Next, John E. Smith proposes "W. E. Hocking’s Insights About the Individual and the State" (335-48). Smith deeply appreciates Hocking’s insight into the radical role which conscience plays in Hocking’s overall philosophy, particularly in his political theory. For Hocking, conscience forms the central core of the human individual, especially in the individual’s relation to the God of Christians. Smith also supplies a rich exegesis of Hocking’s key insight about “circuits,” “circuits of will,” and the “circuit of circuits of will”—the last named being the State, as he sees it.

Finally, Robert Neville creates a capstone commentary entitled, "Metaphysic and World Philosophy: W. E. Hocking on Chinese Philosophy" (367-820). Here Neville opportunely opens windows to the East, as Hocking had done before him. Neville graciously selects for his focus Hocking’s study of Zhuxi, the medieval Chinese Confucian philosopher, insofar as found in Hocking’s essay, "Chu Hsi’s Theory of Knowledge." Although Hocking gave more time and care to his studies of Buddhism and Hinduism, this his sole study of Chinese Confucianism provided an instance of Hocking’s interest in promoting “world philosophy,” even before the term “globalization’ affected philosophers as well as billions of their fellow earthlings. Neville shows how the moral and teleological elements of Zhuxi are ingredient in the best of Confucian thought. This can serve as a critique of a certain selfishness in the Buddhists’ “turn to the self,” a turn which impedes the capability required for scientific knowing. For the latter requires a selfless opening to Nature if one intends to be taught by Nature viewed as objective process.

In brief, all these commentaries make W. E. Hocking relevant to our twenty-first century experience. Meanwhile, this Reader’s well-chosen writings of Hocking provide us with more than a spacious foyer for deeper entry into the hospitable house of W. E. Hocking’s enriching mind.

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Here are three volumes of a readable and cogent, systematic, historically based philosophy with relevant social and cultural implications for this millennium. Each volume starts with an argument for the inevitability of either metaphysics, epistemology or ethics, and of the importance of adequate thinking in these areas, moves to a study of the historical route by which we got to our present philosophical difficulties, analyzes and critiques current approaches and ends with a constructive solution.

The historical section of each volume contains presentations, respectively, of the metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology of the main figures in Western philosophy. The readings are oriented towards understanding what Ferré thinks are the quandaries that the Western tradition has gotten into. Nevertheless this purpose does not cause him to distort the presentations. Particularly suggestive are the treatments of Philo, the Fourth Gospel, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Plotinus in his discussion of the "Platonic Value-Lens" and the discussion of Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, and Nicholas of Cusa in the section "Premodern to Protomodern" in Being and Value. The historical section in this volume includes Eckhart, Kepler, Galileo, Bacon, Malebranche, Boyle, Newton, Philosophes and Idéologues, Comte, Maxwell, Einstein, Bradley, Bergson, Alexander and Whitehead. Knowing and Value includes, besides the major figures in the story of epistemology, Augustine, pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena, Anselm, Roscellinus, William of Champeaux, Abelard, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, Fichte, Comte, Mill, Ayer, Bradley, Blanshard, Kierkegaard, Peirce and James. Living and Value continues the treatment of figures sometimes overlooked, including Augustine, Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, Moore and Ayer. In his historical narrative Ferré makes a strong case for the significance of these figures, who are often overlooked in presenting the story of the Western tradition.

The point of Ferré’s historical reflections can be stated succinctly for each volume, but the beauty of his argument is how his historical analysis supports these conclusions, showing how we got into our present philosophical and cultural cul-de-sacs.
In *Being and Value* Ferré transitions to his constructive section by characterizing the postmodern period through examining four movements whose challenges metaphysics must acknowledge and address: poststructuralism with its challenge to totalizing thinking, liberationism, feminism, and environmentalism. He cautions, however, that the social-economic-political system of corporate capitalism is still dominant, however much fresh breezes intimate change. He champions the postmodern value-preferences for qualitative uniqueness, personal integrity, moral responsibility, justice, relatedness, and holism without neglecting the classical values of coherence and adequacy.

His metaphysics draws on ecosystem ecology with its stress on holism, teamwork and long time spans. Relations will vary in degree of strength. His discussion of types of entities (an entity being a joint product of what we find and what we make), which include aggregate, systematic, formal (e.g., species), organic, compound, and fundamental, is helpful (326-338). He goes on to construct his “personalistic organicism,” based on an “evolutionary panexperientialist kalogenic naturalism.” He rejects the necessity for “God” for an adequate conceptual scheme, although the concept can be reasonably defended granted certain basic attitudinal judgments. Thus he keeps his view open to a wide audience with a variety of organizing images.

The epistemological volume traces the development of a gap between knower and known, of reductionist (idealist and positivist), coherentist (Bradley and Blanshard), and pragmatist and Kierkegaardian ways of coping with this gap, and finally his own way of deconstructing the gap, culminating in a suggestive glimpse of the beauty of knowing.

The volume on value, after historical and systematic sections, treats religion, which provides “value-drenched” images of what is so and what is important. Since Ferré’s metaphysics is compatible with a variety of religious world models (including materialism!), he suggests a “wider ecumenism” which would exclude only fanatics, spiritualities of egoism, and religions of exploitation. The section on religion ends with a thoughtful section on ugliness and evil.

The final section specifies ethical implications of the system. He develops a view of nature and culture as a continuum, avoiding social Darwinism and dichotomizing human and environmental ethics. Then he explores technological
ethics, governance and economics, ending not with optimism but with hope.

Nature and culture as a continuum is seen when we think about agriculture and realize that wilderness is partly an artifact. A thread throughout this trilogy is that modernism was wrong to discount values and valuers independent of human preferences. Although we should not abandon the notion that ideas are subjective, we need to overhaul and expand the notion of subjectivity.

The standard moral maxims, “Do no harm,” “Protect existing good,” “Create new good,” and “Be fair” take on fresh meaning when Ferre discusses minerals on the moon, the ethics of space travel and colonization, terraforming, and what it means that we are the only species evolved to have moral obligations to other life forms. He delves into the areas of habitat disturbance and enhancement, predator reintroduction, and vegetarianism. His answers are not simplistic.

One of the best sections of the book is on the ethics of technology. He has thoughtful and interesting discussions going beyond blanket approval or condemnation. Defining “technology” as “practical implementations of intelligence,” he points out that technology is an umbrella term. We should not favor nor fear technology in general, but rather investigate specific technologies. We can have confidence in the creative power of human mentality while being aware of our tendency toward hubris. Specific discussions range from aquaculture and genetic modification to cloning, SUV’s and computers. Above all is the call for wisdom, which technology cannot supply.

His discussion of political values is also balanced, nuanced, and imaginative. He uses concepts like homeostasis, mutuality, quasi-persons, and transparency to discuss capitalism, democracy, institutions, population growth, access to and reliability of information, international intervention, interpersonal interference, and condominium living.

These volumes can be read and taught independently of each other. I used Being and Value successfully as the main text in an honors class for freshmen and sophomores with no philosophical background in, omitting a few sections and supplementing with handouts and lectures.

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