

## THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF JOSIAH ROYCE

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## Abstract

This paper deals with Josiah Royce's early and later formulations of his moral philosophy, respectively represented by *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* and by "Urbana Lectures" and *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. Though the later theory is more profound and thus receives rather extended treatment here, the early phase is not neglected as it also contains important insights.

There are two fundamental theses in Royce's moral philosophy: 1. sharp distinction between "Is" and "Ought", and between fact and value; 2. emphasis on the autonomy of moral agent. Royce's criticisms of other ethical theories are all based on these two theses. However, the view that moral values are not based on personal likes and dislikes cannot be easily reconciled with the view that moral decisions have to be made by each individual person himself. The tension between the two theses was not resolved until Royce developed a more satisfactory theory of moral self in the later period.

Royce's principle of Universal Harmony proposed in *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* suffered from its lack of concrete content as well as of practical means through which the goal is attained. In order to rectify the shortcoming Royce later attempted to show, in "Urbana Lectures" and *The Philosophy of Loyalty*, that moral ends are realized through imitation of ideal personalities, and that all practical ethical codes of conduct can be deduced from the principle of Loyalty to Loyalty. However, the attempt is not a total success.