

The Critical Edition of George Santayana's *The Life of Reason*¹

In 1905–06, George Santayana published the five books of *The Life of Reason*, which established his reputation as a serious thinker and earned him promotion in 1907 to full professor in the Harvard philosophy department. One hundred and ten years after *The Life of Reason* was completed, the Santayana Edition completed the critical edition of Santayana's *The Life of Reason* in 2016. In celebration of the critical edition, it is important to give an account of the broad significance of the work and the importance of a critically editing version of it.

I once heard a professor known for political activism and social engagement mention in passing that renewed interest in the philosophy of George Santayana would be a culturally salutary development. I wondered, what could this person find beneficial in the thought of Santayana, who, when he is known for more than a routinely mangled quotation about the past, might be seen as a sort of individualist or traditionalist interested in contemplation and content to let worldly powers work their wills? What could Santayana's philosophy provide readers of varying political and social commitments? The answer is, I think, a vision of human life lived sanely in times of great change, and the five books of *The Life of Reason* articulate such a vision.

Santayana's philosophy celebrates ideals arising from human capacities for consciousness and reason, which are inescapably rooted in material nature. His philosophy is a naturalism that acknowledges the power of the material universe *and* the legitimacy of human values without resort to superstition. In response to philosophical and popular irrationalism—whether chaotic or conformist—, in response to the disruption of globalization or the confusion of social fragmentation, Santayana's philosophy maintains the value of reason, a plurality of

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented on 13 April 2017 at the Observatory of the Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures in the United States, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

values, and the possibility of consciousness liberated from distraction and worry. His thought acknowledges the intellectual heritage of different cultures without promoting the supremacy of a particular one; it is grounded in European traditions, but it also engages with views of his American colleagues and draws deeply on Asian philosophical and religious traditions. His philosophy is open to the variety of human experience and respects the distinct character of the concrete individual of a particular time and place.² Santayana accepted the limitations and losses of being mortal and held no illusions about the conflicted nature of human experience, but for him this presented no obstacles also to valuing disillusioned imagination and spiritual freedom. Renewed interest in Santayana's philosophy could mean increased attention to the variety of values in human life, respect for imagination without sentimentalism or escapism, and admission of the overwhelming immensity and power of an irrational material universe coupled with a celebration of the potential of human consciousness. It could mean naturalism and reason would be esteemed highly enough to displace, more often than now, superstition and hubristic delusion in a human life.

Such a philosophy has significance as a response to cultural conditions diagnosed by John Lachs and Michael Hodges. They have written of Santayana's philosophy as a response to a "modern malaise" resulting from the failed project of establishing foundations of certainty for human knowledge and values. The massive and extensive changes of the twentieth century—social, political, technological—shook long-standing traditions including intellectual traditions that ground knowledge and values on foundations of certainty. Without traditional foundations,

² "The full grown human soul should respect all traditions and understand all passions; at the same time it should possess and embody a particular culture, without any unmanly relationship or mystical neutrality. Justice is one thing, indecision is another, and weak. If you allow all men to live according to their genuine natures, you must assert your own genuine nature and live up to it" (*PP*, 464).

human life seemed to many to become meaningless. According to Lachs and Hodges, human values and practices came to be regarded as “thoroughly contingent, [lacking] the certainty, rightness, or absolute justification prior generations insisted they could attain” (Hodges and Lachs, *Thinking in the Ruins: Wittgenstein and Santayana on Contingency* [Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000], 4). Some responses to this contingency, observed by Lachs and Hodges, include, first, denial through affirmation of an eternal or divine or transcendental reality that would make contingency illusory; second and third, nihilism and skepticism, which accept the demand for certainty but despair of ever finding it; fourth, John Dewey’s anti-foundationalism which takes up contingency as a means to reconstruction and seeks resolution of concrete problems instead of universal certainty; and, fifth, a post-modernism that seeks to interrupt the normal, embrace contingency, and question all established power structures.

Lachs and Hodges have suggested that Santayana offered another sort of response to modern conditions by rejecting a search for certain foundations while maintaining the natural legitimacy of meanings and values expressed by the vital impulses and interests of our lives. (Hodges and Lachs, *Thinking in the Ruins*, 3). Santayana abandoned certainty and offered instead a disillusioned and non-reductive naturalism that avoided the insanity of skepticism as a way of life; of supernaturalism or idealism that confuses ideas with existences; of humanism that ignores the infinite context of nature; and of philosophies that dismiss reason altogether.³

Daniel Moreno has argued that Santayana’s thought can be understood as a dedicated pursuit of sanity.⁴ According to Moreno, Santayana’s constant preoccupation was madness, for

³ Traditions are necessary for human living, but none is certain or absolute (making dogmatism unviable). They arise in the press of actual life and can be better or worse, but they cannot be eliminated (making skepticism unviable).

⁴ See Daniel Moreno, *Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life*, trans. Charles Padron, (Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: Bucknell University Press, 2015).

example, the madness of accepting illusions as truths or believing ego to predominate over the natural conditions that produced it. Santayana acknowledged the ineradicable animal compulsion to believe myths while he cultivated the ability of consciousness to transcend though not eliminate that natural compulsion. Santayana’s philosophy guards against deceptive illusions while appreciating them as fruits of human consciousness, which may carry great symbolic import for actual living.⁵

The Life of Reason has its origins in such an outlook. Santayana wrote that the idea for the work came to him in 1888 when, as a student of Josiah Royce, he first read Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He appreciated Hegel’s subject matter—the history of human ideas, but he found the work ruined by the sophistry of connecting historical episodes with a dialectical chain and by the myth that this history was the whole of cosmic evolution. He characterized such an approach as anti-natural (“*Apologia*,” PGS, 558)⁶ and thought a more honest inquiry into the history of ideas would trace human efforts to satisfy natural impulses in the natural environment (*LRI*, 185). He attempted this in *The Life of Reason*, which he characterized as “a summary history of the human imagination” (“A General Confession,” PGS 13–4) and “a presumptive biography of the human intellect” (*LRI*, 184). He wanted to study ideas—the imaginative and subjective descriptions of material facts—not for the sake of the ideas themselves;⁷ but to consider them in their origin and significance as natural expressions of the life of the human animal.

⁵ Ideas are necessary for human living, but none is literally the thing it symbolizes (making dogmatism unviable). They arise in the press of actual life and can be better or worse, but they cannot be eliminated (making skepticism unviable).

⁶ PGS is the abbreviation for *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, ed. Paul Arthur Schilpp, (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Press, 1991).

⁷ “as in a work of pure poetry or erudition” (“A General Confession,” PGS 12-14).

Santayana thought ideas have symptomatic and expressive value, becoming rational as they harmonize with each other and as they adjust to facts.⁸ His interest in *The Life of Reason*, he wrote, “was not fundamentally psychological but moral; [he] wished to select such turns in human sentiment as poetically if not intellectually rendered mankind wiser and nobler. [He] was collecting materials for a utopia.” (“*Apologia*,” *PGS*, 557). His aim in this historical survey of ideas was to determine what wisdom is possible for human beings, given that the human mind always is poetical, that is, given that ideas are never identical to the existences they symbolize. He did not think that rejecting poetry for science was the path to wisdom, because science contained poetry too. Science was scientific insofar as it promoted beneficial adjustment to an external world through observation and experimental action; but this scientific activity was complementary to the poetical ideas of the human mind. Santayana believed that “[w]isdom lay rather in taking everything good-humouredly, with a grain of salt” (“A General Confession”, *PGS* 12-14).

But Santayana was explicit that he did not regard the history of human ideas as “a mere comedy of errors” (*LRI*, 185).⁹ He was sincere in his search for wisdom, and he believed that

⁸ He characterized reason as “a harmony of the passions [and] a harmony of the inner life with truth and with fate” (“A General Confession,” *PGS*, 14).

⁹ The abbreviations for the critical edition of *The Life of Reason* follow this form:

LR1: George Santayana, *Reason in Common Sense*, Book I of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2011).

LR2: George Santayana, *Reason in Society*, Book 2 of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2013).

LR3: George Santayana, *Reason in Religion*, Book 3 of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2014).

LR4: George Santayana, *Reason in Art*, Book I of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2015).

living according to reason can achieve something when it more fully expresses the actual interests that animate it and discerns the truth about the facts those interests direct it toward (*LRI*, 185). However, after rejecting Hegel’s approach, the standard of any achievement was not immediately clear.

In the decade after first reading Hegel, he found a more agreeable perspective in Plato—it was not the voluntary illusions of Plato’s myths and metaphysics supporting his moral philosophy that inspired Santayana; rather it was the wisdom of Socrates. Santayana realized the only thing needed to criticize the life of the human intellect was self-knowledge. One need not impose an “unnatural constancy” on human nature in general to critique it with the aim of discerning the direction of human wisdom. Santayana thought the critic required only a definite character or perspective and “a sane capacity for happiness” (*LRI*, 186).¹⁰

The inchoate idea for *The Life of Reason* matured in the 1890s. Santayana developed a course called “philosophy of history,”—Philosophy 10a—the lectures for which came from his reading of Plato, Aristotle—especially the *Ethics* and *Politics*—, Bacon, Locke, Montesquieu, and Taine. This course, he claimed, established a basis for composing *The Life of Reason* (*PP*, 393).¹¹ In 1895 he made a close reading of Thomas Hill Green’s *Prolegomena to Ethics*, and on the end page of the book he wrote a short outline dated 1896 recording his “Idea of a little system of moral philosophy, The Life of Reason.” He listed five parts, which do not correspond

LR5: George Santayana, *Reason in Science*, Book I of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. Marianne S. Wokeck and Martin A. Coleman, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2016).

¹⁰ “To decipher the Life of Reason nothing is needed but an analytic spirit and a judicious love of man, a love quick to distinguish success from failure in his great and confused experiment of living” (*LRI*, 5)

¹¹ *PP* is the abbreviation for George Santayana, *Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography*, Volume I of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 1986).

to the five books eventually published, and a very brief paragraph about Reason as a distinguishing attribute of human beings. In 1896-97 he took a leave of absence and studied Greek philosophy at King's College, Cambridge University, which he credited with helping to further refine his plan for *The Life of Reason* (PP, 394; LRI, 186).

In a 1900 letter to William James the title of *The Life of Reason* appeared in Santayana's correspondence for the first time (LGS 1:212).¹² In 1902 he wrote to his publisher that he had "been at work since 1896 on a philosophical book to be called The Life of Reason" (LGS 1:254). Two years later, in 1904, he wrote to his publisher that he was sending "a first installment of [his] magnum opus," *The Life of Reason*, which, he wrote, "represents all [he had] to say of any consequence" (LGS 1:264–5). The first four books, *Reason in Common Sense*, *Reason in Society*, *Reason in Religion*, and *Reason in Art* were published in 1905; the fifth and longest book, *Reason in Science*, appeared in 1906. As Santayana understood it, though the five books showed no formal continuity, there was a system contained in the work.¹³

In *Reason in Common Sense*, Santayana described reason as impulse modified by reflection in harmony with past judgments.¹⁴ Reflection and memory make possible a vision of the aim of impulses, that is, of ideal ends. Impulse influenced or directed by this awareness in

¹² This is the standard reference for George Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana*, Books 1–8, Volume V of *The Works of George Santayana*, eds. William G. Holzberger, Herman J. Saatkamps, Jr., and Marianne S. Wokeck (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2000–2008). Citations refer to book and page number following the abbreviation LGS, for example, LGS 8:150, refers to page 150 of Book 8.

¹³ "Reason and humanity begin with the union of instinct and ideation, when instinct becomes enlightened, establishes values in its objects, and is turned from a process into an art, while at the same time consciousness becomes practical and cognitive, beginning to contain some symbol or record of the co-ordinate realities among which it arises.

"Reason accordingly requires the fusion of two types of life, commonly led in the world in well-nigh total separation, one a life of impulse expressed in affairs and social passions, and the other a life of reflection express in religion, science, and the imitative arts" (LRI, 3).

¹⁴ "The guide in early sensuous education is the same that conducts the whole Life of Reason, namely, impulse checked by experiment, and experiment judged again by impulse" (LRI, 28).

harmony with other impulses is reason (*LRI*, 2).¹⁵ To live the Life of Reason is to perceive and pursue ideals such that the direction of conduct and the interpretation of sense promote natural human happiness (*LRI*, 2).¹⁶ This is a coordination of impulse and reflection, instinct and ideation in light of the broadest human interests. Santayana wrote that the Life of Reason is “the unity given to all existence by a mind *in love with the good*,” and so “rationality depends on distinguishing the excellent; and that distinction can be made, in the last analysis, only by an irrational impulse. As life is a better form given to force...so reason is a better form given to interest itself” (*LRI*, 29). The first book outlines the awareness of ideals and the emergence of reason from natural antecedents, that is from impulse and disordered experience; and in particular Santayana considers the emergence of consciousness, recognition of external objects in a unified homogenous space, the discovery of mind and of fellow-minds, the relation of ideals and existence, values and judgment of values, and human nature. He ended the book with a promise that “[t]o give a general picture of human nature and its rational functions will be the task of the following books” (*LRI*, 175). He sought to fulfill the promise by examining the human activities, endeavors, and institutions that constitute society, religion, art, and science.

In *Reason in Society*, Santayana examined human associations and how they contribute to the Life of Reason. He discerned three stages of society: natural, free, and ideal. Santayana’s investigation of natural society began with love and the family and continued through industry and government. He considered aristocratic and democratic forms of government and determined them not to be conducive to the Life of Reason. In free society, which can include friendship and

¹⁵ “Life art . . . the Life of Reason is not a power but a result, the spontaneous expression of liberal genius in a favouring environment” (*LRI*, 4). “Rationality is nothing but a form, an ideal constitution which experience may more or less embody. . . . [It is] an inviolate principle” (*LR3*, 6).

¹⁶ To actually achieve the Life of Reason one must adequately conceive both the conditions under which humans live and human interests (*LRI*, 17).

patriotism, association is guided by ideal interest and concern for fellows becomes disinterested. Ideal society, Santayana wrote, “transcends accidental conjunctions,” and is where “the ideal interests themselves take possession of the mind” (*LR2*, 127). He explains that such ideal society primarily is found in religion, art, and science, which are taken up in the remaining books.

In *Reason in Religion*, Santayana stated that religion makes an attempt to achieve the Life of Reason but falls short. He thought religion promotes an ultimate harmony both within the individual soul and with that which supports the soul, making it “a more conscious and direct pursuit of the Life of Reason than is society, science or art” (*LR3*, 6), which, in his view, are tentative and lack concern for an ultimate ideal. But religion falls short of the Life of Reason because it relies on imagination while mistakenly assuming both literal truth and moral authority, making it an unreliable means to happiness. However, religion may express truth as an interpretation of life or symbolic expression of moral experience (*LR3*, 7). Religion is poetry; and when recognized as such and not confused with science, it may contribute to wisdom. Santayana articulated such a contribution through historical review of religious traditions in Europe and naturalized accounts of piety, spirituality, charity, and immortality as ideal values, showing how regard for the truth of religion need not entail supernaturalism.

In *Reason in Art*, Santayana explained that humans influence and are influenced by the environment; and while human influence often is insignificant, it sometimes makes a change in natural objects that is congenial to the human mind. He wrote, “[a]ny operation which thus humanises and rationalises objects is called art” (*LR4*, 3). This is fully natural human activity, and it expresses reason when human impulse to act on the environment is directed by awareness of an end that fulfills the impulse. This continuity of art with natural impulses does not preclude refinement or aesthetic judgment, and Santayana distinguished industrial art and fine art. In the

book, he considered music, language, and the plastic arts. He also considered the criterion of taste and the relation of art and happiness. Artistic success depends on reason and intelligence. “The Life of Reason,” he maintained, “is another name for what, in the widest sense of the word, might be called Art” (*LRI*, 4). Happiness is the end or aim of the Life of Reason, and art serves this moral aim. Santayana believed that the artist’s activity is innocent, as is the working of any natural impulse toward its ideal, and should be free, while he also maintained that art had a moral purpose. He wrote, “it is one thing to make room for genius and to respect the sudden madness of poets. . . and it is quite another not to judge the result by rational standards” (*LR4*, 110). Art, being concerned with the ideal, is an imaginatively recasting of the world and so a “rehearsal of rational living” (*LR4*, 106). “A rational severity in respect to art simply weeds the garden; it expresses a mature aesthetic choice and opens the way to supreme artistic achievements” (*LR4*, 116).

In the final book, *Reason in Science*, Santayana aimed to justify science as a natural human activity and articulate its role in the Life of Reason. Science, he thought, was continuous with common knowledge differing only in its scope. He wrote, “[c]ommon knowledge passes from memory to history and from history to mechanism; and having reached that point it may stop to look back . . . over the course it has traversed, and thus become psychology” (*LR5*, 99). These early chapters of the book—“History,” “Mechanism,” and “Psychology”—cover this passage of knowledge, and these fields belong to what Santayana called physics, the half of science that describes existences. Dialectic, the other half of science, elaborates ideas; and Santayana thought it the more interesting and important of the two halves. Knowledge of existences is, of course, indispensable; but it is not enough for rational life. We must know the excellence of existences. Santayana wrote, “in the order of values knowledge of existence is

subsidiary to knowledge of ideals” (*LR5*, 99). He then examines the nature of intent to determine how moral life is a part of scientific inquiry. Understanding the nature of intent is vital for self-knowledge and moral growth, and dialectic is the method serving this understanding. Cultivating self-knowledge reveals one’s ideal aims and how best to harmonize them with the world and each other, that is, how to live rationally.¹⁷ In this, Santayana attempted to show how the Life of Reason is scientific, and he followed out this attempt with a discussion of pre-rational morality, rational ethics, and post-rational morality. The book ends with a defense of science and an argument for its necessity for the Life of Reason

In the year before *The Life of Reason* appeared, Santayana wrote to his publisher regarding the terms of publication, which he found quite favorable especially because he expected it to take years for the edition to sell out (*LGS* 1:266). After publication, Santayana responded to a letter from his publisher communicating the success of *The Life of Reason*. Santayana wrote that he was greatly satisfied with the recognition the work received, though he added that he did not read many reviews finding it an unprofitable activity. Prominent reviewers were not agreed in their judgment though some admired it greatly. While G. E. Moore found the work unclear, F. C. S. Schiller praised the literary style. John Dewey called *The Life of Reason* “the most adequate contribution America has yet made—always excepting Emerson—to moral philosophy” (John Dewey, “Review of George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Vol. 1 and 2,” *Educational Review* 34, 1907: 116–29).

The five books of *The Life of Reason* were published in 1905 and 1906, and the first corrected printing appeared in 1917. In that time Santayana had become quite critical of the work, and from 1917 to 1948 he had little good to write about it in his letters. But in 1922 he still was

¹⁷ To actually achieve the Life of Reason one must adequately conceive both the conditions under which humans live and human interests (*LRI*, 17).

willing to submit errata to his publisher and to write a new preface (*LGS* 2:18). In retrospect he found *The Life of Reason* “hopelessly lost in the subjective” (*LGS* 2:290) and the title “obscure and unfortunate” (*LGS* 2:299). In the 1930s, he characterized the work as “professorial and lecture-like, and . . . philosophically less fundamental than [his] later books” (*LGS* 5:45); and he thought “the style, . . . often, verbose and academic” (*LGS* 6:9), though he acknowledged that the presupposition of the work was not superficial. By the late 1940s he still complained about the style and wished he “could erase all that cheap work,” but he admitted there were good sentences and paragraphs that he liked when he happened to find them quoted (*LGS* 8:100). In 1950, he wrote that the second book of *The Life of Reason* “began to displease [him] as soon as it was published” (*LGS* 8:236).

In 1951, at the request of his publisher, Santayana undertook with his assistant Daniel Cory making a one-book abridgement of *The Life of Reason*. After going over the work closely Santayana still found parts of it juvenile, superficial, and a little cocky and flighty, but he also commented in letters from that time that he found the text better written than expected and “much like [his] latest views” (*LGS* 8:396, 401, 421). Santayana died in 1952 before the one-volume abridgement was completed; but his letters indicate that he remained supportive of the rejuvenation of his first great work, which Cory completed and saw published in 1954.

In 2016 the Santayana Edition completed publication of the critical edition of *The Life of Reason*. The five books, published by The MIT Press beginning in 2011, present the original work in a form as close to the author’s intention as can be determined by examination of manuscripts, correspondence, and the author’s marked up reading copies. The five books make up Volume VII of the projected 20 volumes of the critical edition of *The Works of George Santayana*. These twenty volumes will consist of 33 books of which the Santayana Edition has

now published 19. As part of this work the Edition has restored chapters held out of the first edition of Santayana's three-book autobiography and published it as he wished it to appear, as the single book *Persons and Places*; published in eight books the most complete collection of Santayana's Letters; and produced two books of marginalia from his personal library. The autobiography, letters, and marginalia are especially helpful for understanding Santayana's intentions and judgments regarding his other works, and I have drawn on them extensively in my discussion here of *The Life of Reason*.

The efforts of the Santayana Edition have also led to new discoveries of letters and manuscripts. The Edition has produced electronic versions, available on our website, of previously unpublished class notes and Santayana's translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Recently the Edition learned of 300 pages of newly available Santayana documents from Columbia University Libraries Archival Collection, which include letters from Santayana to his friend Baron Albert von Westenholz, whom Santayana described as one of "best-educated persons I have known" (*PP*, 442). The letters to Westenholz, written between 1903 and 1937, will be transcribed and made available electronically on the Santayana Edition website along with transcriptions and translations of letters to Santayana from his father, Agustín.

In addition to these discoveries and restorations, there is a further value of a critical edition. It is perhaps the chief value, and it lies in the stability and integrity of the text established through historical research and critical editing procedures. Knowing the history of the printed text allows editors to identify different versions of the text and to determine variants among the different versions. Critical editing methodology includes recording and justifying with evidence and argument any emendation or preference for one variant over another. A published critical edition always includes a list of all the variants of the critically edited text and the editors'

rationale for choosing one variant as definitive, making the origins of the critical text transparent. The result is a reliable text that scholars can use with confidence.

Without a critical edition, *The Life of Reason* exists in several forms among which the differences are not immediately apparent. One readily available reprinting of the work presents itself as the first edition but does not acknowledge that it contains several changes from the actual first printing. A version presented as the second edition is not actually a new edition, but it is the third version with variants. And the true second edition makes changes that Santayana himself was not in favor of. The critical edition sorts this out and creates a text as close to the author's intention based on the text closest to the author's hand and any notes or corrections made in the author's hand.

This text is important as a common reference for scholarly discussion and interpretation. While this may not seem as dramatic as restoring lost or expurgated chapters, it is hugely important to scholarly activity. For example, in cases where various versions exist with some being misidentified (such as the so-called first edition *Life of Reason* that already had variants introduced), misquotations in scholarly works (which are not as uncommon as might be hoped) cannot be definitively corrected. Without a common text, obstacles remain to resolving disputes about quotations.

The basic principles of critical editing also make plain why the one-volume abridgment of *The Life of Reason* should be considered a new work entirely. Besides being an abridgment, Daniel Cory completed it after Santayana's death, so the final form was out of Santayana's hands. This work was not considered when determining the critical text. But its variants were noted and included in an appendix to the critical edition of *The Life of Reason*. It is offered for comparison but not for justification of any part of the critical text.

The integrity and stability of the text is the most consistent benefit of a critical edition. In providing a common reference for scholarly discussion and interpretation, a critical edition contributes to the conscious harmony of intentions that is the Life of Reason. It is my hope that you may be convinced of the importance of not only of Santayana's philosophy but also of critical editing more generally and of the institutions that support it such as, in the case of the Santayana Edition, the National Endowment for the Humanities.