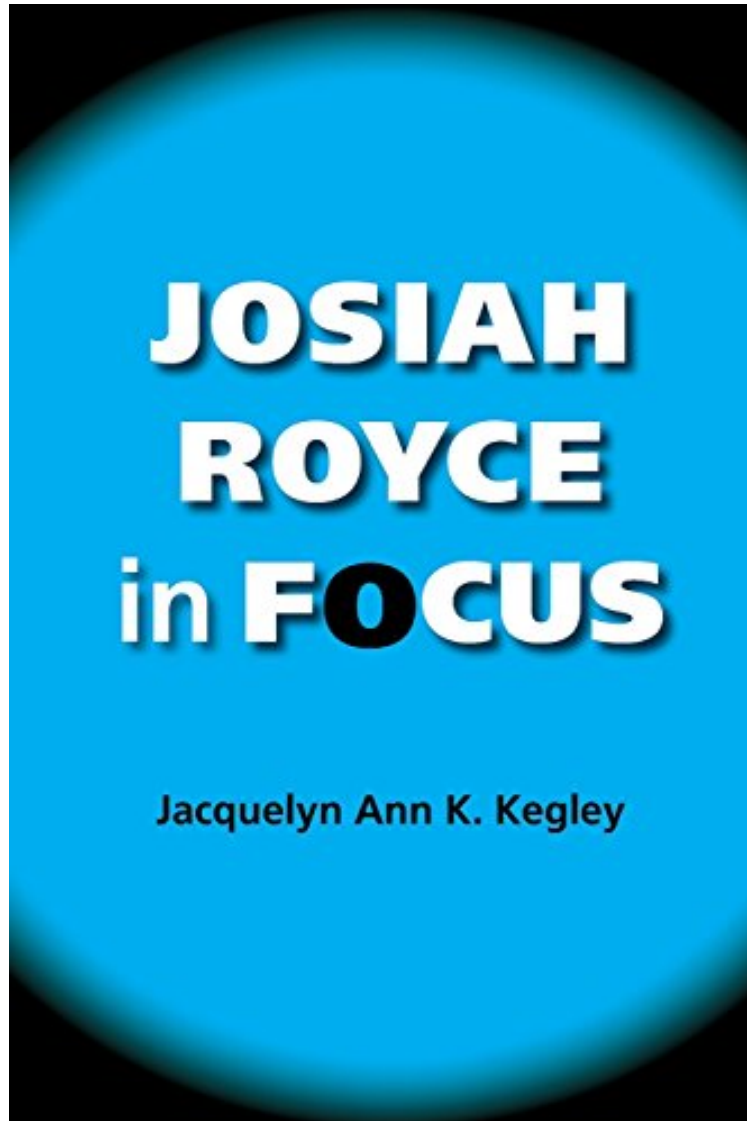


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Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley

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Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley : Josiah Royce in Focus (American Philosophy) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Josiah Royce in Focus (American Philosophy):

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Royce and Contemporary PhilosophyBy Robin FriedmanIn May 2007, I had the good fortune to attend a seminar at the Harvard Divinity School titled "William James and Josiah Royce a Century Later: Pragmatism and Idealism in Dialogue." It was a rare privilege to hear scholars who had devoted much of their lives to the study of James and Royce explore their thoughts and explain their current

importance. Among the speakers at the conference was Professor Jacquelyn Ann Kegley who gave a paper titled "Community: the Context of Creative Action" which considered the social theory of Royce. I was pleased to revisit the HDS Conference and Kegley's consideration of Royce by reading Kegley's recent book, "Josiah Royce in Focus" (2009), published in the Indiana University Press series on American philosophers. Kegley is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Philosophy Department at California State University, Bakersfield. Josiah Royce (1855 -- 1916) has frequently been overshadowed by his fellow pragmatically-oriented thinkers, Peirce, James, and Dewey in the "Golden Age of American Philosophy." Yet a growing number of philosophers, as witnessed by the HDS Conference, believe that Royce has many insights to offer to contemporary philosophy. Thus, Kegley's book explores some of Royce's major themes and relates them to current philosophical debate. Contemporary philosophers tend to shy away from Royce due to his perceived commitment to a strong form of absolute philosophical idealism. Kegley's book attempts to downplay the significance of this large metaphysical position. Instead, Kegley argues that Royce eschewed philosophical or metaphysical certainties and adopted a questioning, tentative and experientially-based approach to all philosophical questions, including questions about the idealist Absolute. Kegley understands Royce as a "model philosopher" whose life and thought testified to the importance of the philosophical endeavor. She sees Royce as a synthesizer, as a "bridge builder", who tried to mediate between various disciplines, the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and religion for the insights each had to offer. Royce's philosophy, for Kegley, is fundamentally nonreductionistic, as Royce accepted the teachings of the natural sciences but argued that human knowledge and life could not be reduced to scientism. Drawing on Royce's early life in California, Kegley characterizes Royce as a "pioneer" an "explorer" and as a "wanderer" who resisted pat answers and engaged in a lifetime of search. Kegley identifies (p.1) seven sub-themes that pervade Royce's thinking: "(1) philosophy as a reflection on life as experienced in all its richness, variety, conflict, and unity; (2) philosophy as personal and as a philosophy of life; (3) enrichment of life and thought through a critical exchange of ideas; (4) the philosopher as a 'frontiersman'; (5) forging a life and self as a narrative with a central cause or ideal as a theme; (6) the prime importance of the temporal, of history, and of the irrevocability of the past; (7) nature as part of life and as a philosophy." Kegley explores Royce's voluminous writings, beginning with a story "Pussy Blackie" he wrote at the age of 8 to his final writings on universal insurance at the end of his life. Besides his philosophical works, Royce wrote a still-valuable history of early California. As stated earlier, Kegley gives only limited attention to Royce's metaphysics, focusing instead on his late books, "The Problem of Christianity", "The Sources of Religious Insight" and in particular "The Philosophy of Loyalty" which culminates Royce's efforts in ethics and social theory. Kegley offers detailed examinations of Royce's understanding of the self, of Royce's ethical theory, his approach to religion, and his thoughts on the development of genuine individuals in genuine and loving communities. Royce rejects an atomistic, individualistic approach to life and thought. He sees the essence of human personhood as a "being-with-others" in which people learn about themselves, about science, and about living a good life in a community. Science is viewed as an interpretive endeavor rather than as the source of certainties or the only means of knowing. Ethics cannot be reduced to naturalism or to evolution, as Royce tries as well to find a ground between intuitionism and utilitarianism in his development of an ethics predicated on loyalty. Individuals find their authentic selves only as part of a community devoted to the pursuit of ethical ideals. These ideals move in ever-widening circles from the nuclear family to a group the individual chooses, to large groups devoted to their own individual forms of loyal behavior, and ultimately to humanity at large. Religion too is a communal matter. Kegley argues that Royce rejects a creationist God in favor of an internalized God immanent in human activity. She quotes Royce (at 157): "He is not a being who exists in separation from the world as its external creator. He expresses himself in the world. God expresses himself in the world as an artist expresses himself in the poems and the characters, in the music or in the other artistic creations, that arise within the artist's consciousness and that for him and in him embody his will. In this entire world, God sees himself lived out." Kegley's book is well-documented with quotations from Royce, and she effectively compares and contrasts his ideas with many contemporary thinkers. It remains questionable whether Royce's metaphysical commitments can be separated from the many insights that Kegley finds in his work. As is generally the case in a study of a historical philosopher, Kegley's book is both a reexamination of Royce and an examination and critique of the current state of philosophy. Kegley shows that Royce is an important thinker, and she offers a critique as well of the scientism and compartmentalism that still dominate much of academic philosophy. Readers with a strong background in philosophy and with an interest in American philosophy will benefit from Kegley's study. Robin Friedman 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Kathleen Sacco Comprehensive.

This new approach to Josiah Royce shows one of American philosophy's brightest minds in action for today's readers. Although Royce was one of the towering figures of American pragmatism, his thought is often considered in the wake of his more famous peers. Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley brings fresh perspective to Royce's ideas and clarifies his individual philosophical vision. Kegley foregrounds Royce's concern with contemporary public issues and ethics, focusing in particular on how he addresses long-standing problems such as race, religion, community, the dangers of mass media, mass culture, and blatant individualistic capitalism. She offers a deep and fruitful philosophical

exploration of Royce's ideas on conflict resolution, memory, self-identity, and self-development. Kegley's keen understanding and appreciation of Royce reintroduces him to a new generation of scholars and students.

Kegley's study is a meticulously researched, comprehensive account of both Royce's life and his work. . . . Josiah Royce in Focus excels at placing his philosophical thought within the context of more current trends, problems, and urgent issues in the behavioral and social sciences and in the arena of public affairs. October, 2010 (Dialogue) Highly recommended. June 2009 (Choice) I find Kegley's book excellent in many ways. It will serve undergraduates and graduates well in their courses on the history of American philosophy or in seminars on Royce. March 2011 (International Philosophical Quarterly). . . this book is the best introduction to Royce's thought written in over two decades. Vol. 4.2 2009 (Dwayne A. Tunstall Grand Valley State University) [The author's] present book confirms that she is one of top scholars on Royce. . . . she introduces Royce to those who do not know him as yet and, simultaneously, stimulates those who are already familiar with Royce to re-think his output and look at it afresh, that is from the perspective of new times and new challenges Vol. 2.1 2010 (Krzysztof Piotr Skowroski Opole University, Poland). . . Josiah Royce in Focus should be read by all interested in Royce. Newcomers will be treated to a thorough and exciting introduction to Royce, while those already acquainted will be led to engage Royce's thought in novel ways. Vol. 36.1 Spring 2009 (Mathew A. Foust University of Oregon) Makes Royce attractive, interesting, and helpful to newcomers to philosophy and to those interested in healing America's wounds. (Frank Oppenheim Xavier University) Kegley's previous work on Royce has bequeathed confidence in her knowledge, her clarity and directness of presentation, and her overall philosophical sophistication. (John McDermott Texas AM University) About the Author Jacquelyn Ann K. Kegley is Professor of Philosophy at California State University, Bakersfield. She is author of *Genuine Individuals and Genuine Communities: A Roycean Public Philosophy* and editor of *Genetic Knowledge: Human Values and Responsibility*.