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Experience and Value: Essays on John Dewey & Pragmatic Naturalism

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Experience and Value: Essays on John Dewey and Pragmatic Naturalism brings together twelve philosophical essays spanning the career of noted Dewey scholar, S. Morris Eames. The volume includes both critiques and interpretations of important issues in John Dewey's value theory as well as the application of Eames's pragmatic naturalism in addressing contemporary problems in social theory, education, and religion.

The collection begins with a discussion of the underlying principles of Dewey's pragmatic naturalism, including the concepts of nature, experience, and philosophic method. Essays "Experience and Philosophical Method in John Dewey" and "Primary Experience in the Philosophy of John Dewey" develop what Eames believed to be a central theme in Dewey's thought and provide a theoretical framework for subsequent discussion.

The volume continues with specific applications of this framework in the areas of value theory, moral theory, social philosophy, and the philosophy of religion. Eames's analysis of value exposes the connection between the immediately felt values of experience and the more sophisticated judgments of value that are the product of reflection. From this basis in moral theory, Eames considers the derivation of judgments of obligation from judgments of fact. This discussion provides a grounding for a consideration of contemporary social issues directed by naturalistic and scientific principles.

In the third section, with regard to educational theory, Eames considers possible resolutions of the current dichotomy between the factual worldview of science and the humanistic worldview of the liberal arts. The comprehensive article, "Dewey's Views of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness," connects the essays of the first and second sections and explores the placement of Dewey's value theory with respect to morals and aesthetics. With "Creativity and Democracy," in the fourth section, Eames also considers the concept of democracy from the standpoint of current and historical issues faced by society. This article hints at a major project of Eames's intellectual life—the theory of democracy.

The volume concludes with a discussion of the difficulty of maintaining the values of religious experience in a scientifically and technologically sophisticated world, the very topic that first brought Eames to philosophy—the meaning of religion and the religious life. Suggested solutions are offered in "The Lost Individual and Religious Unity."

Experience and Value: Essays on John Dewey and Pragmatic Naturalism illuminates Eames' life of inquiry,

a life that included moral, social, aesthetic, and religious dimensions of value—all suffused with the influence of John Dewey.

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