

Introduction

Books that aim to expose the racism of white philosophers are usually of little consequence to the trajectory of disciplines or the interpretive lens of scholars, especially when they are written by Black, Brown, or Indigenous scholars. Often framed as external criticism and irrelevant to the thought of the authors in question, critiques of white philosophers' racism or their endorsement of colonialism are usually described as anachronistic commentaries that are overly concerned with personal predilections, rather than seriously rigorous historical analyses of a given philosopher's worldview. Previous works exposing the centrality of anti-Black racism to the thought of modern philosophers like Immanuel Kant, David Hume, or John Locke have remained as ineffective in changing the intellectual historiography of the discipline as texts demonstrating the rise of modern philosophy to be inspired by and rationalized within the colonization of Africa and Asia.¹ Even sub-specialties like American philosophy that are responding to the dominance of continental and analytic thought throughout philosophy departments in the United States remain obstinate toward works exposing the reliance of Progressive Era thought on scientific racism and colonialism after three decades of scholarship documenting these linkages.² Since such investigations are often regarded as verbose *ad hominem*(s), critiques of white philosophers' racism and indebtedness to colonial projects are deemed creative interpretations of philosophers rather than historically informed exegeses of the terms and concepts that form the basis of a philosopher's work.

So why Josiah Royce? Or more accurately, why write a book on the racism of Josiah Royce, given that he is such a marginal figure in philosophy generally? At one level, I believe it is important to acknowledge that the contention that Josiah Royce was an anti-racist thinker at the turn of the twentieth century is simply false. Josiah Royce was an ardent supporter of British colonization, an adamant racist, and an

advocate of American empire. His proposal to colonize Black Americans in the South is an extension of this logic and is especially relevant to how one theorizes his idea of community and the consequence of such ideas on racialized groups like Black Americans today. At another level, while Josiah Royce is a marginal figure generally, the critique of Royce's racism is more accurately thought of as a case study of the gross misunderstanding philosophers, literary critics, and theorists have of the nineteenth century broadly. Philosophers tend to create heroes or heroines when reading historical figures like Royce rather than seriously engaging his thought and its consequence. Important terms like the white peril, or references to the work of Adolf Bastian, are thought to be irrelevant to the philosopher but were central to Royce's own philosophy. In other words, the racial critique raised against Josiah Royce in this book is more accurately understood as a corrective to the historiographic lens deployed by American philosophers who intuitively assert that nonbiological accounts of race are anti-racist and less pernicious than other nineteenth-century theories of race that linked blood to destiny. The assertion that cultural or environmentalist thinking about Blacks, Native Americans, or the Japanese were less racist and indicative of progress in America's racial consciousness ignore the actual debates ethnologists, anthropologists, and sociologists were having about race at the dawn of the twentieth century. By analyzing Royce's theories of race, we gain an understanding not only of the historical meaning or significance of terms and thinkers in the late nineteenth century, but how these concepts actually functioned and were utilized among philosophers as they approached the problems of a new century. Through Royce, the contemporary scholar can gain insight into the assumptions of Royce's peers, such as John Dewey, Charles S. Pierce, and Jane Addams, as well as the milieu of race thinking among American philosophers generally in the early 1900s. Royce simply offers contemporary (American) philosophers an opportunity to observe American democracy and progressivism in the womb so to speak, allowing even the most casual observer to see how the social stability required for American democracy to take root and flourish depended on the subjugation of Black, Indigenous, and immigrant peoples broadly.

Origins of the Project

This book began as a presentation paper on the first chapter of Josiah Royce's *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* in

Randall Auxier's class at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. I was a doctoral student in the department of philosophy in 2005. A decade ago, there was no literature explaining the connections that Josiah Royce had to the white man's burden or colonialism. Ten years ago, the world had not noticed Royce authored "Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization," nor did it care to know. At this time, Royce's philosophy of race was being presented as a multicultural anti-racism. His essays on "Race Questions" and "Provincialism" were the primary source material used to speak of his understanding of American racism, and it was concluded based on these two texts that Royce should be thought of as a racial progressive who was not only sensitive to the racism of American science, but especially attentive to the problem of lynching in the American South. I remember when I presented my paper to the class, there was a staggering disbelief that all the other scholars writing about Royce had gotten it wrong, while this one Black student (studying nineteenth-century ethnology mind you) had gotten it right. My actual knowledge of nineteenth-century ethnology and the debates concerning race at the turn of the century were thought to be inconsequential by many of the students, though Randy Auxier suggested this idea may have some legs and merit further consideration. This disbelief in Royce's racism continued for years, until Dwayne Tunstall assembled a panel at the joint session of the Josiah Royce Society and the Personalist Discussion Group at the Central American Philosophy Association conference on April 19, 2008. I remember receiving a letter from Frank Oppenheim before the conference urging me to remember that Josiah Royce was the most progressive American thinker on race to date. I remember thinking to myself—"by what measure?"

The panel was a discussion of Josiah Royce's racism. It was formative of my approach toward discussing Royce's racism and imperial aspirations, because it was the first time I revealed my knowledge of this wholly neglected article by Royce delivered in 1900 as an address to the Aberdeen Philosophical Society at Aberdeen University. Given my knowledge of this previously unengaged document, I attempted to convince Royceans that Josiah Royce was in fact racially intolerant and fearful of racial and ethnic diversity. I cited passage after passage where Royce demanded Blacks and other alien races to assimilate into America and urged the audience to think of the consequences of colonizing Black people in the American South as the British had done in Jamaica. I demanded a fairer comparison of Royce on race and sought to place him in conversation with the Black scholars of his day. I remember the conviction I had at

the time trying to convince Royceans of the ahistoricism and dishonesty involved in claiming Royce as the most progressive American thinker on race based on his writing of "Race Questions" given the ethnological treatises authored by Martin R. Delany, Kelly Miller, W. E. B. Du Bois, or even Black idealists inspired by Royce like William H. Ferris. As a young scholar, just a year out of graduate school, I urged a room of senior philosophers to reconsider their methodology and reading of Du Bois, who seemed to be suspiciously present in every reference to Royce's racial progressivism. I found it ironic that in these debates concerning Royce's racism, Royce was described as agreeing with Du Bois on practically everything, or everything Du Bois suggested about race in the two primary documents analyzed in philosophy—"The Conservation of Races" and *The Souls of Black Folk*.

This panel led to a series of articles being published in the fall edition of *The Pluralist* in 2009 and brought this debate to the public's attention. Dwayne Tunstall's introduction to the series framed the debate on Royce around a central dispute during the panel. Can Royce be an anti-essentialist (cultural) racist? Tunstall concluded, "Because of Royce's cultural, anti-black racism and his (unwitting) perpetuation of white supremacy, I think that Royce is not the person to read concerning race issues."³ My essay, entitled "Royce, Racism, and the Colonial Ideal: White Supremacy and the Illusion of Civilization in Josiah Royce's Account of the White Man's Burden," argued that the previous articles published on Josiah Royce and racism were decontextualized from the actual meanings and events he believed constituted the crisis of white supremacy and the racialist sciences of his day. I insisted that assimilation was not a progressive racial theory at the turn of the century, that Royce's endorsement of the white man's burden was blatant imperialism, that British administration as a strategy to control Blacks in the South was racist, and while it is true that Royce had rejected a strict biological determinism, his evolutionary accounts of racial plasticity and environmentalism were no less racist.⁴ Jacquelyn Kegley's "Josiah Royce on Race: Issues in Context" was also published in this issue of *The Pluralist*. In Kegley's article, Royce was simply well intentioned and naïve of the racism he exhibited. This was a common defense of Royce at the time. For example, Shannon Sullivan argued that "Royce makes every effort to avoid racism . . . and is unaware of the fine analysis of contemporary times about the evils of colonialism and the havoc it wreaked on people's lives."⁵ In Kegley's interpretation, Royce is focused on alerting the reader of white privilege, white ignorance, and the dangers of racism. Citing his

now famous question, “Is it a ‘yellow peril,’ or a ‘black peril,’ or perhaps after all, is it not rather some form of ‘white peril’ which threatens the future of humanity in this day of great struggles and of complex issues,” as evidence of his disavowing of white supremacy, Kegley writes:

Royce turns tables on white folk who tend to view racial problems as concerning everyone but white people. Indeed, I believe Royce’s article is somewhat justified in proposing that white domination and imperialism might be the greatest threat to the flourishing of humankind in the twentieth century. Royce was sensitive, as we see in his history of California, to issues of white domination, imperialist tendencies, and prejudice.⁶

From her reading of Sullivan’s introduction to the republication of Royce’s *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, Kegley explains that “Shannon Sullivan and I agree that Royce stands out in the history of classical American philosophy in taking an anti-racist focus on race questions when very few philosophers—especially white male philosophers—took scholarly time to think about these issues.”⁷ Kegley and Sullivan offer readers no actual proof of this claim. They merely assert that the arbitrarily designed white academic canon chosen by white male and female philosophers in the mid-twentieth century to be “American philosophy” is in fact representative of the significant voices at the turn of the century concerning race. If one expands the canon even slightly based on philosophers dealing with ethnology, or America’s first school of sociology at Atlanta University, or the research at the University of Chicago, then such a statement would become vastly inaccurate, if not silly. The debates concerning race were much more complex than the figures American philosophy has selected for study. Because American philosophy chooses to imagine history as a tale of white ignorance to racism, and then white benevolence and virtue upon discovering it, white figures like Royce are interpreted as exceptions because they engaged racism in America at all. This disciplinary disposition in American philosophy makes the standard of anti-racism embarrassingly meager, since it suggests not that a white American author is in fact anti-racist in his or her original work, but that said author can be interpreted as anti-racist because he or she was not blind to the existence of racism. This has been the underlying premise behind the neglect of some of Royce’s most adamantly colonial and racist writings to date.

When lost or neglected essays or writings of authors are discovered, there is usually some consideration, in many cases celebration, of the

meanings found within the unearthed gem. Such was not the case with introducing Royce's Aberdeen speech, "Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization." There were no deliberations on this discovery, nor was there a panel over the last several years to ascertain the meaning this speech has for Royce's larger corpus. While Royce's other reflections on race have become canonical in many respects, this last talk, despite being listed in Ignas Skrupskelis's "Annotated Bibliography of the Publications of Josiah Royce" in 1968, remains relegated to the periphery of Royce's philosophical thought.⁸ The question of why must be addressed. For older generations of Royce scholars, who would have known about this speech and known of its contents from Skrupskelis's annotated summary, why was it not engaged or mentioned as relevant for the study of Royce's social political ethics, specifically that of race? For younger Royce scholars, why was it simply avoided; designated as irrelevant? One could only guess at the motivations Royce scholars had in neglecting this work, but the effect was the same—it was to some extent deliberately ignored.

**Ideo-Racial Apartheid as Method and Paradigm:
How American Philosophers Read Royce into
Anti-Racist Discourse by Ignoring the
Work of His Black Contemporaries**

Despite the scholarly advancements in other fields like sociology, American studies, and Africana philosophy—and the proliferation of critical works in these fields concerning the problems of race, whiteness, and color-blindness in texts produced by historic white thinkers—philosophy has adamantly enforced an "ideo-racial apartheid" whereby white thinkers are praised for any attention given to the question of race, regardless of the extent to which their ideas are assimilationist, culturally deprived, or firmly rooted in colonialism. Under this ideological apartheid, Black thinkers' contributions are categorically excluded from philosophical conversations concerning race. This exclusion is in itself racist, because it not only assumes that Black scholarship, despite its lifelong attempts to understand, cope with, solve, or at least educate people about the American race problem, does not contribute to "philosophies of race." This segregationist logic reinforces the idea that whites set the standards of racial responsibility in American society, while Blacks are merely examples

of the failings of said standards. The consequence of such a system is that white thinkers are only accountable to other whites on the issue of race and cannot and should not be compared to the philosophical outlooks of Black thinkers on the very same questions.⁹

My survey of Royce's racial bibliography so to speak places him squarely within the debates and sensibilities of his time. Starting with the views of race presented by Black thinkers like W. E. B. Du Bois in the Atlanta Sociological Laboratory, I show that Royce is behind the ball in many regards. While it is not uncommon for American philosophers to mark Josiah Royce's reflection on race as exceptional, often suggesting that "except for W. E. B. Du Bois and Jane Addams, no other major figure associated with pragmatist philosophy substantially addressed issues of race and racism in their written work, nor did anyone so early as in the twentieth century as did Royce,"¹⁰ the earnest scholar must probe perhaps the most fundamental question, "In comparison to whom?" Nineteenth-century Black thinkers, be they philosophers, educators, historians, or political activists, have long acknowledged and engaged the ethnological assumptions that Royce attempts to question. Yet their work and texts, which remain for our use, are thought to be without relevance for the debates surrounding race and racism in American philosophy. Why does Royce enjoy the luxury of being elevated within the canon when the basis for comparison is segregationist? He emerges as "a little less racist" than other turn-of-the-century white racists who believed in biological determinism, and on that basis—his comparison to other whites—he is elevated and lauded as being anti-racist. I find this historiography woefully inadequate; a kind of ideo-racial apartheid that must be dismantled.

Today, it is this type of thinking that frames contemporary Roycean debates over the race question and regards Royce as an anti-racist thinker, because he may have been a little less racist when compared to his white counterparts. American philosophy, and the inordinate number of white philosophers who comprise this area, has not begun the arduous task of assessing the gap between their romantic revisions of historical white philosophers and the historical moment in which these thinkers were writing. Because philosophy assumes a literal access to meaning whereby the reading of works is assumed to be intuitive and mediated hermeneutically (only distorted through personal bias or inclination), there has been somewhat of a methodological aversion to historicizing American philosophers. Consequently, the canon is drawn arbitrarily around white figures whose writings resonate with particular disciplinary

debates already established as relevant. Black thinkers, despite writing in the same time, are made invisible despite contesting the meanings and challenging the same audiences the white American philosophers engage. Since the 1850s, Black Americans have deliberately engaged the myth of Black racial inferiority. In *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, for instance, Martin R. Delany argued that the idea of Black inferiority is “mere policy, nature having nothing to do with it.”¹¹ Crediting the scholars in the National Negro Conventions of the 1830s with the role policy has in defining Blacks as inferior, Delany adamantly held that “colored people were selected as the subordinate class in this country, on no account of any actual or supposed inferiority on their part, but simply because . . . they were the very best class that could be selected.”¹²

By the 1880s Black anthropologists and theorists around the world sought to refute the claims of white pseudo-science maintaining the inequality of the races. The Haitian anthropologist Antenor Firmin's *The Equality of the Human Races* (1885) concludes: “after reviewing all the possible arguments put forward in support of the doctrine of the inequality of the human races, we realize that none seems to resist the most superficial examination.”¹³ Firmin continues, “As we recapitulate the various objections raised in order to destroy the very foundations of every method used to rank the human races, we find that we are justified in asserting that all the races are naturally equal.”¹⁴ Unlike the inclinations of white American philosophers who disagreed with the biological theories of racial inferiority, while maintaining that nonwhite races were savage and consequently inferior, Black scholars during the same time period insisted on the equality of the races. Martin Delany argued in his *Principia of Ethnology: The Origins of Races and Color* that the Black race was as historically formidable as the white race. In 1879, he wrote that “the white and black, the pure European and pure African races, the most distinct and unlike each other in general external physical characteristics, are of equal vitality and equally enduring.”¹⁵ Absolute equality was insisted upon by Black scholars throughout the nineteenth century. Firmin for example was equally adamant: “Proven by science and confirmed by increasingly numerous, eloquent, and indisputable facts, the principle of the equality of the races is the true basis of human solidarity.”¹⁶ These works are just a couple of examples of the work Black scholars were doing in the mid-nineteenth century that far surpassed the supposed progressive attitudes of white American philosophers like Royce. Edward

Blyden, Kelly Miller, Alexander Crummell, James McCune Smith, and John E. Bruce are just some of the authors who wrote multiple works arguing for the equality of the Black race.

American philosophy, historically and in the present, evaluates the racism of particular white authors by their endorsement of now popular political ideas and their personal relationships with accepted, canonical Black figures of their time. John Dewey, for example, celebrated the vocational training of Black students in segregated schools, but his relationship with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People trumps his belief of racial inferiority and Black primitivism.¹⁷ No matter the offense, be it the discovery of Dewey's segregated schools, his use of recapitulation theory, or his evolutionary thinking regarding pedagogy, he is affixed canonically as a theorist of education despite what education scholars have shared with philosophers.¹⁸ Even progressive white feminists like Jane Addams, who still believed in the inferiority of the Black race and held firm to the belief in the Black male rapist, is thought to be absolved of her racism because she had personal relationships with Ida B. Wells and W. E. B. Du Bois and wrote against lynching. Bettina Aptheker explains that Addams

comprehended the symbolic relationship between the alleged property crimes of the so-called "lower classes," and the woman-as-property psychosis. Yet she failed to appreciate the dialectics of a racial and sexual oppression with common roots in the ownership of private property which sanctified the lynching of the former slave by maintaining the woman's status as a male possession. Furthermore, to concede that rape was the cause of lynching made effective opposition to it impossible because it concealed the real class origins of the racist assaults.¹⁹

In "Respect for Law," Addams does argue that Southern lynching often "rises to unspeakable atrocities" and "is complicated by race animosity." Nonetheless, she believes "brutality begets brutality, and proceeding from the theory that the Negro is undeveloped and therefore must be treated in this primitive fashion is to forget that the immature pay little attention to statements but quickly imitate all they see. The under-developed are never helped by such methods . . ." ²⁰ According to Addams, by implication, it is not that lynching is unjustified, it is that lynching is ineffective in teaching the primitive Black male rapist the moral disposition to prevent

rape. Maurice Hamington's "Public Pragmatism: Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells on Lynching," makes no effort to analyze this specific racist misandrist logic and the ethnology behind it, but he nonetheless concludes that Addams is insightful for her time and progressive for associating with a Black woman like Ida B. Wells-Barnett and speaking on a controversial issue like lynching.²¹ Hamington neglects to mention however that the debate at the turn of the century was between what progressives termed the barbaric practice of lynching and the more humane alternative of castration.²² American philosophers often emphasize the personal relationships white thinkers had with Blacks as evidence of their anti-racism. The racism of their actions as well as their philosophy is absolved in the minds of many American philosophers if one can suggest that these white thinkers associated personally or had an intellectual overlap with nonwhites.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the shift from biological determinism revolved around a primary question: Could backward peoples, when placed in contact with civilized races, acquire the lessons of civilization? This debate between biological determinists and social Darwinists and progressive environmentalists drove theories about race beyond the presumption that those born a race were irrevocably fixed by their phenotypical and evolutionary station. In American philosophy however, any liberal (meaning environmentalist) explanation by white American figures in the nineteenth century and dawn of the twentieth century that entertains the possibility that Blacks could learn, embrace, or imitate white culture is taken by contemporary (white) scholars to be an anti-racist philosophy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Biological determinism was quickly replaced with cultural deprivation theories that maintained Black and other alien races should be assimilated or left to die for the advance of human civilization.²³ Whereas Royce is praised for rejecting the ethnological fixation on predetermined racial temperament and capacity, his work pales in comparison to even early nineteenth-century Black thinkers much less the work of twentieth-century Black figures specifically addressing scientism. Despite this vast gap between the actual work of Black figures and those of white American philosophers like Royce, the texts and debates about race by Black scholars remain not only absent from any discussions and literature concerning race thinking at the turn of the century in American philosophy, but denied as having any actual relevance to debates undertaken by canonical white figures. Perhaps the greatest irony is that Black race theory had already made the shift toward environmentalist accounts of races by reading the research

of other prominent European scientists well before Royce's engagement with the work of Adolf Bastian and James Frazer. In Edward Blyden's *African Life and Customs* (1908), he quotes liberally from Jean Finot's *Race Prejudice* (1901), which argued that

the Negroes, regarded as occupying the last rung on the human ladder, have furnished us with proofs of an unexpected evolution. Within the space of 50 years, they have realized as much progress as white peoples have in five or six centuries. . . . After all, we have seen the impossibility of attributing immutable psychological qualities to certain peoples or races. Their virtues and their vices are only the effects of historical circumstance or the influence of milieu.²⁴

This is just one instance of Black thinkers at the turn of the century being years, if not decades, ahead of white theorists in the United States on race theory and the decline of ethnological accounts of Black inferiority by reading other white thinkers outside America condemning the racialist sciences of the early twentieth century. In an effort to refute the racist biological determinist theories of extinction established from authors like Thomas Huxley in the late 1890s, Black sociologists and anthropologists, like W. E. B. Du Bois, Caroline Bond Day, and W. Montague Cobb, separated the moral, spiritual, and psychological adaptations of the Negro in America from the allegedly inferior biological traits passed down from African ancestry.²⁵ In short, these Black thinkers asserted the mental and spiritual elevation of Black people in America—their ability to adapt and create genius in the world as a response to the inferiority associated with their skin color.

W. E. B. Du Bois's work as a sociologist reacting to the biological determinism within ethnology during his time at Atlanta University is completely ignored in American philosophy. As early as 1894, Du Bois had already established a functioning school of American sociological thought dedicated to the scientific study of the American race problem—several years before the Chicago School founded by Albion Small was up and running.²⁶ While the Chicago School is usually credited with popularizing the anti-essentialist work of Franz Boas in the 1920s and 1930s, Du Bois's Atlanta Sociological Laboratory had already understood that race was a historical and cultural artifact, not biologically causal, well before the insights of American sociologists. For example, Du Bois

published Atlanta Sociological Paper No. 11 on *The Health and Physique of the Negro American* (1906) as a critique of contemporary ethnological conclusions and craniometry, where he maintained that "it is doubtful if many of the persons in the United States who are eagerly and often bitterly discussing race problems have followed very carefully the advances which anthropological science has made in the last decade. Certainly the new knowledge has not yet reached the common schools in the usual school histories and geographies."²⁷ Drawing heavily from the work of Italian anthropologist Giuseppe Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race* (1901), and William Z. Ripley's *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study* (1899), the eleventh Atlanta University Publication argued that there is no one white race that can claim ownership of civilization. This conclusion is far more radical than anything theorized by Royce at the same time, because Du Bois and the various Black scholars participating in the Atlanta University Conferences in fact maintained there were no natural racial hierarchies and only suggested that the spiritual and physical equality of the races should translate socially into full democratic citizenship. Take Herbert A. Miller's contribution to this Atlanta University Publication entitled "Some Psychological Considerations on the Race Problem" for example. In this section Miller boldly argues:

To conclude, from the manifestations of immorality among the Negroes, or from their failure to recognize certain social conventions, that the Negro is incapable of morality or of adaptation to the social demand, is a conclusion based upon inadequate evidence. Morality and social adaptation are the result of the interpretation of the value of a situation, and not a necessary development of inherent capacity. Therefore, not until different races have had exactly the same history can any valid conclusion be drawn as to their relative psychophysical capacity if mere observation is used. This does not mean that there is no such a thing as race characteristics, but that there are elements in interpretation that are independent of race. This, however, is a philosophical question. My point is that there is something that cannot be put to empirical test in all practical activity.²⁸

Miller's analysis is suspicious of the basis for, the theoretical foundation of, psycho-physics, a branch of ethnology interested in the common mental

states and spirituality of the races that outlined the psychological stages of civilization.²⁹ Like the alleged benefits some philosophers claim they receive from reading Royce, Du Bois's decade-long Atlanta University Publications prove concretely that Black sociologists and anthropologists were at least a decade ahead of Royce's conclusions and reached the same conclusions about biological determinism with the added insights of not believing the white race or any race owned or was charged with the progress of civilization, or that any psychological measure could tell one about the potential or possibility of civilization within a race.³⁰ Philosophers writing on Royce without any real engagement with the Black thinkers of his time are asking disciplines and scholars alike to imagine Black thinkers without having scientific and philosophical insights into the social relations that problematized their existence.

These philosophers are encouraging disciplines and scholars to continue to ignore Black contributions to civilization, philosophy, and history so that Royce appears to be a forerunner of an argument that had been articulated by Black thinkers in several iterations throughout the 1800s. The "racial apartheid" ideology that sustains the invisibility of Black thought in the historical debates of those times and our own is what allows American philosophy to thrive as a field within the disciplinary geography of philosophy. Written as a valorization of turn-of-the-century white thought, American philosophers are able to suggest a particular social consciousness and awareness concerning democracy, community, and experiential knowledge against much of the transcendentalism and intuitive assertions of analytic and continental traditions. Such approaches however ignore that the aspirations and historical grounding of such positions at the dawn of the twentieth century were not only imperialistic but insidiously racist. In order to maintain the pretense of progressivism, American philosophers elide history. A peculiar practice given that much of the work designated as American philosophy defines itself as a particular set of social and philosophical problems that originated geographically and historically upon American soil, or the irony that one of the earliest texts penned by Royce was on the history of California.

While there is often a lip service paid to the idea that American philosophy is attempting to diversify the thinkers available for study, this gesture is often made to the detriment of efforts attempting shift the narrative of the American philosophical endeavor from one of white exceptionalism to one grounded in its actual history of imperialism, recapitulation, and nativism. Confronted with the vast treatises and texts

of late-nineteenth-century Black thinkers, American philosophers are forced to assert that while the progressiveness of Black research during the late 1800s and early 1900s far exceeds that of its chosen white idols, such works by Black thinkers are ultimately irrelevant for how scholars should designate and weigh the thinking of white scholars concerning race in *American philosophy*. To maintain the idea that figures like Royce, Addams, or Dewey have resources to deal with the problem of racism, there is a refusal to compare their actual texts with that of the Black thinkers in their own time. In lieu of direct comparison to what Blacks, Asians, or Mexican thinkers are writing or saying during the same time period, Black intellectual giants like W. E. B. Du Bois or Ida B. Wells-Barnett are made into the disciples of white traditions like pragmatism, or they are tokenized as associates (students) of white philosophers who are robbed of intellectual independence and consequently beholden to the thought of canonical white idols. This is not an external concern but a serious indictment of the methods employed in retrieving Royce as well as other white American thinkers as philosophers with resources for America's racial problems. In other words, Royce only emerges as a progressive thinker by eliminating Black schools of thought like the Atlanta University project, and over a half century of writings where Black thinkers were already utilizing cutting-edge ethnology, anthropology, and sociology from scholars the world over.

The Debate concerning Josiah Royce and Racism

As with most historic white figures in philosophy, their repopularization and reintroduction into contemporary circles commits their works, regardless of its initial silence, to speak to the problem of anti-Black racism in America. Josiah Royce is no different in this regard. Over the last decade, philosophers, like Jacquelyn Kegley, Shannon Sullivan, and Scott Pratt, have introduced revisions to Royce's thought that make him appear to be the premier multicultural and anti-racist thinker at the dawn of the twentieth century. While this declaration has influenced the philosophical framing of Royce's work over the last decade, there is a grave anachronism in such a contention given the history of racism and racialist sciences in America. Generally speaking, Jacquelyn Kegley's early essays on Josiah Royce and race are considered to be the first attempts to ground Royce's philosophy of race. In "Is a Coherent Racial Identity

Essential to Genuine Individuals and Communities? Josiah Royce on Race” (2005), Kegley emphasizes Royce’s rejection of biological determinism as evidence of his anti-essentialism and racial progressivism. According to Kegley, “Royce believes, as others in the contemporary scene, that ‘race’ as a concept cannot be eliminated, [because] it plays too crucial a role, both positive and negative, in self and social identification.”³¹

In order to bolster this claim of Royce’s progressivism, Kegley makes use of a wealth of contemporary Black philosophers’ views on race and racial identity. While Kegley’s article is correct in suggesting that contemporary Black scholars like Lucius Outlaw and Cornel West had adamantly defended the importance of race as a social and cultural entity, her claim that Royce also agreed with racial eliminativists like Anthony Appiah and Alain Locke presents something of an insurmountable problem. It is quite difficult to agree with racial conservationists and eliminativists simultaneously.³² In short, upon Kegley’s reading of Black philosophical traditions, Royce maintains several irreconcilable positions at the same time. While it makes perfect sense for Kegley to try to put Royce in conversation with contemporary Black thinkers in race theory, her work is indicative of a trend aiming to gain currency for historic white thinkers in current race debates at the expense of historical accuracy. Black scholars who studied under Royce and applied his theories to the race problem from the mid-1900s onward, like William H. Ferris³³ and William T. Fontaine,³⁴ are ignored by many white philosophers because the first application of Roycean philosophy supported assimilation. It is only today with the political and ideological ethicizations of racial diversity and multiculturalism that Royce’s work is interpreted as *critically conserving race*.³⁵

The republication of *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* in 2009 marked a decisive racial *epochē*—a subtle suspension, a refusal to become involved in the implications of Royce’s racist commitments—asserting, almost axiomatically, that Josiah Royce’s advocacy of racialist sciences, white supremacist imperialism through his moralization of the white man’s burden, and Southern colonialism in the form of British administration, are indeed irrelevant to the growing canonical enterprise dedicated to the preservation of his philosophy.³⁶ In Scott Pratt’s introduction to the republication of *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*, he argues that Royce’s essay on race questions “raises significant ways in which race is understood and how race prejudice can be addressed.”³⁷ Pratt argues that “Royce presents two

examples of good responses to race conflict, one from Jamaica and one from Trinidad.”³⁸ Rather than centering the violence and poverty British colonialism imposed on Black populations, Pratt sees each case as evidence that “Royce holds that the key to fostering tolerance and peace is the development of a sound administrative and legal system that includes full participation by non-whites.”³⁹ Pratt’s interpretation of English colonization is woefully inaccurate. To understand this point does not actually require one to conduct the kind of historical research into Jamaican colonization undertaken throughout this book; Royce, himself, is in fact quite clear in “Race Questions” that administration places Englishmen above Blacks on the island. Royce writes that the Englishman

organized his colony; he established good local courts, which gained by square treatment the confidence of the blacks. The judges of such courts were Englishmen. The English ruler also provided a good country constabulary, in which native blacks also found service, and in which they could exercise authority over other blacks. Black men, in other words, were trained, under English management, of course, to police black men. A sound civil service was also organized; and in that educated Negroes found in due time their place, while the chief of each branch of the service were and are, in the main, Englishmen.⁴⁰

Royce sees the Englishman as an efficient ruler and British administration as a system offering the Negro self-respect and value. The Black man only has authority over other Blacks. He in no way dictates the behavior or constrains the practices of his English rulers. His task in such a system is service to whites, not authority over them. Even educated Blacks find their place to be under the authority of Englishmen. Royce in fact writes, “For the Englishman, in his official and governmental dealings with backward peoples, has a great way of being superior without very often publicly saying that he is superior.”⁴¹ Black Jamaican inhabitants were British subjects not citizens and certainly not Englishmen according to Royce. Race, more specifically Blackness, delineates the subjugated from the free for Royce. This is but one example of how race serves to demarcate the relationship between the white citizen of empire who has the duty to bring civilization to the world and the Black primitives who are to be colonized in the name of civilization. How an administrative

system recognized for its proficiency in conveying the superiority of the Englishman to backward people becomes a system of full participation for Blacks encouraging tolerance and peace in philosophy can only be explained as the product of the liberties philosophers engaging race can take with history regarding Blacks the world over.

While Pratt does acknowledge that one could possibly surmise that although Royce does not accurately understand the depth of American racism, especially in the American South, in light of his administrative proposal, he nonetheless believes this is where Royce's philosophy of loyalty to loyalty offers solace to the critic. Pratt writes that "loyalty to loyalty is a commitment to one's causes in ways that foster the loyalty of others. . . . Administrative relations provide a formal context in which the boundaries of communities can intersect, come into conflict, and promote ways of resolving conflicts that preserve and foster others' loyalty."⁴² The irony of Pratt's introduction is that it praises Royce's reflections on American race relations in 1905 and 1906 with the presentation and publication of "Race Questions," while simultaneously acknowledging the imperialism Royce supports in "Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization" in 1900. Even more surprising is that this essay (which I tracked down a year earlier) was in fact republished in Pratt and Sullivan's edition. Pratt admits that Royce concludes "Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization" with "recommendations for how the Empire might be maintained . . . [such as] the development of a stronger central government that can enforce a uniform education system and the affirmation of a kind of 'manifest destiny' for Anglo-American culture," but he argues that "it is important to note, however, that these recommendations came to be challenged in Royce's later work."⁴³ Pratt explains to the reader, "rather than finding nations (empires) as the ideal, the Beloved Community introduced in the *Problem of Christianity* provides a framework that will undermine causes that seek to dominate others."⁴⁴

Pratt, however, is not attentive to the actual development of Royce's thinking of community in this regard. First, Royce's *The Problem of Christianity* was not published until 1913, so it is difficult to understand how this would affect his ideas about imperial aspirations and colonial administration argued for in 1905 in "Race Questions." Second, in the preface to *The Problem of Christianity* Royce writes "since 1908, my philosophy of loyalty has been growing. Its successive expressions, as I believe, form a consistent body of ethical as well as of religious opinion, and teaching, verifiable in its main outlines, in terms of human experience, and

capable of furnishing a foundation for a defensible form of metaphysical idealism.”⁴⁵ Given Royce's reflections on the shifting of his thought, and Pratt's own urgings, Royce simply could not have imagined loyalty to loyalty as separate from empire in 1900 with his publication of “Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization,” in his delivery of “Provincialism” in 1902, or in 1906 with his publication of “Race Questions and Prejudice.” In fact, since many of these essays were published practically unchanged in Royce's 1908 publication of *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* as testaments to his philosophy of loyalty to loyalty, it is safe to conclude that Royce's shift did not include an incompatibility between his notion of the beloved community and empire but instead rearticulated his earlier imperial aspirations through religious and idealist doctrines.⁴⁶

In the second introduction to this republication entitled “Royce's Race Questions and Prejudices,” Shannon Sullivan focuses on Royce's resources for contemporary whiteness studies. Sullivan begins her essay suggesting that “the centrality of the race essay to Royce's thinking is all the more significant since, with the exception of W. E. B. Du Bois and perhaps Jane Addams, no other major figure associated with pragmatist philosophy substantially addressed issues of race and racism in his or her written work, nor did so as early in the twentieth century as Royce did.”⁴⁷ Unlike Pratt's previous essay, Sullivan does recognize that Josiah Royce's call for British administration is rooted in white supremacy. She observes quite accurately that “what Royce admires about the English is the way they dominated people of color through imperialism and colonialization. Such domination need not rely on rifles and cannons. In fact, it is all the more effective, as Royce understood on some level, if it is internalized by those who are dominated rather than forced on them with arms.”⁴⁸ Though Sullivan admits that Royce actively perpetuates racism and the deliberate domination of Black people in the American South, she apologizes for Royce, suggesting that he was ignorant and ultimately naïve concerning the consequences of his proposals. Sullivan explains, “Writing before the worldwide post-colonial struggles that generally began after World War II, Royce did not see that imperial colonialism was part of the violence of global race problems . . . he did not recognize that the English type of social pedagogy . . . could be a deceptively polite way of making Black people the enforcers of their own subordination.”⁴⁹

In Sullivan's reading of Royce, white ignorance has a double meaning, so to speak. It both justifies Royce's mistakes concerning the evil of

colonization while simultaneously describing what Sullivan takes to be the greatest insights of Royce's thinking concerning the American race problem, namely, his identification of white ignorance. Sullivan reads Royce as criticizing white civilization for its ignorance about whiteness. She believes that Royce offers a searing indictment of whiteness as the ownership of the earth, speaking a truth about the lie of white benevolence, charity, and exceptionalism that most white people do not want to know.⁵⁰ Sullivan's engagement with Royce begins with the premise that "Royce's condemnation of civilization reveals the disloyal ignorance of civilization's actual effects that is required of its members."⁵¹ She emphasizes that Royce concludes that "no one knows with certainty how different racial groups are from one another, nor how fixed or changeable the traits of any particular groups are. Perhaps there are significant differences and perhaps also there are fixed traits that future science will uncover. But 'we are at present very ignorant regarding the whole matter,' and that ignorance should not be treated as if it were knowledge of white supremacy."⁵² In Sullivan's reading, loyalty to loyalty is a means to demystify the white supremacism of white communities.

These aforementioned views of Royce's racial corpus have been largely apologetic. In the cases where Royce is admittedly racist, imperialist, or colonialist, he is ultimately excused as being ignorant and unknowledgeable of the effects of his beliefs. In the cases where Royce can be read as somewhat reflective about race or the racist sciences of his day, he is critical, and a precocious thinker and philosopher of America's racial legacy and history. In other words, it seems a philosophical analysis of Royce makes him inculpable and without sin regarding matters of race. Royce becomes a figure whose insights are intentional, but whose faults are accidental. He, like many others handled by the current theories of white ignorance, is presumed to be innocent—an ultimately good and virtuous turn-of-the-century white man. He is thought to have meant no harm to Blacks, where any detriments inflicted upon nonwhites came from his inability to anticipate the consequences of his thought. As is often the case, the practitioners of American philosophy can imagine an early twentieth-century America defined by the white man's burden, Jim Crow segregation, and lynching as racist, but somehow cannot fathom that many if not most of the canonical figures of American philosophy actively contributed to, participated in, and intimately desired this world. In other words, in the practitioners' current narrative, America had racism, but there were no American philosophers who were racist. The American

philosopher is thereby conceptualized as distant and outside this world, not constituted by it.

In contrast to the contemporary works dealing with Josiah Royce and race, which conflate Black thinkers who used his terminology or ideas with his actual character or projective social perspectives as being anti-racist, this book evaluates the legitimacy of the current arguments for the relevance of Royce's thoughts in contemporary debates about race and racism in America based on his actual texts dedicated to race questions and problems. Royce only appears to be an anti-racist thinker if he is taken out of his historical moment and revised as gesturing toward the political ideal that defined the latter half of the twentieth century. While such (poststructural/-modern/-colonial) readings are now the bread and butter of many scholars' repertoires, the historical context of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thought simply do not allow Royce to gain much distance from the imperial and anti-Black racism of his explicitly stated ideas on race and the racist sciences he manifestly endorsed and even practiced at the dawn of the twentieth century. If scholars actually place Royce in his historical context, it becomes quite easy to demonstrate that Royce's essay entitled "Race Questions and Prejudices" is an unapologetic extension of his 1900 essay entitled "Some Characteristic Tendencies of American Civilization," where Royce adamantly champions British colonialism and assimilation as the remedy to the burgeoning race problem both at home and abroad. These two foundational essays not only articulate his thinking about race but also serve as the basis of his thinking about provincialism.

As with any attempt to expose the racism of a canonical white figure, the road is especially hard and fraught with attacks from defenders of the status quo who seek to establish the virtue of the alleged racist. It is often the case that accusations concerning the failings of canonical white figures are intuitively denied, so the real failing must therefore lie in the character of the accuser. In the face of such narrowness, every citation of actual textual evidence contrary to the favored narrative becomes "irrelevant to Royce's philosophical project," or "merely historical"—common code words for "not worthy of *our* philosophical consideration." Comparisons to Black thinkers become "a political agenda," and disputes concerning the meaning of race and racism is "ideology." Despite establishing a clear-cut historical and textual account of Josiah Royce's racism and colonialism in my previously published article entitled "Royce, Racism, and the Colonial Ideal: White Supremacy and the Illusion of Civilization in Josiah Royce's Account of the White Man's