal is not to some esoteric, specialized mystic vision. His appeal is simply to what we really see in our first wide open look, before we start narrowing down to our own specialized corner of the field." (Ibid., p. 243.) Rouner seems not to have perceived that Hocking saw his "re-conception" of mysticism not in radical discontinuity from the classical tradition, but as a development of it. For Hocking, classical mysticism is the basic, common experience of everyman, focused and concentrated.

² Rouner, WHE 242.

³ Ibid.
very ordinary media of God's felt presence in beauty, both in Nature and as culturally embodied in music and art:

Hocking wants a religious sensitivity which feeds its vitality into the workings of the world. He wants men like Dag Hammarskjold who work at day in the frenzy of the U.N. and chart their markings in the still of the night. But when Hocking's own telephone was stilled and the visiting delegation departed, he was not usually to be found in his closet at prayer, or recording an intensely spiritual journey. One might have found him listening to Tchaikovsky, or watching the last touch of the sun on the peak of Mt. Washington; but he was usually in his study philosophizing on what it all meant. It is misleading to call this 'mysticism.'

It is difficult to grasp the intent of Rouner's conclusion here, much less follow it, given Hocking's great emphasis on the mystics' quest for meaning. Two of his own most important works, both dealing with mysticism, contain the word "meaning" in their titles. In so far as the mystic is a philosopher, his whole enterprise can be seen as a quest for the meaning of God and of human life. For Hocking himself, mysticism was undoubtedly a philosophy, as noted before. Some of the greatest mystics were philosophers, endlessly seeking to discover "what it all meant"-- Plotinus, Augustine, Eckhart, Spinoza, the Cambridge Platonists, Nicholas of Cusa, Jonathan Edwards, Goethe, Novalis, Schelling, Emerson and Rufus Jones among them. Hocking himself possessed at an early age what he called "the mystic's sense of the

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1Rouner, WHE 244.

2Cf. TP 255, cited above, p. 186.
The meaning sought by the mystic is not abstract, however. It is concrete, religious and primarily expressed in action, not concepts. Moreover, meaning is often conveyed by the ordinary media of Nature and Society, in truth, beauty, and goodness found in pleasure, art, music and friendship. It is far from misleading to call such a quest mystical.

Rouner nowhere explains why it should be misleading to call such an experience of natural beauty, music or the quest for meaning "mystical." Hocking himself, further, had expressly taught that such media were capable of communicating the very presence of God. Finally, inasmuch as Hocking had consistently identified mysticism with the quest for meaning in the whole of experience, it is difficult to see Rouner's concept of mysticism other than as embodying the historical misunderstanding Hocking had endeavored to correct.

In brief, Rouner's assertions are warranted neither by the facts of Hocking's own experience nor by his teaching.

1"SSP" 388.

2Cf. MGHE 418, 422; CWC 101, 138f. For some major references on meaning and mysticism, cf. MGHE 97, 362, 388, 428, 452, 460; TP 56, 62, 100f., 116, 132, 262, 314; CWC 23, 99, 122n., and MIHE 96, 97, 98, 159 and 162.

3See above, pp. 210ff., 216f., 234, 282 and 291.

4Cf. TP 314, MIHE 159.
as noted by Rouner himself. In fact, the very evidence
Rouner marshalls against Hocking's mysticism -- his love of
nature, music, art and philosophy -- strengthens the case
for it, as I shall substantiate more specifically. Moreover,
on the basis of Hocking's own testimony, the conclusion is
evident that according to his own criteria and somewhat reti-
cent admission, he was not only a mystic but that his meta-
physics was substantially mystical as well.

To begin with, unlike William James, Hocking never
denied that he was a mystic. Coupled with a somewhat peri-
phrastic admission that he indeed was a mystic, this non-de-
nial assumes greater positive force. In a revealing comment
from the 1963 preface to his magnum opus, Hocking referred
to his two-fold philosophical agenda in highly personal terms:

Modernity completely failed to resolve the dilemma of
"solipsism"; and with its inability to find an experi-
ence of other selves would follow its deeper inability
to find an experience of God. I had for some time been
of the belief that these barriers could be surmounted
and that they would fall together. In my own experience
they did; this book is to that extent autobiographical.\(^1\)

Given the importance Hocking immediately and pervasively at-
tached to mystical experience in his major work, this refer-
ence assumes greater significance.

In similar fashion, virtually the opening lines of
"Some Second Principles" find Hocking claiming an immediate

\(^1\) MGHE xii.
and ineffable sense of the worth of existence, a characteristic he would single out as mystical:¹

The peculiar coloring of immediacy which belongs to religion, the pervasive sense of an unevident value in existence, cannot be precisely transmitted. But it is sure to be recognized, thought about, sought after. It is almost as sure to be critically regarded at some time or other, to be analyzed and explained away or rejected, as a preliminary to independent building. This was my own very ordinary experience.²

In a review from 1933 appended to The Coming World Civilization, "What if God is Gone?", Hocking added a valuable footnote to his personal understanding of the meaning of mysticism, alluding to his own mystical tendencies in a remark introducing a letter from one of the authors of the book in question, Max C. Otto:

I am impelled to share [the letter] -- first for what it says about him, his extraordinary willingness to reconsider a firm position, and then for the evidence it brings that what I have called the recognition of mystic by mystic, and their rapprochement across apparent gulfs, are not limited to relations between avowed faiths.³

This remark must be interpreted in light of Hocking's reference to his claim that "The true mystic will recognize the true mystic across all boundaries and will learn from him."⁴

Possibly the most convincing proof of the mystical character of Hocking's position is conveyed by his explicit

¹Cf. MIHE 157 - 58.
²"SSP" 385. Cf. CWC 100f.
³CWC 190.
⁴CWC 141.
endorsement of theses cited by him as mystical. In referring, for instance, to his magnum opus in the preface to Living Religions and a World Faith, he stated, as we have already seen, that

I was attempting to present a realistic mysticism, one which turns its back on circumstance and the world's concerns only to find the Real, and thereby to renew energy and grit for the particular task, and to regain certitude in action, that detailed action whose integral sum is history.¹

In Types of Philosophy he similarly adopted as his own the realism of the mystic.² He also claimed a mystical idealism, which constituted with mystical realism the nucleus of his philosophy.³ Further, he clearly espoused the mystics' tenets that the world is charged with unfathomed significance and value,⁴ and that the world is a Self "infinite in its depth and mystery."⁵ In "Some Second Principles," Hocking openly admitted that his philosophy incorporated a "tentative mysticism," reaffirming his own belief in the inadequacy of conceptual knowledge to grasp reality in its fullness.⁶

¹ LRWF 7.
² Cf. TP 318.
³ Cf. TP 320, MGHE xxviii.
⁴ Cf. TP 314 - 15.
⁵ TP 315; cf. "SSP" 397, GL Mar. 18, 1938.
⁶ Cf. "SSP" 397.
in *Strength of Men and Nations*, Hocking reiterated his conviction that the mystic was right in asserting the total meaning in life.\(^1\) He also affirmed the mystic's sense of destiny, not so much in terms of his own life as of that of his generation.\(^2\) Likewise, in the earlier book, he stated of the mystic, "In my judgment, he is right in his primary assertions, that there is a total meaning in things, and that we are always dimly aware of it, and may thus be certain that it exists."\(^3\)

Other instances can be brought forward more systematically with respect to Hocking's inclusion of the principal teachings of the mystics as he specified them in his own teaching.

First, Hocking expressly testified in several works to his belief that "God is and God is One."\(^4\) He also maintained in various places that it is possible to be one with God.\(^5\) Elaborated in the form of the three mystical "axioms," with their corollaries, Hocking's assent to these fundamental theses of authentic mysticism can be briefly indicated:

\(^1\) Cf. MIHE 159, SMN 210.

\(^2\) Cf. MIHE 96 - 97, SMN 218.

\(^3\) MIHE 159; cf. TP 320.

\(^4\) CWC 149; cf. "MM" 55, MGHE 409 - 10; CWC 198.

\(^5\) Cf. MGHE xxviii, HNR 352, CWC 198.
I. Reality is ultimately One (in God), etc.¹

II. It is possible to be one with God by following the right moral discipline.²

III. All oppositions are reconciled in the One.³

With respect to his life-experiences, inasmuch as he stated his belief that all men are "avowed or unavowed mystics, -- even the Schopenhauers,"⁴ there is no reason to assume that Hocking meant to exclude himself. More to the point, apart from his early conviction that "the mystic's sense of the universe is in substance a true one,"⁵ the specific experiences in his life that can be adduced in support of Hocking's mysticism include the encounters with Time (1892) and Space (1941) recorded in The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience,⁶ which gained for him at least a momentary certainty of immortality. Both experiences were mediated by Nature, involving situations of great beauty and an

¹Axiom: TP 275, "FFD" 525. Corollaries: MS 368, TP 316, CWC 184; "MGHE" 65, "MS" 191; TP 315, "SSP" 397, GL Mar. 18, 1938; HNR 410 - 11, TP 318, "SSP" 397 - 98.


³Axiom: MS 343, TP 276, 316, "SSP" 397 - 98; MIHE 99 - 100. Corollaries: SBF ix, 31, 34, MIHE xv - xvi, 216; LRWF 105 - 06, CWC 123, 149; CWC 101; "MGHE" 65, "MS" 190.

⁴TP 314.

⁵"SSP" 388.

⁶MIHE 215 - 16, xv - xvi.
insight into some truth about the world. Other experiences include his conversion at age twelve, which Rouner perhaps exaggerates as "probably his most important 'mystical' experience";¹ his love for Agnes Boyle O'Reilly (the basis, as we saw, of the famous passage in his magnum opus); his interest in and practice of art and music.² Hocking's active career as a teacher, soldier, political analyst, writer, reformer, farmer, churchman and citizen testifies eloquently to the excursive, prophetic aspect of his life.³

In sum, Hocking can safely be called a mystic according to his own criteria and somewhat oblique confession as well as on the basis of his teachings. Similarly, his reticence itself can be considered a mystical attribute.

Hocking indeed resisted the temptation to articulate a mystical ontology until long after the main lines of his general metaphysics were set, although there is ample evidence that he had long studied the mystic's metaphysics both under Royce and on his own. Further, when he did take up the metaphysics of mysticism, he did not hesitate to disagree or

¹Rouner, WHE 2.
²Cf. Rouner, PRCWC 7.
³Hocking's diverse involvements in the world are reflected in the variety of the 294 items in Richard Gilman's bibliography, of which roughly 56 concern political issues, 71 religion and the philosophy of religion, 131 other aspects of philosophy, law and mathematics, with 36 others dealing with science, education, architecture, farming and similar interests.
to correct or even to amend when he saw fit.¹ As we have seen, Hocking espoused a tentative pluralism, if also one which was in many respects still too committed to a rationalistic vision of the cosmos. Unlike James, Hocking seems discontent with the prospect of real loss in the evolution of the universe. There is little of the shadow of tragedy in his writings that haunts the pages of Whitehead's metaphysics, however. Like the mystics about whom he wrote, Hocking was in the final analysis incurably optimistic. But nowhere does he indicate that he understood his "ordinary" mysticism to differ in kind from that of the classical mystics he so long studied and undertook to interpret. I submit that however reticent his admission, Hocking conceived of his own religious experience in terms of continuity with the mystical tradition of the West. The often remarkable concurrence between his account of the tenets of mystical teachings and the components of mystical experience with those of other serious students of mysticism indicates that in this estimation of his place in religious history, Hocking was not in error.²

Thus, however one wishes further to distinguish the meaning of the term "mystical" with respect to Hocking's experience, it can safely be concluded that Hocking was a mys-

¹ Cf. TP 275 - 76, "SSP" 397 - 98.

² Cf. in this regard the works cited by Bertrand Russell, Evelyn Underhill, Lawrence LeShan, Georgia Harkness and Margaret Lewis Furse.
tic in his own eyes and in terms of his conception of the classical Western tradition, and also that his mysticism was not idiosyncratic, as Rouner implies.
II. HOCKING AND HIS CRITICS

In the later years of Hocking's long career, critical estimation of his interpretation of religious experience and mysticism tended to be benign and favorable. However, in the years immediately following publication of The Meaning of God in Human Experience, critical reaction was less positive, much of it founded upon what was held to be Hocking's continuation of a form of idealism growing rapidly more unfashionable in American philosophical circles.

Ralph Barton Perry's caustic review of Hocking's major work, largely a critique of his alleged identification of the real and the ideal, first attacked the conception of God as the Other Knower of our common World. Content, however, merely to characterize as "obscure" the connections by which Hocking achieved the transition between "other mind" and Other Mind, Perry passed on to accuse Hocking of promoting a conception of God having the "social value of a com-

panion in misery."¹ As for the report of the mystical consciousness, Perry simply dismissed the whole business as an experience of subjective conviction. Further, "The conviction itself is more simply accounted for [as a psychological reaction] than by the reality of the object which it reports."² In its immediacy, the mystical experience remained for Perry equivocal and variable.

Hocking did not reply formally to Perry's article, as far as I know.³ He would no doubt have acknowledged his colleague's accurate perception of his passage beyond James's reluctant concession of ontological objectivity to the mystics' report, appealing to their own metaphysical reticence but also noting their widespread empirical consensus on the minima of mystical theory: God is and God is One. More importantly, he might have simply stated that Perry missed the whole point of his definition of religion as the anticipation of attainment -- a present awareness and even tentative possession of what would be fully achieved only at the telos and therefore a goal to be striven for and a ground for hope, not for supine acquiescence in present evils.


¹Perry, art. cit., p. 386. ²Ibid., pp. 388f.
³Cf. however "INR" 587 - 88.
While extreme in several respects, Perry's reaction nevertheless touched upon a problem other critics would note and which I believe Hocking never satisfactorily resolved. It can be granted that all experience is intentional, even metaphysically so: ideas are of something other than themselves, ultimately of Being. But as the study of illusions, delusions and dreams has shown, the actuality of the objects of ideas is not guaranteed by merely entertaining their ideas. Clarity is not immediacy.

To be sure, Hocking frequently acknowledged the force of the realist's objection. Further, his elevation of the ontological argument to the status of a special case shows that he was fully alive to the dangers inherent in attempting to infer existence from abstracted mental aspects of experience. However, if the nuclear I-It-Thou triad as Hocking expounded it accurately represents the structure of human experience, then the direct concepts of Self, of other Self or "Thou," of the World as a whole and of God as the Field of experience are always rooted in present experience and therefore intentionally objective. But such ideas or concepts, when adverted to as concepts, that is, when the object of reflexive consciousness, are always more or less inadequate, especially in the case of the Whole and of God. Further, Hocking's insistence that we can be more certain in experience that God is than what he is suggests that essence and
existence can be differentially intuited whether ontologically united or not and that, moreover, existence has an empirical priority at least with regard to the knowledge of God if not also to that of the Self, other selves and the World.¹

The cognitive distance introduced by reflexion, whereby direct concepts (what we think with: the God-idea, the whole-idea, etc.) are made the content or object of other concepts (what we think of: the idea of God, the Whole, etc.), occasions the inadequacy that renders conceptual knowledge of one's Self, Others, the World and God always provisional, corrigible and uncertain. In this respect, the mystical discipline of suppressing conceptual thought can be seen as an attempt to enhance the direct immediacy of the God-concept, Self-concept and Whole-concept co-present as the structural components of consciousness itself. The distinctively religious character of meditation and its unitive consummation is constituted by our awareness, however peripheral, that God is the Field uniting I-It-Thou(s) and simultaneously the Thou grounding and addressing us through that relation. Meditation is thus functionally an effort to raise the God-concept (or even the Self-concept or Whole-concept) to fullest consciousness without thinking reflexively about "God," that is, employing a concept of God.

If this extrapolation of Hocking's teaching on medi-

¹Cf. "ORE" 60–62.
tation is correct, then the problem of interpretation as an extrinsic factor in experience is partially solved. For the culturally determined concepts of God to which the mystic sometimes resorts in attempting to articulate his experience are precisely those he attempts to suspend in repressing conceptual reflection. This allows for originality both in the experience itself and also in subsequent reflection, as the socially-funded concepts of God are compared to the God-concept raised to fuller consciousness by the meditative process. Conversely, of course, the mystic can also evaluate his God-concept in terms of the accepted doctrine of God in his culture or religious tradition. But it does not follow that the mystic's previously-held cultural concept is fully determinative of his articulation of his God-concept. And thus the interpretive process includes a "free" dimension -- the God-concept itself as a factor in experience which exercises a critical function in later reflection. Further, it is important to note that for Hocking this operational God-concept is God as cognitively present to the mystic in the very structure of consciousness itself. This, I believe, is the basis for Hocking's original treatment of the ontological argument.

Hocking's insistence on the necessarily empirical character of our knowledge of God was taken up in a more stringent if less acrimonious critique by a Yale colleague,
Douglas C. Macintosh. Macintosh more fully appreciated Hocking's religious realism. He took issue, however, with his adherence to an idealistic perspective and his epistemological intuitionism, particularly with respect to the "most primitive and fundamental of all intuitions, the intuition of the whole... the essential thing, it is claimed, in the religious experience of the mystic."¹ For Macintosh the idea of the Whole lent no more force to the reality of the Whole than it did to the equally likely mystical claim that "reality" is illusory. Here Macintosh taxed Hocking for not taking his principle of empirical duality further:

There is equal justification for the view that the relative unreality or merely ideal existence of the physical and the finite, and the absolute perfection and timelessness and practically undifferentiated divinity of the Whole, together with other features of absolute idealism which seem to be confirmed by the mystical experience, are mistaken applications to the object of what is simply a transient modification of the subject.²

A still more fundamental criticism dealt with Hocking's supposedly too-exclusive identification of religious experience with the mystical phase of that experience. This, Macintosh averred, underplayed the all-important role of morality in "practical religion": "Indeed our contention would be that, so far from the distinctly mystical experience being the only phase of religious experience, it is not

¹Macintosh, art. cit., p. 39.
²Ibid., p. 40.
even its primary phase." ¹ Thus Macintosh concluded that the ontological argument can have any force only in so far as it is buttressed fore and aft by "practical religion," not merely by a mystical consciousness. ²

In his large volume, The Problem of Knowledge, which incorporated much of the preceding article, Macintosh added a critique of Hocking's doctrine of social experience -- the immediate awareness of another Self (other mind) through sharing common objects. ³ While sufficiently penetrating to have earned Hocking's later concession of inadequacy regarding the spatial metaphor in the celebrated passage of his magnum opus, ⁴ Macintosh's refutation was based on the mistaken assumption that Hocking's argument rested on "an immediate inner experience of other mind" in the sense of a non-mediated intuition of another Self. In the experience of loving, there was indeed for Hocking a direct intuition of the "substance" or "idea" of a person, but one not only mediated by objects, but as ineffable as the God-concept or one's own Self-concept. ⁵ Nevertheless, both in his magnum opus and

¹ Ibid., p. 41.
² Ibid., p. 45.
⁴ In a letter to D.S. Robinson almost fifty years later Hocking wrote in this regard that "The spatial language of my report in The Meaning of God is both inadequate and misleading. Yet it is hard to find an equivalent for the metaphorical 'within.' Whitehead finds the same difficulty...." (D. S. Robinson, op. cit., p. 168.)
⁵ Cf. MGHE 432ff.
elsewhere Hocking explicitly denied the possibility of an immediate and meaningful experience of another mind apart from the contents of that mind.\(^1\) He later went on to insist, "Human beings can approach each other only by way of third objects."\(^2\)

Although Macintosh's criticisms were based solely on Hocking's major work, his trenchent observations retain something of their force even considering Hocking's later clarifications. For instance, while in subsequent works Hocking stressed the moral aspects of mysticism, it is nevertheless true that he tended to grant mysticism a place of importance over other aspects of religion which needed to be carefully established rather than presumed. But it should be clear from the preceding analysis that Hocking did not simply equate religion and mysticism nor did he claim mysticism to be the "primary phase" of religion.

Second, although Macintosh's discussion of Hocking's nascent doctrine of intersubjectivity was off-center regarding an imputed "inner experience" of another mind, he nevertheless hit upon a fundamental weakness in Hocking's theory of immediate social (i.e., intersubjective) experience, especially as grounds for the validity of the ontological argument. As we have noted elsewhere, Hocking's case for the so-

\(^1\) Cf. MGHE 256 - 69 and "MGIM" 453, 459.

\(^2\) LRWF 33. Cf. also 34, 227 and "MGIM" 451.
cial character of experience (and against solipsism) is summarized in his claim that the "Idea of a social experience would not be possible unless such an experience were actual."¹ But it is not the same thing to say that "In any sense in which I can imagine, or think, or conceive an experience of Other mind [sic], in that same sense I have an experience of Other Mind, apart from which I should have no such idea."² While it might obtain that my idea of other mind rests upon the presence to my mind of Other Mind, that does not give me the factual experience of other mind(s). Only concrete, particular encounters can do that, as Hocking himself admitted.³ The capacity for all social experience may well be founded upon the continuous presence of God as Other Mind (thus also providing the ground for the ontological argument as an empirical proof for the existence of God); but actual social experience can only be accounted for in terms of itself. In this respect Whitehead's apodictic "Hang it all! Here we are: we don't go behind that, we begin with it...." is possibly a more honest admission of the antecedent improbability of solipsism than an appeal to Hegel's universal spirit necessarily clothing itself with particulars.⁴ In life, as

¹ MGHE 274. Cf. 273: "If, then, experience ever becomes social, it has, in more rarefied condition, always been so; and hence is, in the same fundamental sense, continuously so."

² Ibid., emphasis added. Cf. also p. 282.

³ Cf. MGHE 279, "MGIM" 459.

⁴ On Whitehead's remark, cf. CWC 27, TP 309, "MGIM" 451f.
Hocking once said, immediate experience is always better than proof. But as a philosopher, Hocking necessarily concerned himself with proof, that is, with the reasons why solipsism is antecedently improbable. He discovered them, I believe, by going "behind" experience and articulating the primordial intersubjectivity of nuclear experience. In this, following Marcel, Hocking was perhaps first effectively to refute subjective idealism.

Thus, intersubjectivity in the sense of actual human I-Thou encounters is both an achievement and a condition. Human experience is antecedently intersubjective radically and necessarily inasmuch as it is a "dialogue with God" as a unique Thou. In so far as nuclear experience is also a Self-awareness and an awareness of the World as a whole (It), the possibility of particular experiences of others is a real one. But their actual presence, unlike that of God, the Self and the World-as-a-whole is neither assured nor continuous. It is, in short, contingent. Human intersubjectivity presupposes not only the existence of the "Thou's" but also immediacy. The vocative case is a response to a perceived presence.

Hocking, of course, realized that even the infant's first experience was social, if not precisely intersubjective in any conscious sense. He was intent on uncovering the meta-

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1 Cf. MIHE 213 - 14, cited above, p. 7.
physical ground of that sociality, which, in the form of the mystical I-Thou encounter of nuclear experience, I believe he did. But a ground need not be a cause. It may well be a condition for the possibility of any event in particular, and so, I believe, is the mystical dialogue in nuclear experience. But the other condition necessary for the actuality of social and intersubjective experience is the realistic premise that other selves in fact exist independently of my own mind. As we have seen, Hocking did adopt this realistic perspective. For him, the transition from the possibility to the actuality of particular intersubjective experience is achieved just as is that regarding any other particular experience--by the course of experience itself as a reciprocally active and receptive meeting of the Self with the World which makes differences.

As might be expected, one of the strongest attacks on Hocking's treatment of mysticism came from James H. Leuba, to whose reductionistic interpretations Hocking had taken continuous exception from his earliest writings on the subject. In his lengthy book, The Psychology of Religious Mysticism, which incorporated most of the preceding article on the immediate apprehension of God according to James and Hocking, Leuba, like Perry, centered his major objection on Hocking's willingness to accept the mystic's interpretation of his experience as indicative of the reality of the object
encountered. To account for the mystical experience in terms of an encounter with God was for Leuba, moreover, a regression to "causal thinking." For Leuba, as for Perry, the explanation was far simpler: the interpretations of the mystics "are unavoidable products of the psychological condition in which an entranced person finds himself." 2

Curiously, Leuba never seemed to perceive the irony of prohibiting the mystic from engaging in causal explanation while doing so himself. It should be observed, however, that nowhere did Hocking speak of "causality" with regard to the mystic's claim of an immediate experience of God, nor did he countenance the inevitability of inference. Rather, Hocking spoke of "recognition" or "realization," further requiring that interpretation be included structurally within experience itself as the correlate of mediation -- at least as I read him. The "occasions" of mystical experience are the elements of experience itself: Self-awareness, the presence of natural and social agencies and the Field of experience.

Hocking's teaching on mysticism emerged relatively

1Leuba, art. cit., p. 710. In his book, Leuba softened his charge to one of confusing "an immediately given and invulnerable revelation of the nature of God" with an inference imported from previously accepted beliefs. (Cf. p. 312.)

2Leuba, art. cit., p. 711. In his book, Leuba was more specific: "many of the curious phenomena to which most great mystics owe in great part their fame or notoriety are due to perturbations of the sex function consequent upon its repression." (Op. cit., pp. 119 - 20.)
intact from these critical encounters, especially to the extent that he was able to develop his doctrine in later works. But it is important to note that in regard to his articulation of mysticism, none of his strongest critics faulted him for misrepresenting its character as traditionally received, however they evaluated it themselves. Most of them objected, rather, to his use of mysticism to bolster the sagging theses of idealism. Leuba in fact regretted Hocking's failure to reconceive mysticism according to the reductionist model of the psychologist. Much later, a critic with the advantage of thirty years more of Hocking's writings would tax him, curiously, not so much for misrepresentation as underrepresentation: "It may be remarked that Hocking limits himself to one type of 'valid' mysticism, which is activistic, and moralistic." In fact, while Hocking included references to over twenty classical mystics in his magnum opus alone,

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1In 1915, Hocking's interpretation of the ontological argument was subjected to a brief criticism by John E. Russell, which need not occupy us here. ("Professor Hocking's Argument from Experience," Journal of Philosophy, 12 [Oct. 14, 1915], pp. 68 - 71.)

2Leuba, op. cit., pp. 316 - 17.

3James A. Martin, Jr., Empirical Philosophies of Religion (Morningside Heights, N.Y.: King's Crown Press, 1945), p. 15. Martin further comments, "If one seeks an empirical grounding for a philosophical or religious concept, it is of dubious value to appeal to a selected type of experience, since the selection itself indicates that the validity of the experience is bound up with the validity of its interpretative concepts." (Ibid., cf. also p. 27.)
the majority of citations are from the writings of St. Teresa, Tauler, Eckhart and Madame Guyon. Further, although Martin's evaluation of Hocking's selectivity is perhaps exaggerated, Hocking did not attempt or at least publish a comparative survey of the mystics' teachings on either practice or theory. Moreover, the sources Hocking drew from were also cited by almost all contemporary students of mysticism from the French alienists to Leuba. Thus, while somewhat diverse, the range of variation among these classical representatives is not as great nor as illustrative of the nature of mystical experience concretely as it would have been had Hocking taken a wider sample, as James had done.

However, adverting to the virtual unanimity of the mystics concerning practice and theory, Hocking went beyond James' tentative proposals and disregarded both James' and Royce's disclaimers concerning the metaphysical validity of the mystics' reports. As more recent research suggests, Hocking was on surer ground methodologically and philosophically than his critics were able to concede. In fact, however, few if any of his critics faulted him for that, preferring to fall back on the antecedent improbability of his being correct in view of his adherence to the tenets of idealism.

1Cf. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, op. cit., and the works cited by LeShan, Capra and Furse.
III. MYSTICISM RECONCEIVED: HOCKING AND THE CLASSICAL CONCEPT

The failure of even his sternest critics to tax Hocking for distorting the meaning of mysticism strongly suggests that Rouner's disjunction of Hocking's mysticism from classical mysticism is ill-founded. Having thus surveyed the criticisms of his contemporaries, we may pursue this line of inquiry further by a survey of the classical tradition itself.

1. Classical Western Mysticism

The comprehensive and critical study of Western mysticism hardly antedates the late nineteenth century, as I pointed out in the Introduction. But to his classic Christian Mysticism (1899), Dean Inge was able to append a list of twenty-six lengthy definitions or descriptions of mysticism emanating from that century alone—of which only Inge's need concern us here:

Now it will be found that these men of acknowledged and pre-eminent saintliness agree very closely in what they tell us about God. They tell us that they have arrived gradually at an unshakable conviction, not based on inference but on immediate experience, that God is a Spirit with whom the human spirit can hold intercourse; that in Him meet all that they can imagine of goodness, truth, and beauty; that they can see His footprints everywhere in nature, and feel His presence within them as the very life of their life, so that in proportion as they come to themselves they come to Him.¹

¹Inge, op. cit., p. 325.
William James, it is noteworthy to recall, declined to define mysticism, but characterized it by its four "marks" of ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity.\(^1\) However, he did associate religious mysticism with what he called a "sudden realization of the immediate presence of God."\(^2\) Similarly, a contemporary and life-long student of mysticism, Rufus Jones -- a Quaker and himself a mystic\(^3\) -- stated in his *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909) that

I shall use the word mysticism to express the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and immediate consciousness of the divine presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense and living stage.\(^4\)

In her monumental work, *Mysticism* (1910), Evelyn Underhill offered the following observations:

I understand it to be the expression of the innate tendency of the human spirit towards complete harmony with the transcendental order; whatever be the theological

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\(^1\)James, op. cit., pp. 292 - 93.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 302.


\(^4\)Rufus Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970 ed.), p. xv. Cf. also his *Some Exponents of Mystical Religion* (London: Epworth Press, 1930), pp. 31 - 32: Mysticism "is a form of religion that builds primarily on consciousness of acquaintance with God through direct and immediate experience of Him, instead of on logical and forensic arguments about Him, or on scribal interpretation of ancient records that tell of Him." (Emphasis added.)
formula under which that order is understood. This tendency, in great mystics, gradually captures the whole field of consciousness; it dominates their life, and, in the experience called "mystic union," attains its end.\(^1\)

Among Catholic writers, Dom Cuthbert Butler, in his *Western Mysticism* (1922) wrote,

the mystics' claim is expressed by Christian mystics as "the experimental perception of God's Presence and Being," and especially "union with God" -- a union, that is, not merely psychological, in conforming the will to God's will, but, it may be said, ontological \([,]\) of the soul with God, spirit with Spirit. And they declare that the experience is a momentary foretaste of the bliss of heaven.\(^2\)

Similarly, Fr. Joseph Maréchal, in his *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics* (1927), quotes with approval the opinion of his fellow Jesuit of a generation before, Auguste Poulain, that mystical states represent "an experimental intellectual knowledge of this presence [of God]."\(^3\)

\(^1\)Underhill, op. cit., p. xiv. Later she described mysticism as "that organic process which involves the perfect consummation of the Love of God: the achievement here and now of the immortal heritage of man. Or, if you like it better -- for this means exactly the same thing -- it is the art of establishing his conscious relation with the Absolute." (Ibid., p. 81. Cf. also pp. 68, 72 and passim.) In *Practical Mysticism* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1915), she wrote, "Mysticism is the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or less degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment." (p. 3.)


\(^3\)Maréchal, op. cit., p. 102, citing Poulain, The Graces of Interior Prayer (1912 ed., p. 64). He added, "This is, in truth, the fundamental mystical phenomenon -- the di-
In 1932, the eminent philosopher and theologian, Jacques Maritain, described mystical experience as

an experiential knowledge of the deep things of God, or a suffering of divine things, an experience which leads the soul through a series of states or transformations until within the very depths of itself it feels the touch of divinity and "experiences the life of God."\(^1\)

A more recent writer, Dom Illtyd Trethowan, describes mysticism as "an awareness of God which, although mediated by the finite, is nevertheless in itself a direct knowledge of him, a contact with him."\(^2\)

From this brief survey of representative authorities on mysticism, there is no evident reason to conclude that any fundamental disparity exists between Hocking's concept and the so-called "classical" concept as articulated within the Catholic and Protestant traditions. For, as we have seen, Hocking also held that mystical experience was an immediate intuition or perception of God's presence (Inge, James, Jones, Butler, Poulain, Maréchal) mediated by the natural and social World (Inge, Trethowan), including among other characteristics ineffability, noetic content, transiency, and passivity (James) and marked by an awareness of goodness, truth and beauty (Inge), an unshakable conviction (Inge) tending toward personal union with God through a progressive rect feeling of God's presence, or the intuition of God as present." (Ibid.)

\(^1\)Maritain, op. cit., p. 247.

\(^2\)Trethowan, op. cit., p. ix.
transformation of experience (Underhill, Butler, Maritain).

Many of Hocking's other salient teachings also find support among these and other writers, both traditional and recent. Of these, it is illuminating to note the widespread agreement that the essential experience of the mystics is not to be identified in itself with the extraordinary or even "supernatural" phenomena that sometimes accompany the higher forms of mystical union. ¹ Mystical experience, as we shall note again, is the common capacity of everyman according to the classical tradition as well as Hocking.

2. The Recovery of the Classical Concept of Mysticism

Rather than departing from the classical concept of Western mysticism, I believe that by emphasizing the continuity of the mystical life with religious life in its ordinary manifestations, especially that of worship, Hocking in fact

recovered a tradition common to the Christian world from the third through the sixteenth centuries.

After the controversies and condemnations surrounding Quietism at the end of the seventeenth century, this ancient concept had been severely modified as Catholic spiritual theologians began to distinguish sharply between the "ordinary" life of the Christian and the "extraordinary" stages of mystical experience with its special graces, odd phenomena, etc.  

Similarly, under Calvinist and later Lutheran influence, Protestant theologians had already all but stifled the mystical element of religion in Germany, England and the Low Countries. Despite the protests of many great mystics and theologians, the tendency to reduce mysticism to the quaint, odd or pathological and thereby to the irrelevant periphery of ordinary life continued both to divide Catholic "ascetical" and "mystical" theology and also to pit Protestants against each other regarding mysticism versus prophecy well into the twentieth century. At that time, the

1Garrigou-Lagrange ironically summarizes the attitude of those authors who "thus distinguish[ed] a unitive life called 'ordinary,' the only one necessary, they say, to perfection, from a unitive life called 'extraordinary,' which according to them, is not even required for great sanctity. From this point of view, asceticism does not lead to mysticism, and the perfection, or 'ordinary' union, to which it leads, is normally an end and not a disposition to a more intimate and elevated union." (Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Perfection and Contemplation, op. cit., p. 28.)

work of both Catholic and Protestant scholars (and mystics) began to reverse the trend.

By emphasizing the continuity of religious and mystical experience, Hocking supported and (in 1912) even anticipated the arguments of Catholic theologians such as Garrigou-Lagrange. In some instances he went beyond them in recovering the authentic tradition of Christian mysticism, as in, for example, his insistence that human experience as a whole was at root mystical. For by this contention he returned to the pre-Enlightenment understanding of the progressive unity of the Christian life. He also regained the ancient Christian tradition of the Greek Fathers, namely that mystical refers to the quality of the whole Christian life in its rootedness in scripture, the liturgy and the "inner" experience of the Spirit of God.¹ This tradition has been preserved in an apparently unbroken continuity only in the Orthodox Church, which still recognizes the radical commonness of the mystical life. Writing in 1944, the theologian

¹Fr. Louis Bouyer, the liturgical historian and spiritual theologian, clearly affirmed this as the common teaching of the early Church: "The Christian texts, in fact, in which the word mystikòs is acquiring the particular religious and doctrinal meaning which it has never had before may be classed, roughly speaking, in three great groups: Biblical, liturgical and spiritual. The most ancient texts are found in the first category; those which have a liturgical character come later, and last of all appear those which belong most decidedly to the third group.... But -- and this is most important -- it is evident that nowhere can a clear boundary be drawn between these three different uses of the word. We pass from one to the other without any breach of
Vladimir Lossky noted that "If the mystical experience is a personal working out of the content of the common faith, theology is an expression, for the profit of all, of that which can be experienced by anyone."¹

Hocking can thus be said not only to have been in fundamental agreement with the ancient and classical Christian tradition, East and West, but to have recovered it to a large extent by departing from the later, reactionary conception. He did not deny the extraordinary aspects of ultimate mystical union with God. He did, however, deny that these aspects constituted either the whole or essence of mysticism. These were, rather, rooted for him in the common capacity of everyman -- not those only of the Christian faith if they in fact reached a climax in Christianity unequalled in many respects in other traditions, as Bergson would also conclude.²

3. The Social Dimension of Mysticism

As I noted before, I am unaware of any philosophical attempts prior to Hocking's to explicate the tendency of myst-


tical contemplation to express itself in action as an integral part of the structure of the process of mystical development itself, although the relationship between action and contemplation had long been part of the Christian tradition. In 1932, Bergson observed that Plotinus had actually disparaged action as "a weakening of contemplation." As a result, "mysticism in the absolute sense in which we have agreed to take the word, was never attained by Greek thought." He likewise claimed that Hindu and Buddhist religion, while achieving true mysticism, nevertheless did not achieve the complete mysticism of action, creation and love. For Bergson, the completion of the historical development of mysticism occurred only with the advent of Christianity, as was the case for Hocking.

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1 Hocking based his "principle of alternation" on the psychological research of Delacroix and Godfernaux. Evelyn Underhill also noted the presence of activity in the lives of mystics as a function of what she called "conation," but she did not attempt to develop the matter much further. (Cf. Mysticism, op. cit., pp. 46f., 67, 83.) For her, the five stages of mystical development were complete with union. And although the unitive life in fact leads to action (pp. 172ff.), Underhill did not account for this fact other than as an expression of the wholeness of Christian mysticism which, perhaps following Delacroix, she, too, found largely superior to non-Christian mysticism. (p. 172. Cf. also pp. 416, 436.)

2 Bergson, op. cit., p. 221, citing The Enneads, III, viii, 4.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid., p. 225.

5 Ibid., p. 227. Bergson noted here the work of Dela-
Bergson's position, while illuminating and in many respects strikingly parallel to Hocking's position in the Gifford Lectures and Living Religions and a World Faith, noted the fact of activity in the mystic's life but, like Underhill's, did not account for it by showing its necessary function in the mystic's development. A more recent writer, Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, also adverting to the constant tendency of the great mystics to express their vision in action, suggests a structural modification of the model of their development as proposed by Underhill, that is, sudden conversion, purification, illumination, the "dark night of the soul" and union.¹ To these Wapnick adds a sixth, a "return... to the requirements of social living," which, he claims, "constitutes the most important part of [the mystic's] path."²

In a passage highly reminiscent of Hocking's ascetical principle, Wapnick observes that croix and Underhill. The apparent source he gave for the mystics' activity was "their increased vitality" unleashed by the Christian belief in the efficacy of action and which "radiated an extraordinary energy, daring, power of conception and realization." (Ibid., pp. 227 - 28.) Their accomplishments in the field of action represented "the culminating point of the inner evolution of the great mystics." (Ibid., p. 228.) Paramount here were the functions of teaching and the creation of small groups of disciples whose survival and proliferation would eventually lead to a "radical transformation of mankind." (Ibid., pp. 233, 236.)


²Kenneth Wapnick, art. cit., p. 53.
The mystic now no longer finds his involvement with the world to be abhorrent, but, in fact, seems to welcome the opportunity to move in the social world he had abandoned. This seeming paradox becomes understandable when one considers that it was not the world the mystic was renouncing, but merely his attachments and needs relating to it, which precluded the development of his personal, asocial experience. Once he was able to abandon these dependent, social needs, and felt freed of the pull of the social world, he experienced the freedom to live within society in conjunction with his inner strivings, rather than experiencing society's customs and institutions as obstacles to his self-fulfillment.¹

On the basis of clinical research as well as a comparative study of the mystics, particularly of St. Teresa, Wapnick observes that their return to the world constitutes the ultimate purpose of withdrawal. But in order to return to the demanding world of social action, the mystic must first acquire the ability to face the prior demands of "inner" experience:

The entire mystic path may be understood to be a strengthening process whereby the mystic gradually develops the "muscles" to withstand the experiences of this "inner world." It is this strengthening that is responsible for the long periods of suffering and fallowness that are often the mystic's fate, as well as the mystic's faith in the positive outcome of his experience.²

The mystical path, from Wapnick's perspective, is a psychological strategem for ensuring effective presence in the social world. What endows mysticism with the ability to

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., p. 63.
achieve personal integration of "inner" and "outer" experience is its structured, gradual approach to the expansion of consciousness involved "until its utmost depth is reached, what [the mystic] usually refers to as the Self or God, wherein he feels at one with the universe."¹

Wapnick's emphasis on the requirement of social integration for full human life, an integration which mysticism pre-eminently facilitates, supports Hocking's similar contention. Nonetheless his account falls short of Hocking's in that it lacks reference both to the mystic's own motivation for his return to society and also to the reciprocal character of all human operations which provides the dynamism of processive advancement. Wapnick also fails to note the actual contributions distinctive of the mystic's return to the world, giving the impression that mysticism is functionally a religious form of preventive psychotherapy evolved to promote social adjustment, whereas in fact the mystic often returns to society as a reformer and revolutionary, not merely a more adequately adjusted wheel in the social machinery.

Another recent discussion of the social dimension of mystical development can be found in William Johnston's study of meditation and mysticism, Silent Music. Even more than Underhill, Bergson and Wapnick, Johnston notes the inte-

¹Ibid.
gral character of social activity in the course of mystical development based on twelfth century Chinese Buddhist texts and the writings of St. Teresa. He does not, however, provide an explanation of the phenomena in terms of the structure of mystical development other than, as for Underhill, the increased compassion of the mystic as a result of his unitive vision. Similarly, W. T. Stace, in his study Mysticism and Philosophy, devotes several pages to a consideration of the ethical elements in mysticism. But although he adverts to the active character of the mystic's response to his awareness of the oneness of all and repeats the judgment that Christian mysticism appears superior in this regard to other forms, he, too, fails to account for the active phase of mystical development in terms of the structure of that process itself in its social context.

Thus while adducible in support of Hocking's articulation of the integral character of action within the overall development of the mystic, these studies generally lack either Hocking's clearly expressed accounting for the return to the world in terms of the structure of experience or of the motivational elements such as love and the desire for justice as well as the need to communicate his vision which


impel the mystic to return to the World.

In my opinion, Hocking's association of alternation with motivation was consequent on his insight into the social character of mysticism, in the context of which the mystic's return to the World can be seen to be part of the dynamic structure of social development itself. In contrast, all the above-mentioned theories were proposed from the viewpoint of individual development only, without taking into consideration the social aspect of mysticism both historically and contemporaneously. Finally, while each of the interpretations we have considered affirms the social effects of mysticism, none includes the antecedent social aspect of mystical experience, the intersubjective relation of the Self and God in the depths of all human experience.¹

4. Mysticism and Prophecy

Much as Hocking's case for the social character of mysticism, at least in its manifest expression, finds support from other and more recent studies, so also his dialectical identification of prophecy and mysticism as aspects of ¹

¹Stace acknowledges that to assert that "mysticism is ultimately the source and essence of all religion" would require maintaining that "mystical experience is latent in all men but is in most men submerged below the surface of consciousness." (Mysticism and Philosophy, op. cit., p. 343.) He declines, however, to assert more than a close "association" between religion and mysticism, thus declining in effect to elaborate and defend the hypothesis. (Cf. also Underhill, Mysticis, op. cit., p. 68.)
a unified process can be supported by an appeal to the understanding of prophecy on the part of many modern biblical scholars.

Hocking himself first defined the prophetic consciousness in terms of its historical and active character:

I mean the knowledge that this act of mine which I now utter is to succeed and hold its place in history. It is an assurance of the future and of all time as determined by my own individual will, embodied in my present action.¹

The prophetic consciousness is realized, however, in the felt presence of God.² Thus the prophet is the mystic in action: "The prophet is but the mystic in control of the forces of history, declaring their necessary outcome: the mystic in action is the prophet."³

Among modern scripture scholars, several are in more or less evident agreement with this view. B. Napier, for instance, adverts to the mystical dimension of prophecy in discussing the prophet's title of seer:

prophet and seer, by either signation, were understood [by the Hebrews] as exercising in common the function of

¹MGHE 503.
²Cf. MGHE 508.
³MGHE 511. Hocking added, characteristically, "In the prophet, the cognitive certainty of the mystic becomes historic and particular; and this is the necessary destiny of that certainty: mystic experience must complete itself in the prophetic consciousness." (Ibid.)
'seeing,' -- i.e., apprehending that which is not normally accessible and 'speaking forth,' proclaiming, that which is thus seen and apprehended.... His function, prophethism, is never reception alone, but reception-articulation.1

In a passage recalling Hocking's concept of Destiny, J. Lindblom affirms that

a prophet may be characterized as a person who, because he is conscious of having been specially chosen and called, feels forced to perform actions and proclaim ideas which, in a mental state of intense inspiration or real ecstasy, have been indicated to him in the form of divine revelations.2

H. H. Rowley defines a prophet not only as "a man who knew God in the immediacy of experience," and felt "an inescapable constraint to utter what he was profoundly convinced was the word of God," but also was "a true prophet and the measure of his experience was the measure of his receptiveness and his response."3

John L. McKenzie even more explicitly recognizes the mystical aspect of prophecy:

The only satisfactory parallel to the prophetic experience is the phenomenon of mysticism as described by writers like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and


others. They affirm that the immediate experience of God is ineffable; like the prophets, they must employ imagery and symbolism to describe it, with explicit warnings that these are used. They describe it as a transforming experience which moves one to speech and action beyond one's expected capacities. It grants them a profound insight not only into divine reality but into the human scene. Thus the prophetic experience is such a mystical immediate experience of the reality and presence of God. The prophets disclose the nature and character of the God so experienced, and they state the implications of the divine nature and character for human thought and action.¹

Hocking's argument for the dynamic and intrinsic connection between mystical and prophetic experience thus finds solid support among outstanding Protestant and Catholic biblical scholars. Not all contemporary writers on mysticism are of this mind, however.

In sharp contrast to the scripture scholars, the eminent philosopher of religion, Ninian Smart, still maintains a radical division between mysticism and prophecy. In his article "Interpretation and Mystical Experience," he writes, for instance,

mysticism is not prophetism, and can be distinguished from devotionalism or bhakti religion (though mysticism often intermingles with these forms of religious life and experience). I would propose that the following are not mystics in the relevant sense in which the Buddha and the others are mystics: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Muhammad, Rāmānuja, Nichiren and Calvin.²


²Smart, art. cit., p. 75.
Similarly, in his article on mysticism in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Smart reiterates his position: "there is quite a difference between mystical experience and prophetic and, more generally, numinous experience, but it is not easy to bring out this phenomenological fact in a short definition."¹

Whereas in the former article, Smart adduces no reason for his sundering of mysticism and prophecy, he indicates in the encyclopedia that although the experiences of Old Testament prophets, those of Muhammad, and the theophany described in the Bhagavad-Gītā [can be included under certain definitions²] these differ so markedly from the interior illumination of such figures as Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, Śaṅkara, and the Buddha that it is misleading to bracket the two kinds of experience.³

Herein lies one clue to Smart's insistence on the difference between mysticism and prophecy. For him, as for Russell, Scharfstein and others, mysticism is essentially an "interior" event, a subjective experience having its origin and term within the mystic's consciousness. In his earlier article, Smart wrote,

For the purpose of this article, I shall treat mysticism as primarily consisting in an interior or introvertive

¹ Smart, ed. cit., Vol. 5, p. 420.

² For instance, that of Sidney Spencer: "What is characteristic of the mystics is the claim which they make to an immediate contact with the transcendent." (Ibid., p. 9.)

³ Ibid.
quest, culminating in certain interior experiences which are not described in terms of sense-experience or of mental images, etc.¹

In Reasons and Faiths, Smart likewise espouses an operational description of mystical experience.² In The Religious Experience of Mankind, however, although he avoids exact definitions of either mysticism or prophecy, he clearly indicates the reasons for his disjunction between them:

First, the mystic looks within, into his own soul and beyond. In this imageless state he experiences something ineffable and blissful. But the prophet, such as Isaiah, has a vision that seems exterior to himself.... Second, mysticism can occur... in a context where there is no concept of a Creator God and where the experience is not brought directly in relationship to, or interpreted as, an experience of any deity or numinous being. But it is nonsense to try and conceive of a prophetic experience which does not involve such a concept. Of course, mystics often find in their own experience a strong intimation of the divine presence operating inwardly. But this is not universal.

Third, the language of the prophet, and especially of the prophets of the Hebrew tradition, is strongly personal, even anthropomorphic... while contemplative language is frequently impersonal....

Fourth, the Jewish prophets taught a way of life

¹Smart, art. cit., p. 75.

²"Let us say that a mystical experience is one which is reported by a class of persons generally referred to as 'mystics' -- such as Eckhart, St. John of the Cross, Plotinus, the Buddha, Sankara, and so on. Such men are characterized by spirituality and asceticism and pursue a certain method." (Reasons and Faiths, op. cit., p. 55.) He adds, however, "For a most important characteristic, one which we may regard for the purposes of linguistic legislation as the defining characteristic, of the mystic is that he undertakes a certain sort of mystical discipline." (Ibid.) The evident circularity of his definitions may present no linguistic problem, but it remains unclear what warrants calling a discipline "mystical" or a class of persons "mystics."
that was powerfully dynamic and activist; typically, though not universally, the mystic aims at stilling activity.¹

While interesting, these characterizations hardly provide solid grounds for a radical disconnection of prophecy and mysticism. First, we have little or no evidence about the interior states of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Muhammad or other prophets with which to form a true comparison. We even lack such information about most of the mystics. Further, the mystics in fact often report visions or other experiences which indicate realities "exterior" to themselves. Moreover, whereas it is possible to grant that not all mystical experience involves explicit theism, this need mean no more than that the unavailability of appropriate interpretive schemata by which the religious character of the mystical experience can be recognized impedes not only that recognition but even the expression of that experience in activity. But in fact most of the great mystics were religious figures per excellence. They were also effective agents of social change, as pointed out by Hocking, Underhill, Bergson and others— not perhaps universally, as Bergson noted of Plotinus, but at least in the West, typically. Mystical language, in addition, while sometimes impersonal, is, as Hocking and others have amply shown, more frequently personal, especially with regard to

Almost a point-by-point refutation of the theses this dissertation concerns, Smart's treatment of mystical experience as a wholly "inner" event betrays an inadequate conception not only of mysticism but also of experience. He fails, further, to place mystical experience(s) in the context of the mystic's life as a whole, socially and in an historical perspective, thus isolating particular episodes as "mystical" while ignoring their antecedent conditions and their effects. The disjunction Smart proposes between mystical "stillness" and prophetic activism arises out of this selective inattention to development.

Thus, Smart's separation of mysticism and prophecy does not appear to be well-founded. It clearly departs in significant respects from the views of many outstanding biblical authorities as well as students of mysticism. The reason possibly lies in Smart's covert adherence, like that of Rouner, to a concept of mysticism tainted by reaction. It is possible, however, to grant to Smart that mysticism and "prophetism" are conceptually distinct, although in actual experience, especially when viewed developmentally, they are not only associated (as Stace might allow) or intermingled (as he admits), but are conjoined as internally related moments in a unified process, prophetic activity being the natural outgrowth of mystical receptivity as McKenzie insists and Hocking consistently maintained.¹

¹In her otherwise excellent study, Margaret Lewis
5. The Elements and Structure of Mystical Experience

Despite the widespread agreement Hocking claimed to exist among mystics regarding practice and theory, the study of mysticism has yet to produce an extensive consensus among investigators as to what those areas of agreement are, although various schools of thought exist, as Staal has shown. Rather than attempting a detailed résumé of various points of agreement and disagreement between Hocking and other writers, some of whom were admittedly influenced by him, I shall simply note agreement with respect to several major features of Hocking's teaching.

We have already examined in some detail the social and prophetic characteristics of mysticism as presented by Hocking in view of more recent studies and have noted in passing a tendency toward affirming that at least in principle all are possessed of the capacity for mystical experience.

Furse similarly overlooks the intrinsic connection between mysticism and action, despite her reliance on some of Hocking's writings. Cf. Furse, Mysticism, op. cit., pp. 13, 142f.

1Staal, op. cit., pp. 68 - 122.

2E.g., Bennett, Wieman, Urban and Hartshorne.

Other topical areas in which recent writers concur with Hocking include the metaphysical and theological intentionality of mystical experience, mediation as a factor in all experience, the ordinary as opposed to an "extraordinary" character of true mysticism, and the differential certitude of the mystic regarding the perceived existence and essence of God. The practical aspects of mysticism, especially the function of the "negative path" in renunciation and meditation has recently been subjected to examination in regard to dishabitation (or "deautomatization") by several psychological writers. The dynamic explicitation of the latent capacity for mystical experience into manifest and theologically expressive forms has been noted by Urban, who acknowledges


in this respect his debt to von Hügel, Underhill and Jones.¹ Buber, of course, developed a comprehensive account of the I-Thou relationship(s) available to human persons in terms similar to those elaborated by Hocking.² Likewise, the concept of intersubjectivity, especially as developed by Gabriel Marcel, not only bears a resemblance to but has its origins at least partially in Hocking's metaphysics of experience.³ Hartshorne's social theory of reality was also influenced by Hocking, if less openly acknowledged as such.⁴

The theoretical aspects of mysticism, specifically the principles that All is One, that the way to union with God is by non-conceptual knowledge and love, and that opposites are reconciled but not abolished in the One, are found in many writers in various combinations and permutations.⁵ Other elements articulated by Hocking which find contemporary support include the "dim" awareness of God always present in experi-

¹ Urban, op. cit., pp. 434ff. Urban makes no mention of Hocking in his chapter on mysticism.

² Martin Buber, I and Thou (1923), Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970). Buber, however, tended to oppose I-Thou relations to I-It relations, whereas Hocking saw them as complementary and conjoined.


⁴ Hartshorne, op. cit., pp. 18 - 19.

ence,¹ the fusion of fact and being,² and the theory of interpretation as an integral part of experience.³

The point of citing these references is not to "prove" somehow that Hocking was correct because of the corroboration that can be marshalled on behalf of his teachings, but to suggest, rather, that these teachings, while expressly divergent on some issues from almost all the authors cited, are nevertheless harmonious with the general drift of recent studies. In some cases Hocking was clearly ahead of that drift. Further, no recent author seems to have suggested or implied that Hocking's approach or findings departed from or misrepresented the traditional concept of mysticism.

Hence, on the basis of this comparison with contemporaneous and recent authorities, I conclude that no compelling reason exists to doubt Hocking's essential continuity with the classical tradition of Western mysticism. His differences from the tradition, especially his corrections of it in light of the pragmatic-realistic perspective of American philosophy, fall well within the scope of typical variability.

³Cf. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, op. cit., pp. 31 - 38; Smart, art. cit., passim.
Furthermore, his correction of the idealistic bias of previous mystical theories by the incorporation of pragmatic and realistic elements brought the philosophy of mystical experience closer to rather than farther from the earliest strands of classical Western mysticism.¹

¹In this regard, compare the work of Trethowman, op. cit., passim.
III. CONCLUSION: THE ACHIEVEMENT OF WILLIAM ERNEST HOCKING

Despite Hocking's reconception of mystical experience along lines more in accord with the classical Christian concept of the West and congruent with many subsequent studies, as opposed to the exotic and reactionary notion generated between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, there are some deficiencies in his treatment worth noting.

To begin with, Hocking's reliance upon the Christian mystics from the third to the sixteenth centuries, while enabling him to establish continuity with the major Western tradition, also restricted the range of his investigation to classical sources somewhat unduly. His major reconception was largely finished before he had widened the scope of his inquiry to include the mystics of Eastern and even less Catholic Western traditions than those drawn on in his magnum opus. Moreover, unlike James and more recent investigators, Hocking paid little attention to contemporaneous instances, the mystical experiences of ordinary men and women and the analogues found in drug-induced and other non-religious forms of ecstatic experience. Hocking was particularly attentive to metaphysical mystics like Eckhart and the classic Hindu exponents of absolute monism, whose philosophical tenor was more or less proximate to his own. Thus, Hocking was less attentive to the variety of mystical experiences than a com-
prehensive representative account requires.

In general, Hocking's philosophical sensitivity to language was noticeably underdeveloped, perhaps as a reaction against what he perceived as the excesses of the analytical approach to philosophy. In this he remained true to his empirical heritage. But Hocking was perhaps too impatient with the special problems presented by the mystics' distinctive use of language, especially the hermeneutical difficulties of symbolic discourse and the logical ones pertaining to paradox, oblique reference and hyperbole. His theory of interpretation was less well-developed than those noted above by Stace and especially by Smart, although it anticipated contributions made by both.

Further, a more critical study of the influence of society upon the mystics and their impact on society and culture, whether constructive or destructive, would have greatly aided Hocking's analysis of the social dimension of mysticism. The effect of the mystics on the development of vernacular literature in the late Middle Ages and their propensity to gravitate toward heretical movements, at least in the eyes of orthodoxy, warrant particular attention.

The cognitive priority in Hocking's writings, particularly his earlier ones, should not be decried too hastily, however. For despite an emphasis on the "discovery" of God as the Other Knower of our common world, Hocking was consis-
tently sensitive to the intrinsic connection between idea and feeling -- eventually characterizing feeling as the most important element in experience. Moreover, Hocking stressed the inadequacy of conceptual knowledge as a means of achieving union with God in favor of an immediate apprehension or intuition of presence and the unitive power of love. Even in his magnum opus he matched the cognitive awareness of God's presence with the affective realization of that presence as an intimate, loving companion. Hocking also gave consistent priority to the practical aspects of experience. (It should perhaps be recalled here that Hocking's typical stress on certitude, while cognitive, was not primarily a conceptual certainty, but a practical, even existential conviction, if one which, more than for James, had metaphysical significance as well as social implications.) Finally, Hocking's God was, even as the All-Knower, not omniscient in the classical sense; his knowledge of future events was limited by the fact of human creativity in time.

As I understand it in general, Hocking's conception of God owes less to Hegel than to the personalistic tradition of the Judeo-Christian mystics, perhaps especially with respect to his association with Whitehead, Hartshorne and the beginnings of process philosophy. His God was no "thought thinking

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1Cf. LRWF 48, cited above with other references, p. 318.
2Cf. NIHE 63.
itself," nor the Absolute Spirit marching through history (or out of it, as in Vedanta). Hocking's God was historical, concrete and immanent, intimately accessible within human experience rather than "wholly other" in the radically transcendent neo-orthodox sense. Hocking's historical sensitivity led him to place Jesus Christ in the center of history as the mediator between God and the human race, "the human face of God." But he was disconcertingly reticent as to the meaning of Christ's divinity, the resurrection and the Holy Spirit. The vagueness of his trinitarianism may be overstressed with regard to a philosophy of religion, however; Hocking nowhere claimed to be doing dogmatic theology. In sum, his formal concept of God seems largely that of the liberal Protestantism of the early twentieth century, given his openness to a God limited by time, as was also true of James. Hocking, on the other hand, did not fully embrace the concept of a finite God as found in the later process thought of Whitehead and Hartshorne.

If philosophical success can be measured by the achievement of a satisfying account of a problematic situation as well as by exercising a lasting effect upon subsequent efforts to deal with the same or similar problems, then Hocking's attempt to develop a rational and socially sensitive theory of mystical experience and religion can be adjudged a qualified success. That is, he succeeded in terms
of elaborating a solution to a problem, as Marcel recognized, but failed to the extent that despite his great influence on many of his contemporaries, Hocking's account of the ontological argument, our knowledge of other minds, and even the dialectical connection between mysticism and prophecy have not been widely adopted.¹ (Marcel's puzzlement at the relative neglect of Hocking in America is perhaps answerable in terms of his identification with idealism, which earned him the quick and lasting opposition -- much of it uncritical -- of some of America's foremost philosophers.)

Nevertheless, if I am correct in my appraisal of Hocking, his development of the concept of nuclear experience, the intersubjective relation grounding all manifest experience, as an explanation of the eventual social expression of mysticism can be said to be cogent. His account is likewise coherent, uniting elements and structure not only meaningfully but in accordance with the facts of actual experience.

Historically, it can hardly be gainsaid that the most active and effective individual religious figures were in fact mystics -- if not all mystics have been effective nor all effective religious figures mystics. Further, the process of mystical development as described by Hocking conforms in all important respects with the reports of the mystics

¹A recent exception, but one which falls short of adequacy in exploring Hocking's thought is Margaret Lewis Furse's Mysticism, op. cit. See especially pp. 13, 142ff.
themselves and also to those of psychologists who have studied the dynamics of mystical development in its entirety and especially in its social context. The counter-factual instances that can be -- and were -- brought against Hocking's case, Quietism, elitism and extraordinariness, have been shown to be exceptional rather than typical, representing incomplete development, hypertrophy or partial observation. Authentic mysticism is ultimately activistic in orientation, a common capacity of all persons and as such an ordinary dimension of human experience (even in its extraordinary manifestations!).

Similarly, Hocking's case for the mystical and social character of all experience and especially of ordinary religious activity is also compelling despite some remaining obscurities. Moreover, his exposition of the meaning of mysticism as its value for life as a whole -- that is, as an integrating power by which the common concerns and partial preoccupations of human existence are evaluated in terms of the meaning of human life in its totality as an on-going dialogue with God in individual experience and social history -- effectively linked the basic religious experience of mankind to the democratic spirit of American philosophy, an accomplishment denied both James and Royce.

In Western philosophical experience, perhaps the most crucial development since the Cartesian "revolution" was the
shift in thought from a monarchical, absolutist perspective to one characterized by the democratic outlook, which recognized the value of the common experience of everyman. Royce and especially James attempted to secure the success of the transition in American thought, and with Dewey the achievement can be said to have been consummated. Hocking's accomplishment in this regard can fairly be described as the execution of the crossing with respect to what until his time was largely taken as a bastion of esoteric elitism, the last refuge of Absolutism: mystical experience. By democratizing mysticism and with it the Absolute, i.e., locating them within the experience of everyone, Hocking established the tie between the classical Western tradition and the spirit of the New World in the area of religion and religious experience. In so doing, however, Hocking did not, like Dewey, reject the idealistic element in American thought, but included it as a partial aspect of a more adequate because more realistic view of the experienced world.

In this synthesis of idealism and realism in mysticism, Hocking's insistence on the necessity of mediation was a key element in his reconception of the absolutist model of mystical union, often conceived of as an ontological merger of subject and object. This, I believe, is a point missed by John E. Smith in his characterization (and subsequent rejection) of mystical union as "the individual's merging with an
ultimate reality or... his becoming absorbed in the object of his quest."¹ Hocking's triadic model of experience precludes the simple absorption of subject by object in so far as all experience of an object by a subject is mediated by "thirds," that is, some other entity. In the integrity of mystical oneness, God remains God, the creature remains creature.²

Given the difficulties still attendant on discussions of mediation and immediacy, Hocking's treatment of the issues involved is not without significance today, even though he never fully developed his solution theoretically. Perhaps it is more significant since it has received scant attention save by Marcel. Even Hocking's major commentators (notably in this instance, Rouner, Luther and Smith), while generally attentive to the theme of experiential immediacy in his writings, manifest a lack of sensitivity to the depth of his treatment. All overlook his explicit articulation of "relative immediacy" and ignore his consistent employment of this doctrine. Further, many of their objections to his notion of an immediate experience of God were anticipated and sufficiently refuted by his exposition of the meaning of mediated

¹Smith, art. cit., p. 231.

immediacy.

Similarly, Hocking's largely undeveloped analogy between the structure of social and individual religious history seems a particularly apt paradigm by which to express the emergence of a world faith out of the common and universal elements in religious experience -- e.g., the felt presence of God as a unifying, non-competitive Spirit and the development of explicit mysticism from the nuclear experience of God's presence to the Self through the media of Nature and Society. In this respect it is not surprising that for Hocking the prophet of the coming world faith was the mystic. It should be recalled, however, that for him the intermediary agencies in the converging religious experience of individuals and societies are particular religious traditions, especially those with a universalizing tendency -- Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam and to a lesser extent, Hinduism. Further, the temporal interaction between the individual and the group indicates that the analogy is a dynamic one -- i.e., the terms are mutually implicated in process. Religious development is thus in factual experience an interconnected system of individual and social transformations, two phases of an alternating process in time.

Regarding Hocking's own mysticism, although Rouner erred in denying that he was a mystic in the "classical" sense, Hocking was clearly not an ordinary mystic. Like Plato, Plotinus, Eckhart and Schelling, he was a philosopher
-- a philosophical mystic, then, or a mystical philosopher; it makes little difference. He was not a religious figure in exactly the sense than Eckhart was, much less John of the Cross or George Fox. Yet he was a religious leader in his time and, as a man of action, both reformer and critic, he was prophetic.

No one who reads with an open mind Hocking's "Confes-sio Fidei" -- the epilogue to Types of Philosophy -- can miss the fact that the mystical element of religion as he exposed it permeated his thought and life extensively. But Hocking proposed a "realistic mysticism" (or a "mystical realism" -- which also amounts to the same thing). His was a reconceived mysticism in which the residual absolutism perhaps inevitable in any mysticism was strongly tempered by the pluralistic realism of everyday experience. Such a mysticism not only accords better with the "Gospel Christianity" such as Hocking professed, but by its openness also admits of comparison and exchange with the temperate absolutism he found at the heart of all great religions.

In sum, beyond recovering the true "classical" concept of Western mysticism, Hocking's structural model of the mystical undertaking as a whole, while never fully systematized, can also serve as a heuristic instrument of interpretation and evaluation both for philosophical and scientific investigation and for ecumenical dialogue. For it takes
into consideration above all the structure and function of social process as well as the psychological motives for action.

Ultimately and conclusively, Hocking himself, I am convinced, adequately and prophetically embodied the ecumenical, inquiring spirit of the "mystic of the future" as he confessed with regard to her personal faith,

We must treat things in the day's work as if they were independent, naturalistic, over against us, or at least, not for us. Struggle to build a human habitation in the midst of an alien universe; unremitting effort to expel by the aid of science whatever is evil from our point of view; expecting no good from the universe other than what we human beings construct in the face of nature, except the universe itself; and admitting no wrong as inherent in the constitution of things: -- this is the program in which we join the realist.

But who has the eye for this humanistic work, and the endless patience and energy for it, in view of the fact that the task defined is nothing short of infinite? Who can wait until the end of evolution for an achievement which only remote posterity can ever see? Only one who in some way is at the goal, as the mystic is (who for us represents the religious spirit). For him, reality in its fulness is always accessible where he is: he is always in the middle of time and space and history; he is never neurotically anxious to catch the dernier cri, nor hurried on to a remote goal. He alone can labor with endless resources and patience for what may yet be; for he knows that the nature of things is with him. He knows that there can be no incommensurable relation between the task and the power to deal with it. He knows that what is in him is the same substance that has set the object and established its over-againstness. He is assured, with Confucius, that the "good man is a ternion with Heaven and Earth."1

1TP 318 - 19.
ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS FREQUENTLY REFERRED TO

(Quotation marks indicate articles)

EEOCB  Elementary Experience of Other Conscious Being in Its Relations to the Elementary Experience of Physical and Reflexive Objects, Dissertation (1904)

"HCCBFR"  "How Can Christianity Be the Final Religion?" (1909)

"MM"  "The Meaning of Mysticism as Seen through Its Psychology" (1912)

MGHE  The Meaning of God in Human Experience (1912)

HNR  Human Nature and Its Remaking (1918)

"IGSEG"  "Is the Group Spirit Equivalent to God for All Practical Purposes?" (1921)

"INR"  "The Illicit Naturalizing of Religion" (1923)

"DCSNR"  "Does Civilization Still Need Religion?" (1925)

MS  Man and the State (1926)

"RF"  "Religion of the Future" (1927)

SBF  The Self, Its Body and Freedom (1928)

"WDPS"  "What Does Philosophy Say?" (1929)

TP  Types of Philosophy (1929)

"SSP"  "Some Second Principles" (1930)

RM  Re-Thinking Missions (1932)

"OARO"  "The Ontological Argument in Royce and Others" (1932)

"CIC"  "Christianity and Inter-Cultural Contacts" (1934)

"MGHE"  "The Meaning of God and Human Experience" (1935)

GL  Gifford Lectures (Glasgow Herald, 1938 - 39)

LRWF  Living Religions and a World Faith (1940)

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"OSSM"    "Outline-Sketch of a System of Metaphysics" (1940)
"DCEN"    "Dewey's Concepts of Experience and Nature" (1940)
"LRT"     "Lectures on Recent Trends in American Philosophy" (1941)

SIG     Science and the Idea of God (1944)
"MS"     "The Mystical Spirit" (1944)
"WV"     "A World View" (1946)
"WM"     "What is Man?" (1946)
"BIC"    "The Binding Ingredients of Civilization" (1949)
"FD (I)"  "Fact and Destiny (I)" (1950)
"FD (II)"  "Fact and Destiny (II)" (1951)
"MGIM"   "Marcel and the Ground Issues of Metaphysics" (1954)

CWC     The Coming World Civilization (1956)
"ORE"    "On Royce's Empiricism" (1956)

TIMF     This is My Faith (1956)

MIHE    The Meaning of Immortality in Human Experience (1957)
"FFD"    "Fact, Field and Destiny" (1958)
"RPK"    "Response to Professor Krikorian's Discussion" (1958)

SNN     Strength of Men and Nations (1959)
"FEDLU"  "From the Early Days of the 'Logische Untersuchung'" (1959)

TIMP     This is My Philosophy (1958)
"MCS"    "Man's Cosmic Status" (1959)
"HA"     "History and the Absolute" (1966)
"ABN"    "A Brief Note on Individuality East and West" (1968)

WHE     Leroy Rouner, Within Human Experience (1969)
PRCWC  Leroy Rouner, ed., Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World Civilization (1966)

OED  The Oxford English Dictionary
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WORKS REFERRED TO BY OTHER AUTHORS

I. Books


II. Essays


III. Articles


APPENDIX

FROM THE GIFFORD LECTURES TO "FACT, FIELD AND DESTINY"
FROM THE GIFFORD LECTURES TO "FACT, FIELD AND DESTINY"

The most important element to emerge in Hocking's metaphysics in the interim between 1939 and his revisions of the Gifford Lectures in 1951 and 1966 was the central category of Field -- a notion present in his thought from his early career, but which achieved mature development only in the last decade of his life. The concept of the Self as "a Field of Fields" enabled Hocking to bring together the major metaphysical elements of his philosophy: intersubjectivity, the reality of the objective world, the plurality of space and time, and the apprehension of God as "Thou" in the natural and social experience of mankind.

However, the connections between mystical experience, the historical development of mysticism in religion and the metaphysics of "Fact, Field and Destiny" are not obvious from a reading of the articles themselves. Yet there is an important element of continuity between the Gifford Lectures and the 1958 articulation of Hocking's metaphysics. I believe that continuity was provided by his abiding interest in mysticism.

Hocking delivered twenty lectures in two series at the University of Glasgow which were distributed as a mimeographed summary in seventeen pages. He also prepared summaries of the lectures for the Glasgow Herald and the Edinburgh Scotsman, the former especially appearing with very minor editorial changes on the day following each lecture.\footnote{The first series, "Fact and Destiny," appeared on Jan. 18, 21 and 28, 1938, and on Feb. 4, 11, 18 and 25, and March 4, 11, and 18 of the same year. The second series, "History and the Absolute," was printed on Nov. 30, Dec. 3, 7, 10, 14 and 17, 1938, and Jan. 11, 14, 18 and 21, 1939.}

Although Hocking intended to publish the Gifford Lectures in book form as a systematic metaphysics, the outbreak of the Second World War forestalled him. By the end of the war, the philosophical climate had changed considerably and Hocking began to plot an extensive revision of the lectures for publication. The first series was revised and presented in article form in 1950 and 1951 as "Fact and Destiny (I)"\footnote{Review of Metaphysics, 4 (Sept. 1950), pp. 1 - 12.} and "Fact and Destiny (II)."\footnote{Ibid., (March, 1951), pp. 319 - 42.}
The first article related the Gifford Lectures as a whole to the philosophical situation more than a decade later, dwelling mainly on the metaphysical status of Fact. This article did not appear in any form in the Herald or the Scotsman. The second article, subtitled "Argument of the First Five Lectures," was thus in fact a revision of only part of the first series. It must be read in conjunction with a yet later article, "Fact, Field and Destiny" (1958) in order to grasp Hocking's revision of the entire first series.

The second series of Lectures, "History and the Absolute," was not published until 1966, when Hocking summarized and revised it for inclusion in the Festschrift edited for him by Leroy Rouner, Philosophy, Religion and the Coming World Civilization. But Hocking died within the year, leaving unfinished the comprehensive and systematic statement of his metaphysics he had so long prepared for.

"Fact, Field and Destiny" was the title of Hocking's presidential address before the Metaphysical Society of America on March 28, 1958. It was published in an abbreviated form later that year, apparently (at first glance) as a second reworking of the first series of Gifford Lectures. Closer inspection, especially in comparison with the Herald version of the Gifford Lectures and "Fact and Destiny (II)" indicates, however, that this is not the case. In fact, the 1958 article is the revision of the sixth to the tenth of the first series of Lectures, expanded to include the concept of Field. This connection with the Gifford Lectures has, as far as I know, been overlooked by Hocking's commentators. It merits attention, nonetheless, at least in connection with the present subject of investigation.

As noted before, "Fact and Destiny (II)" was identified as a summary statement of only the first five Gifford Lectures, which Hocking indicated at the time and is mentioned in most references. Comparing this article with the Herald text shows that Hocking actually reworked the first five and half of the sixth Lecture in "Fact and Destiny (II)," ending with a consideration of Schopenhauer's notion of the will as the agency of access to reality, and a brief, proleptic summary of the remaining lectures in the first series. These

1 "FFD" art. cit.
2 PRCWC 423 - 463.
3 Cf. "FD (II)" 319 and PRCWC 484.
4 "FD (II)" 341. The material from the sixth Lecture be-
were to deal with the logic of the infinite, the tension be­tween the plurality of facts and meaning, and the unity of the world.1 "Fact, Field and Destiny" begins, by comparison, with a summary but extensive revision of the first lectures on Fact as a fundamental metaphysical category, followed by what appears to be a wholly new treatment of the concept of Field as another such category. Yet it seems evident that the problems Hocking was considering in the remainder of the article are, once more, the plurality of Fact(s), the unity of meaning, and the wholeness of the world, which, with the question of character or telos (Destiny), comprised the pro­gram of the four concluding lectures of the first series in 1938.2

What is lacking in this program in "Fact, Field and Destiny" is an explicit elaboration of the logic of the in­finite, which occupied half of the sixth and all of the sev­enth of the first series of Gifford Lectures. Otherwise it is clear from the content that despite changes of language and emphasis, "Fact, Field and Destiny" continues and de­velops the Gifford Lectures, particularly the last three lectures, which concerned the problem of the unity of the world and its character.

This connection between the original lectures and the 1958 article is important for the present study in several respects. For although there is no explicit reference to mys­ticism in the latter piece, unlike the concluding lectures of the first series, nevertheless the structure and content of Hocking's argument remains virtually the same. Here, I suggest, Hocking has translated the earlier references to mystical experience into less religious language, incidental­ly providing a clear indication of the relationship between the empirical content of mystical experience and more ab­stract metaphysical categories, that is, their fundamental equivalence. (Hocking's explicit return to the theoretical and historical aspects of mysticism in the 1966 revision of his second series of Gifford Lectures, "History and the Ab­solute," shows that he had by no means abandoned his earlier views, as also demonstrated by his intervening writings.)

Specifically, in "Fact, Field and Destiny" Hocking was finally able to connect satisfactorily the empirical, begins with the section entitled "Teleology of the Particular."

1Cf. "FD (II)" 342.

2Ibid.
realistic elements of his philosophy with its idealistic elements by means of the concept of Field, which, in experience, links together human selves, the World and God in a system of triadic relations ultimately constituting a unified but diverse Whole.

Hocking identified this connection as well as the clue to the equivalence of mysticism and metaphysics theoretically by expressly relating his concept of Field with what he had described in his earlier writings as the mystic's "felt unity of the world." In an important passage he wrote:

We have too long identified the empirical with the itemized, the separate, the plural aspects of experience. The illusory attraction of sense-data as the primary building-stuff of knowledge consists largely in the circumstance that we can count them, identify them, name them. But there is no law of being that the real, in its major aspects, must come, as it were, in spots, and unscrambled. For this reason, I have dwelt on the Field-concept which underlies all discontinuities, and which, once recognized, accounts for the simply felt unity of the world.¹

He continued, employing language previously used in regard to mystical experience, by re-introducing a crucial category of thought and being, nuclear experience:

Within this felt unity, there is a richness of experience which is at a disadvantage for recognition, partly because it is too near us, beneath the level of specific language, and partly because its aspects are mutually involved. To refer to it, we must use speech; and every translation into speech does it some injustice.

Let me refer to this region as our nuclear awareness of the world. Within it there is, for example, a nuclear awareness of our Self, so central and so engaged, that Hume and many others after him, interested in separate impressions, not only fail to find it but deny its existence. There is a nuclear awareness of the intersubjective Thou-art. There is also a nuclear awareness of bodily well-or-ill being, of certain instinctive powers, of a general direction of process in time, involving what is now pertinent to us, a sense of destiny.²

¹"FFD" 545.
²"FFD" 545 - 46.
The immediate context of this passage should be considered, first of all, the original Gifford Lectures in which Hocking indicated the overriding aims of the series and later developed them specifically with respect to mystical experience. In the introductory lecture, Hocking referred to the "rational use of intuition," especially as articulated by Bergson, as "the opening of a new style of thought" for the West. It involved two techniques:

(1) The clarification of the theory of the infinite—a new distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate uses of this slippery conception; and (2) the utilization of the insights of mystic and artist in indicating the significant unity of the world. These would form much of the content of the subsequent lectures.¹

"The mystic," the article continues, "might remind us, among other things, that the world had an aspect of simplicity as well as of complexity, and that the native certitudes of the soul could not be abandoned."²

The theory of the infinite, which occupied more than two lectures in the original series, survived only in greatly altered form in the later versions. But mystical and aesthetic experience remained central empirical elements for Hocking in formulating his metaphysics, appearing most significantly in this regard in the 1966 revision of "History and the Absolute." It is the development of the notion of mystical experience in the original lectures and the revisions of 1950, 1951 and 1966 that thus provides the link between the Gifford Lectures and the metaphysics articulated in the 1958 article. In particular, it is the experience of the underlying unity of the world that is the common element of mysticism and metaphysics. But with regard to Hocking's own philosophical development, I believe that this connection also indicates that the most clearly indicated metaphysical aspects of his thought have their roots in prior mystical aspects of experience.

¹GL Jan. 18, 1938.
²Ibid.
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The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April 24, 1978

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