

THE JOSIAH ROYCE SOCIETY

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17 April 2008

Kelly Parker

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I am writing on behalf of the Josiah Royce Society seeking your support for a significant preservation and access project in American philosophy. The ultimate goal of the project is to produce a Critical Edition of the Writings of Josiah Royce that will stand beside the Critical Editions of the works of William James, Charles S. Peirce, John Dewey and George Santayana. The more immediate project, for which funding is needed, is an Indexing Project of the papers and manuscripts of Josiah Royce at the Harvard Archives to be conducted in 2008-2009. This index will serve as the editorial basis for the larger Critical Edition project.

Josiah Royce (1855-1916) is a canonical figure in American philosophy who worked in all areas of philosophy including logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, as well as philosophy of religion, psychology, and social philosophy. During his tenure as the Alford Professor of Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy, and Civil Polity at Harvard University at the turn of the 20th century, Royce was considered the preeminent American philosopher. Due to a philosophical shift toward realism shortly after his death, Royce's work fell from popularity for much of the last century. Nonetheless, in 1954, at almost the nadir of Royce's reputation, William Ernest Hocking wrote to Royce's son, Edward, and reflected on the Royce Memorial Fund in this way: "I am inclined to think that a little boost for this Memorial Fund might help Harvard itself to recall the ground for its former pride, and maybe remind the Department of its Mount Washington." In Professor Hocking's mind, Royce's philosophy was the "ground" of Harvard's former pride and the Harvard Philosophy Department's (unappreciated) "Mount Washington."

A new generation of scholars, motivated by philosophers such as Frank Oppenheim, John Clendenning, and Jacquelyn Kegley, has embraced Hocking's estimation of Royce's work and reclaimed his philosophy. These new scholars are now making novel contributions using Royce's work in the philosophy of religion, ethics, logic, and social/political philosophy. The challenge faced by these scholars, both as researchers and teachers, is that of gaining access to Royce's work. Much of Royce's published material is out of print and the vast majority of Royce's unpublished papers and manuscripts are stored in the Harvard Archives.

The overarching Critical Edition project aims to eradicate these access issues; the immediate project attempts to meliorate these issues and focuses on the creation of a detailed and annotated index of Royce's papers and manuscripts housed at Harvard. This index will be digitized for internet availability and is *an absolutely essential first step* in preparation for a Critical Edition of Royce's writings insofar as it will provide an overall inventory of the collection including the accurate dating of material. This inventory will allow editors to assess the scholarly significance of each item and its role in the historical and intellectual history of Royce's time as well as our own. Professor Larry Hickman, Director of the Dewey Center and General Editor of the Critical Edition of the works of John Dewey, has consented to serve as General Editor of the Royce Critical Edition, and has deemed this indexing project crucial for the overall success of the Critical Edition. Professor John J. McDermott, who served as General Editor of the Correspondence of William James and is a former president of the Josiah Royce Society, concurs with Professor Hickman.

The Josiah Royce Society is working closely and cooperatively with the Harvard Archives in their attempts to preserve Royce's materials. Our project, however, aims not only to preserve the materials, but also to improve access to Royce's papers and manuscripts by specialized scholars, students in the humanities, and the general public. Further, by facilitating the continued recovery of Royce's philosophy, our project will contribute to new developments in philosophy, psychology, sociology, history, and religious studies.

Frank Oppenheim, professor at Xavier University and author of numerous books on Royce's philosophy, including *Royce's Mature Ethics* and *Royce's Mature Philosophy of Religion*, has agreed to undertake the indexing project at Harvard University on behalf of the Josiah Royce Society. Xavier University has pledged to support Professor Oppenheim's salary during his work on the project for the Josiah Royce Society (\$10,000), and the Chicago Province of the Society of Jesus will add an additional \$10,000. The total amount required for the indexing project is \$67,100. With the \$20,000 already pledged, \$47,100 remains to be funded.

It is our hope that you will judge the project a worthy one and provide the additional funding at whatever level you can. It is not only your dollars, but also your demonstrated support that will help this work progress.

The Josiah Royce Society has been granted tax-exempt status as a public charity. A copy of the letter from the Internal Revue Service is available upon request. If additional information is needed in support of this initial inquiry, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you very much for you consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Parker , Ph.D.
President, The Josiah Royce Society