Overheard in Seville

Bulletin of the Santayana Society

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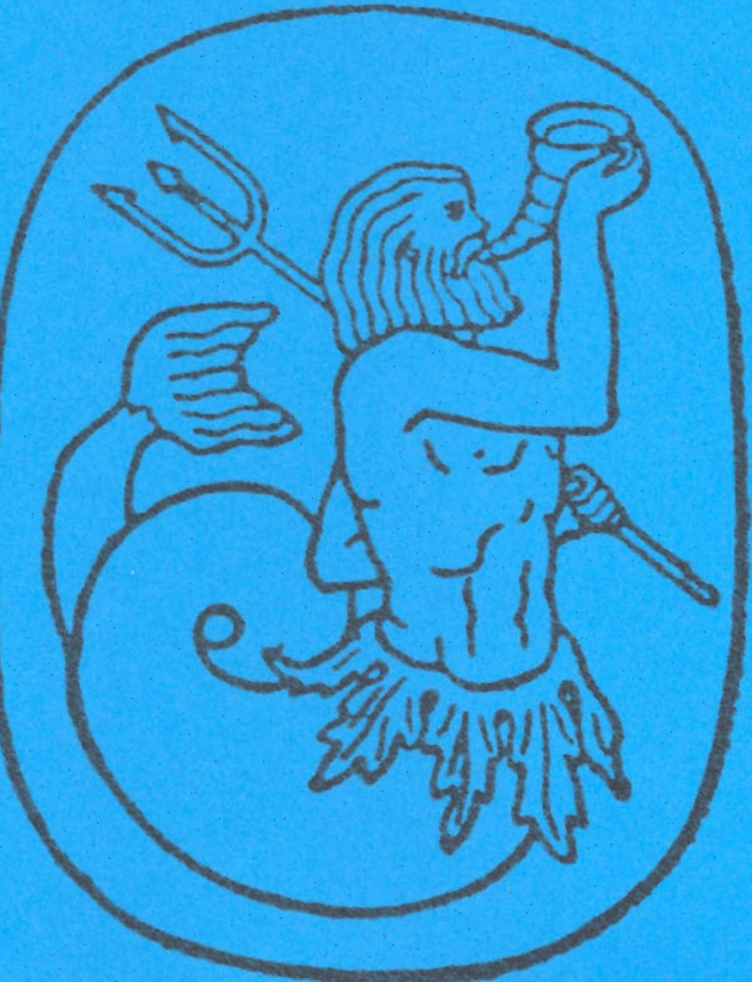

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The George Santayana Society

2007
ANNUAL MEETING

The Society's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the December meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division) in Baltimore, Maryland.

- Report on the *Santayana Edition*

Speakers

Glenn Tiller
Texas A&M at Corpus Christi
"Counting Categories with Peirce and Santayana"

Paul Forster
University of Ottawa
"What Grounds the Categories:
Peirce and Santayana"

Michael Brodrick
Vanderbilt University
"Animal Struggle, Intellectual Salvation"

Chair

Matthew Flamm
Rockford College

8:00 - 11:00 P.M. 29 December
Atlantic (Third Floor)
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel

Corpulent or a Train of Ideas? Santayana's Critique of Hume

In his autobiography *Persons and Places*, George Santayana admits to having ill-appreciated David Hume.[1] This stated inability to have grasped Hume's significance is confounded by the fact that his Harvard professor, George Palmer, claimed that Santayana "had Hume in [his] bones" (PP 238). Palmer sees a deep similarity between Santayana and Hume, while the connection eludes Santayana himself — this incongruence begs to be examined. Not only will it (hopefully) help us further appreciate the all too well-known British empiricist, it will illuminate an essential element of Santayana's critique of modern philosophy. Santayana's distaste for what he considered "transcendentalist" or "psychologistic" philosophy lies at the core of his criticisms, and it influences his take on Hume. I plan to argue here that Santayana ultimately misrepresented Hume but that this is due to a tension in Hume's own work, namely between the epistemological commitments inherent in his coherence theory of truth and the naturalism at work in his ontological assumptions. These latter inclinations, together with Hume's general skepticism toward metaphysics, strike a chord that is harmonious with Santayana's own work. But it is on the epistemological aspect of Hume's philosophy that Santayana fixates, leading him to neglect the naturalist sympathies underlying Hume's skeptical critique of knowledge. Ultimately, however, this misunderstanding is instructive, for it brings into focus the merits of Santayana's own theory of a fundamentally transitive knowledge grounded in animal faith.

To present the most charitable reading of Santayana's critique of Hume, it is important to note that the general problem of "two Santayanas" — the earlier and the later — can be said to tempt us here. This is because Santayana's generally positive and sympathetic claims about Hume in *The Life of Reason* contrast in noteworthy ways with the "enem[y] of common sense" he later depicts in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (SAF 293). It would seem that, at an earlier date, Santayana saw the commonalities between Hume's position and his own notion of instinctive belief. But later, as he sets up the introduction to his ontological system, Santayana is at greater pains to critique the modern epistemological trends that would deny him the right to believe in a substantial reality, and so he changes his assessment. Hume's skeptical dogmatic focus on the coherence between impressions and ideas joined by three principles of connection wins him a place in the enemy camp and leads Santayana to wryly suppose that Hume, "in spite of his corpulence, was nothing more than a train of ideas" (SAF 200). Whereas in *Life of Reason* Santayana focuses approvingly on Hume's analysis of reason as natural instinct, in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and thereafter Santayana's analysis turns a critical eye on Hume's criterion of knowledge as a relation between ideas and impressions, which results in a mis-characterization of Hume as an anti-naturalist propounding a malicious critique of scientific knowledge.

Ultimately, while Santayana's assessment of Hume as one who negates the natural world in favor of experience is not justified, his critique does illuminate Santayana's problem with the modern philosophical notion that knowledge is the adequation of thought with its object. Santayana detects this phenomenon at work in Hume, and rightly shows it to be problematic. For, despite the fact that the two thinkers treat many philosophical problems in similar ways, generally turning to the natural world to supply the solutions, Hume's coherence epistemology would seem to invalidate his own right to make the materialistic claims that he does. Santayana's assertions about the inherent transitivity of knowledge, on the other hand, make claims about the natural world an actual possibility. His philosophy of animal faith is superior to traditional empiricism in this regard because it recognizes knowledge as a transitive leap rather than an association among essences (or, in Hume's case, impressions and ideas). According to Hume, while common sense teaches us about nature, philosophy must be appropriately skeptical and deny any real knowledge of the "secret powers" governing existence; still, it may remain certain if confined to relations between ideas themselves. Santayana, by contrast, claims that because *all* thought involves animal faith, in that it connects the given to what is not given, the notion of certain knowledge is incoherent, and thus there is no fundamental divergence between philosophy and common sense. In short, while, for Hume, belief is incompatible with knowledge, with Santayana the two go hand in hand. This may be a fine distinction, but it is not an insignificant one. Santayana's fundamental challenge to the idea of knowledge as adequacy between thought and its object remains one of his most significant philosophical contributions.

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[1] See (PP 238). This paper was read to the George Santayana Society at its annual meeting in Washington D.C. on December 29, 2006.

The Natural Origins of Belief

Despite their important epistemological differences, Santayana and Hume do agree that instinctive belief is the basis for knowledge of existence, or what Hume called matters of fact. Furthermore, they both locate this instinct outside of the realm of thought and make the source of thinking itself a natural animal function. Hume compares the origins of our thoughts to other physical powers and organs, claiming that "[A]s nature has taught us the use of our limbs, without giving us the knowledge of the muscles and nerves, by which they are actuated; so has she implanted in us an instinct, which carries forward … thought in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects … " (ENQUIRY V-2). Santayana similarly explains thinking as an organic process and distinguishes between our conscious awareness and our ignorance of the material roots of that awareness: "I turn to an assumed world about me, because I have organs for turning, just as I expect a future to reel itself out without interruption because I am wound to go on myself. To such ulterior things no manifest essence can bear any testimony" (SAF 100). Santayana's point about the biological origins of our expectations regarding the future should not go unnoticed, for of course Hume similarly argues that reasoning concerning matters of fact requires an instinctive assumption that the future must be like the past. Furthermore, Santayana notes that thinking itself can give us no direct access to the powers that generate it, and this is reminiscent of Hume's denial that we can receive impressions of the secret powers that drive existence. When Santayana claims that no perceived essence can "bear testimony" to its substrative origin, he is not ignorant of the fact that we can make scientific discoveries about ourselves; he is denying that the assumptions we use to make empirical inferences (namely, assumptions regarding a natural world and a future time) are themselves based on any given intuition. In essence, both philosophers are poignantly aware of the fact that any sort of conclusions about our biological workings, including those functions producing our thoughts, will be contingent on fundamental animal beliefs about the world.

To underscore the fact that neither Hume nor Santayana intends to simply play skeptic to the possibilities of scientific knowledge, it is helpful to briefly consider their assertions about causation. Neither philosopher—and this will be important when we get to Santayana's criticism of Hume—intends to use his circumspection about the basis of cause and effect reasoning to deny the existence of causes and effects in nature. In point of fact, Hume draws on his claim that ulterior causes are obscured from awareness to argue *for* causal determinism in the case of human behavior. He first reminds us that the constant conjoining of like objects is the origin of our idea of cause and effect: "Our idea, therefore, of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity, *observable in the operations of nature*, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together" (ENQUIRY VIII, italics mine). This epistemological claim is not unlike Santayana's ontological claim that "whatsoever grows out of a certain conjunction in things, and only out of that conjunction, may be said to be caused by it" (SAF 210-11). Both may be fairly interpreted to mean that we attribute "causation" to objects in nature when we experience a constant and reliable correlation of one set of events with another, and that this is our true and legitimate understanding of the meaning of a cause. Evidence of this lies in Hume's reasoning about liberty and necessity. His claims about the origin of our idea of cause and effect is not used, as one might suppose, to deny that we can assert whether we are free or determined. Instead, he supports the notion that human behavior is as governed by causes as are any other natural operations. Absence of awareness of the causes of our behavior is not evidence that it is undetermined, for no causes are ever present to awareness, though they are the very basis for our reasoning about existence. If our instinctive associations between similar events are all that allow us to move, however fallibly, beyond our memory and senses to make claims about existence, we should similarly conclude that regularities in human behavior indicate we, too, are likely to be determined (ENQUIRY VIII).

The Reasonableness of Belief

There are, no doubt, deep similarities in both philosophers' beliefs in a natural world driven by a material engine that is transcendent to perception. Furthermore, both Hume and Santayana accept that we may—and in fact must—use our instinctive beliefs to gain knowledge of that existence. Still, in order to assess the extent of this commonality, it is important to more closely examine Hume's own understanding of the relationship between reason and instinct, for this will clarify his position on whether these beliefs are ultimately justified. As it turns out, there are tensions in Hume's claims on this topic, both within *A Treatise of Human Nature*, but even more explicitly between the *Treatise* and his later *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.[2] If we focus on parts of the *Treatise*, it seems clear that Hume considers reason to be an instinctive operation. But by the time we get to the *Enquiry*, Hume explicitly distinguishes reason from instinct. As far as Hume's connection with Santayana is concerned, this change is of primary importance, for Santayana does not abandon his claim that the operations of reason are instinctive psychological functions.

At face value, it would appear that Hume originally views reason as an instinctive biological function and then later changes his mind, connecting reason solely with discursive thought or explicit argumentation and fundamentally severing it from the habits that govern belief. If we compare Hume's sections on the reason of animals in the two works in question, he first notes in the *Treatise* that, "[T]o consider the matter aright, reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls" (TREATISE I-3-16); but by the *Enquiry*, he distinguishes reasoning from experiential inference: "Animals … are not guided in these inferences by reasoning: Neither are children: Neither are the generality of mankind … Neither are philosophers themselves, who, in all the active parts of life, are, in the main, the same with the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims" (ENQUIRY IX). Santayana was sympathetic with the version found in Hume's *Treatise*, and praised him accordingly in the *Life of Reason*: "Reason, as Hume said with profound truth, is an unintelligible instinct" (LR 19). But he would take issue with divorcing reason, not only from inferences involving cause and effect, but from active life and "vulgar" persons, generally. This would at least seem to imply that common sense and philosophy are basically incompatible, which is an attitude that Santayana's critique of contemporary philosophy aimed to undermine.

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[2] The conflict in the connotation of reason in Hume's works and the correlative tension between Santayana's accounts of Hume begs the question of which Hume Santayana had in mind in each case. A biographical analysis of this matter, while intriguing, is, however, beyond the confines of this paper.

It is possible, arguable, and ultimately my position, that in this later text Hume meant to distinguish reason as an instinctive function from *reasoning* as a deliberate logical demonstration. But we cannot simply make this assumption, for Hume does assert that "*causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason, but by experience*" (ENQUIRY IV-1, italics original). In this case, he does not use the term "reasoning," as he did in the earlier quote, but distinguishes reason itself from knowledge gained from experience. It would seem that reason is *not* the instinct that discovers connections among matters of fact. If Hume retained his earlier account of reason as instinct, there would be no need to separate the faculty of reason from discoveries made by experience. There must be some distinction here, and the important question is whether, in contrasting reason and experience, he means to deny that empirical claims are reasonable.

I argue that we would misunderstand Hume's purpose if we focused too closely on this change from the *Treatise* to the *Enquiry*. Hume's point in the *Enquiry* is that *a priori* reasoning about objects does not lead to conclusions about their effects. Furthermore, in arguing why it is not reason but custom that guides experience, he demands that we produce the *reasoning* to justify why certain matters of fact must be constantly conjoined. In other words, he is asking for some additional premise like "the future must resemble the past," which would give the argument logical validity, as arguments involving only relations of ideas may enjoy. If we keep this part of his argument in mind, it would seem that when he denies that *reason* is involved in cause and effect associations, he is, in effect, denying that there is a demonstrative proof. In other words, to justify cause and effect associations, there is no *a priori* deduction that can fit the bill.

It does not, however, necessarily follow from the fact that the grounds for a belief cannot be rationally demonstrated that the conclusions made based on that belief are not reasonable. I believe Hume means to conclude the opposite. First of all, he claims that "[M]an is a reasonable being; and as such, receives from science his proper food and nourishment" (ENQUIRY I). This does not sound like a man bent on undermining scientific understanding. Furthermore, to emphasize his point about our ignorance of the basis for cause and effect inferences, he writes: "I shall allow, if you please, that ... one proposition may justly be inferred from the other: I know in fact, that it always is inferred. But if you insist, that the inference is to be made by a chain of reasoning, I desire you to produce that reasoning. The connexion between these propositions is not intuitive" (ENQUIRY IV-2). Note that Hume does not claim that arguments from experience are ultimately unjustified, for he deliberately states that inferences made in this way may be just ones. It is merely the case that no analytic demonstration can provide that justification. We have to look elsewhere, to more uncertain evidence, namely to empirical phenomena.

In *Life of Reason*, Santayana notes: "[A] cause, in real life, means a justifying circumstance. We are absolutely without insight into the machinery of causation ..." (LR 186). This indicates something like what Hume may have intended, namely that the tests of our beliefs are experiences that support or refute them and that this evidence is always fallible and contingent. We should, I believe, understand Hume's focus to be on the lack of certainty of our inductive inferences. Both he and Santayana share the idea that cause and effect relations are reasonably confirmed by experience without being rationally justified by logical proof. *An Enquiry on Human Understanding* is, among other things, an admonition to speculative metaphysical philosophy against making unwarranted claims about ultimate reality, a goal not unfriendly to Santayana's own when he grounds knowledge in animal faith. For Santayana, however, faith is involved in all reasoning, including logical deduction, and this is where Santayana will challenge Hume to be a more thoroughgoing naturalist.

Santayana's Critique of Hume

If we compare Santayana's assessments of Hume in *Life of Reason* and *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, it appears as though he has two very different philosophers in mind. Noteworthy is Santayana's changed estimation of Hume's commitment to a natural basis for knowledge, particularly when compared with Kant. In the earlier work, he notes that "Hume, in this respect more radical and satisfactory than Kant himself, saw with perfect clearness that reason was an ideal expression of instinct … " (LR 52); but by *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, he has reversed himself: "more wisely than Hume, [Kant] never abandoned the general sense that ... perceptions had organs and objects beneath and beyond them" (SAF 299). Santayana first supports Hume's claims about the naturalistic basis for thought, and curiously, he is next finding Hume inferior to the (slightly) more satisfactory Kant.[3] This is no mere technicality. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Santayana turns Hume into an experience worshipper on the level of the idealists and a despiser of the natural world: "The world of literature is sacred to these bookish minds; only the world of nature and science arouses their suspicion and their dislike ... Is not their criticism at bottom a work of edification or of malice, not of philosophical sincerity ... ?" (SAF 295-6). To be sure, Hume is arguing a skeptical position in the *Enquiry*, but it is not the scientists who arouse his suspicion and are the objects of his satire. It is the metaphysicians, who believe that absolute truths of existence can be derived from pure reason. Very much as Santayana does, Hume claims that science serves as an appropriate nourishment, inviting the connotation of an animal making its way in the world. It certainly seems unfair to make Hume out to be hostile to science. Santayana's attitude is puzzling on the face of it: what could have been in his mind that made him consider Hume a bookish and insincere literary philosopher with an axe to grind about nature?

My hypothesis is that, in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Santayana has an agenda to refute the intuitions driving material skepticism in modern philosophy and that this agenda colors his reading of Hume. *Scepticism and Animal Faith* is Santayana's introduction to his four-dimensional ontology, *Realms of Being*, a worldview that he believed hearkened back to more ancient philosophical strains. In order to be able to explode into four different realms what he considered to be modern philosophy's thin transcendental universe, Santayana would have to tackle dogmatic skepticism. Modern philosophy, he believed, bore the legacy of Descartes's subjective turn, which involved a professed but incomplete skepticism. In response to doubts concerning the existence of material things, modern philosophy had noted the certainty of immediate consciousness and built illegitimately on that felt certainty to hypostatize an ultimately psychological universe. David Hume becomes accused of just this sort of psychologism due to two elements at work in his epistemology: his famous "fork" between relations of ideas and matters of fact, and his claim that the test of a true idea is its relation to the impression or impressions from which it is derived.

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[3] This is not to say that he exonerates Kant from his general charges of psychologism in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*. The problem with Kant, of course, is that his "organs of thought" are synthetic a priori laws rather than animal instincts. But it is curious that Santayana would prefer Kant's variation on innate ideas to Hume's notion of instinctive belief.

To tackle the latter part first, the psychologistic element in Hume's coherence theory of truth is the implication that epistemology is fundamentally an intramental endeavor. If ideas are copies of impressions and true ideas trace back to single impressions, the object of knowledge becomes experience rather than an independent, non-mental world, which is then placed outside the bounds of our understanding. Santayana notes that "the fact that observation is involved in observing anything does not imply that observation is the only observed fact: yet in this gross sophism and insincerity the rest of psychologism is entangled" (SAF 293). Santayana suggests that Hume's epistemological criteria make it impossible to know material reality, and, in a sense, he is right. Hume's characterization of knowledge is inconsistent with his desire both to affirm certain causal principles of nature and to explain human behavior, including knowing behavior, by reference to those principles. In other words, Hume necessarily assumes a substantial reality full of secret powers (in this case instinctive powers of association) undergirding the train of ideas that make up his consciousness, but his epistemology despairs of knowledge of that corpulent matter.

Hume's fork, the second psychologistic culprit, refers to a separation between objects of which we can be intuitively or demonstratively certain and those of which we cannot. Relations of ideas, which merely indicate the logical connections among propositions, may be justified with certainty through demonstrative reasoning, while matters of fact can never be so, and are instead based on customary, or habitual, connections in the mind. In the first case, we can be certain we are in possession of truth, but this provides no knowledge of existence, and in the second, we have some habitual basis for making existential claims, but no certainty that our claims are true.

To be fair, I would argue that the general sense of this distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact is very similar to Santayana's own numerous assertions that relations between propositions can, by themselves, offer us no knowledge of existence and, furthermore, that we can never be certain that our empirical beliefs have hit the mark. So again, this affinity begs the question of why Santayana should be critical of such a position. Santayana's concerns hinge on Hume's association of certainty and truth with relations of ideas. If we examine Hume's own description, we may see what troubled Santayana. Matters of fact, Hume claims "are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing [relations of ideas]" (ENQUIRY IV-1). Despite the fact that, here, Hume does not mean to affirm the power of *a priori* reasoning but instead to delineate its limitations, he nonetheless associates certainty and truth with relations of ideas in order to distinguish these characteristics from knowledge of existence.[4] Because Santayana wants to argue that certainty and knowledge are fundamentally incompatible concepts, this association of certainty with regard to relations of ideas was enough for him to judge Hume an idealist.

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[4] In addition to the claims about certainty, there is a second problem for Santayana with associating truth with relations of ideas. Santayana reserves the concept of truth for knowledge of

In order to show that beliefs about substance are as natural and justifiable as any other kind of claim, Santayana demonstrates that animal faith is the foundation for all knowledge, including that focused solely on discursive thought. Modern philosophy, while trying to be appropriately skeptical, had nonetheless misjudged the certainty involved in discourse. In arguing that abstract reasoning is no more infallibly grounded than claims involving matters of fact, Santayana adheres more strictly than Hume himself does to the assertion that reason is an animal instinct. In critiquing Descartes's insufficient skepticism, Santayana notes that: "[Descartes] ... assumed the principle of sufficient reason, a principle for which there is no reason at all" (SAF 289), indicating that the grounds of *a priori* argumentation transcend our understanding as powerfully as those of reasoning concerning matters of fact. Furthermore, because the only absolute certainty is the present datum, and because knowledge must move beyond pure presence to posit anything whatsoever, it must combine presence with something absent and therefore rely on an uncertain belief in memory, substance, or the future. In short, Santayana's philosophy of animal faith aims to correct modern philosophy's dogmatic skepticism by asserting that we should be both more skeptical about our knowledge of ideas and less skeptical about our knowledge of fact.

Santayana distrusts Hume's epistemology because it appears to make a fundamental distinction between knowledge of conscious experience and ungrounded beliefs about matters of fact. Hume behaves as a dogmatic skeptic when he identifies the object of our knowledge with an immanent moment of experience rather than a transcendent natural reality. Santayana responds by showing that no objects of knowledge, mental or material, are immanent at the moment they are known (and some are never immanent), so animal faith is unavoidable, and certainty is not a criterion of knowledge. Because Santayana is committed to the idea that knowledge aims beyond consciousness to the existing natural world, he notes Hume's skepticism about knowledge of matters of fact, and based on this, misjudges him as a thoroughgoing idealist hostile to science and nature.

Hume and Santayana on the Self

In taking aim at psychologism generally, Santayana definitely overreaches when firing his criticisms at Hume. Despite Hume's affirmed belief in matter, instinct, and a deterministic universe, Santayana accuses him of intending to deny these very elements:

> [These analyses] are supposed, however, by Hume and by the whole modern school of idealists, to destroy both the meaning of these notions and the existence of their intended objects. Having explained how, perhaps, early man, or a hypothetical infant, might have reached his first glimmerings of knowledge that material things exist, or souls, or causes, we are supposed to have proved that no causes, no souls, and no material things can exist at all [SAF 295].

If Hume had indeed claimed this, he would have been guilty of a sweeping appeal to ignorance, and even Descartes realized that there was a difference between calling beliefs into doubt and making positive claims that such beliefs are false.[5] Throughout

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existence. This existence may be psychological — as in, "I felt happy yesterday" — but the object of truth must be an actual event in nature.

[5] Because of this very distinction, he begins his *Meditations* by doubting everything, not by claiming his earlier beliefs are false.

his work, Hume appeals, as I have shown, to natural and yet ultimately inexplicable forces governing our behavior. Once again, we are led to wonder why Santayana would accuse him of denying their existence. However, in one particular argument, at least, Hume very much appears to be making the kind of claim of which Santayana accuses him. In Hume's take on personal identity, we arrive at a specific instance in which Hume's coherence theory of truth leads him to reject the existence of a substrative principle, namely the soul, based on lack of knowledge of such a principle. This argument relies on his psychologistic epistemology, and so is most relevant to our assessment of Santayana's critique.

In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume addresses the problem of personal identity. As an empiricist, he investigates whether consciousness can be the locus of such identity and, utilizing his epistemological criterion, claims it cannot: "It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are suppos'd to have a reference" (TREATISE I-4-6). In order for consciousness to be the source of selfhood, there would have to be one unchanging, identical impression always present to consciousness in order for someone to be the same person. Of course, there is not, so personal identity does not exist in consciousness. Santayana would certainly agree that a given datum is not the source of the self. For him, self—or psyche—is a material principle that both underlies and generates conscious experience. This, however, is why he would take issue with Hume's argument that follows:

> We feign the continu'd existence of the perceptions of our senses ... and run into the notion of a *soul*, and *self*, and *substance*, to disguise the variation. But we may farther observe, that where we do not give rise to such a fiction, our propension to confound identity with relation is so great, that we are apt to imagine something unknown and mysterious, connecting the parts, beside their relation ... [TREATISE I-4-6].

In this particular argument Hume does move from skepticism regarding our knowledge of a material principle to the assertion that the principle is fictitious, also referring to it as an "absurdity" we try somehow to justify (TREATISE I-4-6). Hume's argument for the origin of the idea of personal identity is very near his argument for the idea of necessary connection. In each case, the source of the idea is not one impression that justifies it, but a combination of many impressions that cannot justify it. However, whereas Hume does not then explicitly deny the existence of material forces (in fact, he elsewhere asserts that all humankind readily affirm their existence), in this case he positively asserts that selfhood—and any other organizing principle that renders living things self-identical—is nothing but a figment of the imagination.

Not only does Hume reject the truth of a self or soul, he instead identifies (so to speak) human beings solely with their perceptions, and here we may have located Santayana's motivation for implying that Hume thought he was nothing but a train of ideas. In denying an ulterior organizing principle to consciousness, he affirms a very psychologistic reality indeed: "I may venture to affirm of ... mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement" (TREATISE I-4-6). In denoting human beings as a stream of perceptions, Hume likens the mind to a kind of theater, where objects appear and pass away. In this sense, Hume's notion of mind is like Santayana's concept of spirit, or consciousness. Santayana offers many dramatically themed metaphors when explaining how spirit illuminates essences, and so he would agree if Hume were only characterizing conscious awareness. Santayana recognizes, however (unlike Hume), that we cannot be solely a stream of successive perceptions. Perceptions must be located *somewhere* and produced *somehow*, and thus, Santayana claims, we both may and should affirm a material psyche underlying and generating consciousness.

Hume’s denial of the reality of a psyche, based on his strict empiricism, generates significant conflicts with his other claims. Without a psyche, where do we locate this instinctive habit that grounds our cause and effect reasoning? Hume recognizes it cannot be given in consciousness, so it must come from somewhere outside it. Furthermore, the notion that we are a collection of perceptions contradicts his later claims in the *Enquiry*’s section on liberty and necessity about the similarities in human nature. If we were nothing but the sum of our experiences, we would be as varied as each individual history of perceptions, and our behavior would be determined only by whatever impressions we had happened to receive. This would seem to contradict Hume’s argument that universal characteristics in human nature justify the belief that our behavior is determined. Generally speaking, Santayana certainly overstated his criticisms. However, in the case of Hume’s argument about personal identity, we receive concrete evidence that the criticisms are not wholly unjustified. Santayana rightly saw the problems in a psychologistic epistemology that denies knowledge of the material world.

Conclusion

Returning to our original problem—namely, how Santayana’s professor could have recognized Humean strains at work in Santayana’s own philosophical attitudes while Santayana could not—we see that the Hume so deeply lodged “in Santayana’s bones” is the naturalist and fallibilist affirming secret powers of nature that ultimately transcend our perception and to which our understanding is never adequate. But the empiricist Hume, with his coherence theory of a true idea as an adequation of a single impression, is who Santayana has in the forefront of his mind when he accuses Hume of idealism. Santayana focuses so closely on this aspect in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* that he fails to recognize the similarity in the bulk of their arguments about instinct, reason, causation, and logical relations. However, Hume’s empirical presumptions are ultimately problematic, as we have seen with his treatment of personal identity. Animal faith, which fundamentally challenges the compatibility of certainty and knowledge, can better address the connection between the existential strain of felt experience and the natural reality that produces it. Santayana’s contribution of this concept to philosophy should not be underestimated.

In the end, both George Santayana and David Hume wanted to return an element of common sense to a philosophy that had become so speculative that it was divorced from everyday life. Hume admits as much when he counsels his reader to “[B]e a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man” (ENQUIRY I). But because Hume never questioned the notion of certain truth, he is forced, philosophically, to take a skeptical position on knowledge of matters of fact. Santayana’s epistemological position can more completely wed philosophy with everyday life, and he thus becomes the more common sense philosopher.

JESSICA WAHMAN

Dickinson College

Hegel as Alienist: Santayana, Absolute Idealism, and the Normal Madness of Materialism

I draw my title from suggestive remarks Santayana makes about Kant towards the end of *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, which closely parallel his assessments of Hegel and, more generally, modern philosophy. He characterizes Kant as "an alienist discovering the logic of madness."[1] In this Santayana pays Kant the dubious compliment of being a more devout subjectivist than other modern's. He characterizes Kant's "recondite categories" and forms of intuition as "pompous titles for what Hume had satirically called tendencies to feign." Even if presented carefully and discriminating enough to convince others of their plausibility as solid foundations for the sciences, Kant's categories ultimately amount to what Santayana calls a "gratuitous uniformity in error."[2] More specifically, he charges that at their heart Kant's categories issue in an unacknowledged negation of living existence, and, once purified of its "personal alloy," it is evident that his philosophy denies the possibility of knowledge (SAF 301).

This astonishing set of charges against Kant is applied by Santayana with equal force to the case of Hegel, and taking these two as decisive for the development of later philosophy, he sweepingly maintains that all philosophy after modernity — charmingly self-conscious and critical as it is — follows a trajectory patterned on several colossal missteps in reasoning. These assessments may not carry much force of persuasion for contemporary philosophic sensibilities, but they are of deep consequence for a sufficient understanding of Santayana's thinking. As he writes towards the end of *Scepticism and Animal Faith*:

> I hope I have taken to heart what the [schools of transcendental criticism] have to offer by way of disintegrating criticism of knowledge, and that in positing afresh the notions of substance, soul, nature, and discourse, I have done so with my eyes open (SAF 301).

The point of Santayana's mature thinking is to recover for philosophy a sense of confidence in common sense understanding—of life observed with "open eyes." Such a recovery, Santayana believed, hinges on rescuing traditional notions of philosophy from the shameful position in which they were placed by transcendental criticism. But to do this, Santayana also knew, one must be capable of *taking to heart* the offerings of transcendental critique.

I shall argue here that Santayana takes to heart transcendental critique in his view that all consciousness is a form of delusion, a view that develops out of his own deployment of transcendental method, which realizes itself in the discovery of essence.

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[1] See SAF 300. This paper was presented to the George Santayana Society during its annual meeting at the American Philosophical Association in Washington D.C., December 29, 2006.

[2] Cf. Bertrand Russell on Hegel, who after identifying the latter's central confusion as conflating the "is" of predication with the "is" of identity, asserts: "This is an example of how, for want of care at the start, vast and imposing systems of philosophy are built upon stupid and trivial confusions, which, but for the almost incredible fact that they are unintentional, one would be tempted to characterize as puns." (Bertrand Russell. *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy.* London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1914, 1961: 49) For a persuasive defense of Hegel against Russell's criticism see "Hegel's Revenge on Russell…" by Katharina Dulckeit in *Hegel and His Critics.* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989: 111-131.)

The recovery of discredited notions of traditional philosophy is subsequently recommended in his distinction between "normal" and "abnormal" forms of consciousness, the latter of which have as their preeminent philosophic representative the philosophy of Hegel, and the former of which is found in a reconstructed form of naturalistic materialism.

Kant's and Hegel's Transcendentalism

To begin, Santayana's claim that Kant's philosophy denies the possibility of knowledge needs much explaining given that most of his defenders see Kant's constructivist epistemology as an historically unprecedented means of *legitimating* knowledge. What can Santayana mean by this charge? The complete answer requires acknowledgement of the unique conceptions of reason found in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel, and the differences those conceptions make for each thinker's version of transcendental philosophy.

The enlightenment motto — *dare to be wise* — was in urgent need of clarification by the time Kant took it under consideration in his famous 1785 essay.[3] Kant knew that while enlightenment ideals could be credited for having enticed human reason beyond its prolonged adolescence, its full maturation was being stunted by an increasingly inadequate understanding of the status of its own achievements. This was Kant's meaning in saying that while humans can not yet be said to live in an "enlightened age," they nevertheless find themselves living in an "age of enlightenment."[4] In the meantime, Kant argued, humans' intellectual immaturity was a self-imposed exile whose cure depended upon the emergence of a truly autonomous capacity to reason.

In his enlightenment essay Kant focused on the social-political dimensions of such an emergence, but his three critiques addressed the problem from the vantage of a tribunal of reason with respect three main areas of philosophic inquiry: metaphysics, morality, and aesthetics. The point of putting reason on trial was, in large part, to free it from the charge of overreaching into metaphysical regions, where David Hume had persuasively shown it to be incapable of rational purchase. Kant's ingenious solution in the first *Critique* was, in effect, to show that Hume's criticisms were neither a problem for, or with metaphysics as such, but rather for a form of common-sense realism that presumed the objects of such to reside on the side of phenomenal understanding.

The realism Kant exposed and discredited had privileged the idea of an *empirical external reality* as a means of grounding knowledge, and by unreasonable extension, grounding metaphysical claims. Kant's recommendation in the first *Critique* was to insist upon a distinction between "empirically" and "transcendentally" external objects, the former designated as "things found in space" (space being a *mere subjective representation*) and the latter as objects incapable of external epistemological grounding.[5] This distinction enabled Kant to free metaphysical assertions from the pins of Hume's celebrated fork, which established that such assertions neither qualify as matters of fact nor as relations of ideas, and therefore lack both an external and internal means of legitimacy. Kant's brilliant move was to show that the failing of metaphysicians was their inability to establish the epistemological uniqueness of claims falling under the metaphysical heading. From Kant's perspective, while Hume was correct to say that metaphysical claims qualify neither as matters of fact nor as relations of ideas, he nevertheless suffered from the same error of previous metaphysicians, which was to overlook the transcendental capacity of reason, the product of which mathematics provides a vivid example.[6]

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[3] "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*. Edited and Translated by Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge University Press, 1996: 17.

[4] Ibid, 21.

[5] For Kant's elaboration of these points, see Book II, Chapter One of the "Transcendental Dialectic" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965, transl. by Norman Kemp Smith: 328-383). A particularly relevant passage from this section: "If we treat outer objects as things in themselves, it is quite impossible to understand how we could arrive at a knowledge of their reality outside us, since we have to rely merely on the representation which is in us." (pg. 351)

Enough suffices as a remedial sketch of Kant's transcendentalism, a main feature of which was to extend the conception of reason to overcome the epistemological checkmate of Hume's fork. And enough has also been said to clarify the meaning of Santayana's charge that Kant denies the possibility of knowledge. Santayana argues that Kant's mistake consists in having overestimated the extent of Hume's criticism of knowledge, and, rather than seeing it for the "plausible literary psychology" that it was, took it to have *really* discredited reason and the objects of which it purports to claim knowledge (SAF 295). In truth, Santayana contends, Hume's penetrating critiques only serve to clarify the origins of common sense, that is, to give a more meticulous account of the basis on which reasoning concerning matters of fact unfolds. In Santayana's words: "Having explained how, perhaps, early man, or a hypothetical infant, might have reached his first glimmerings of knowledge that material things exist, or souls, or causes, we are supposed to have proved that no [such things] can exist at all." (Ibid) Santayana specifically claims that "Hume and the whole modern school of idealists" is guilty of this absurd conclusion.

Now I believe that however guilty Hume and his successors are of the kind of over-exaggerated transcendentalism Santayana describes here, he ought to have been more careful with Kant; Kant does not naively glean from Hume's philosophy the inability of reason to establish the existence of common-sense objects. One need only consult the characterization given in the *Prolegomena*, where Kant clearly states the legacy of Hume's philosophy to be the question "concerning the *origin* of the concept [of cause and effect], not concerning its indispensability in use."[7] At any rate Kant viewed the matter as one of deploying Hume's philosophy for a "complete reform of science," and he would have agreed with Santayana's point about not over-exaggerating the existential reach of his criticisms of knowledge.[8] Having said this however, I do think that Santayana's point is sound with regard to Hegel's transformations of Kant. I thus turn to Hegel's transcendentalism.

A mistake that interpreters continually make in their characterizations of Hegel is to conflate his version of transcendental philosophy with Kant's.[9] Hegel was in fact avowedly opposed to Kant's version of transcendental philosophy. Robert R. Williams makes this point concisely:

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[6] A fuller exposition of this complex aspect of Kant's philosophy is not possible here, but in this context one should also take note of his crucial distinction between reason (*Vernunft*, which is responsible for establishing principles) and understanding (*Verstand*—responsible for establishing rules)—a distinction Hegel praises, but reconstructs.

[7] Kant. *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977: 4. Emphasis is Kant's not mine.

[8] In the section of the *Prolegomena* from which the previous quote was taken Kant himself identifies Reid, Oswald, Beattie, and Priestley as Humean contemporaries who were guilty of such overestimating.

[9] One such mistaken interpreter was Heidegger, according to Robert R. Williams in the essay cited in the next footnote.

> Kant's version of transcendental philosophy stands in the tradition of legislating the a priori structure to which the world must conform in order to be experienced. But Hegel is an anti-transcendental philosopher in the Kantian sense of transcendental, in which transcendental subjectivity is conceived as legislating and imposing a priori the conditions of being and knowledge on unformed materials … neither Hegel's *Phenomenology* nor his *Logic* are transcendental philosophy in the Kantian sense.[10]

It is important to note that the characterization of Kantian transcendentalism offered by Williams here — of conceiving subjectivity as a privileged legislator of unformed ontological and epistemological materials — is precisely the characterization Santayana consistently provides, and holds against the German idealist tradition. This being the case, one might suppose that Williams' ensuing characterization of Hegel's main works as opposed to this Kantian subjectivism places Santayana in league with Hegel. Yet nothing is further from the truth. As we know, Santayana identifies Hegel as one of the preeminent "egotists" of the German idealist tradition.

To sort this out one must tend to Santayana's clarification that, while "All transcendentalists are preoccupied with the self…not all are egotists." (EGP 32) Santayana is referring in this passage to Goethe, but elaborates a little further along in the same context by contrasting Goethe with Hegel:

> …[Goethe] was many-sided, not encyclopedic. … He did not … arrange the phases of his experience … in an order supposed to be a progress. … Hegel [on the other hand] might have *understood* all [the] moral attitudes [that Goethe's work presents], and described them in a way not meant to appear satirical; but he would have criticized them and demolished them, and declared them obsolete — all but the one at which he happened to stop. (EGP 34. Emphasis is Santayana's)

Santayana thus discerns a voracious progressivism in Hegel's transcendentalism which lends to it an egotistical character not attributable to Goethe. So even if, as Williams clarifies, Hegel's transcendentalism is anti-Kantian, in Santayana's eyes it is no less guilty than its opposition of setting out to destroy the credibility of the objects under its scrutiny. This condemnation makes more sense when one attends to Santayana's broader understanding of Hegel's affiliations with the idealistic tradition, a fair evaluation of which requires analysis of Hegel's attempts to break from Kant's idealism.

Hegel's Critique of Kant's Idealism

As John Hund observes, Hegel objected to Kant's idealism on the (somewhat ironic) grounds that it was "subjective."[11] By this Hegel was not objecting to Kant's privileging of the synthesizing subject but rather to Kant's account of the subject, as such. Hegel's specific denial, Hund clarifies, was "that the unity of consciousness is created by a synthesising subject and then projected against the world like a screen."[12] In conceiving subjectivity this way, Kant grouped both natural and social realities under the blanket category "phenomena," as features beholden to the synthesizing subject. In effect Hegel interpreted Kant as holding that subjectivity must relate to both nature and society as a spectator, straining its objects, as Hund puts it, through a synthesizing screen of understanding.

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[10] Robert R. Williams. "Hegel and Heidegger." *Hegel and His Critics.* New York: State University of New York Press, 1989: 142 (135-157).

[11] John Hund. "Is *The Critique of Pure Reason* Asociological?" *South African Journal of Philosophy.* February, 1998. Vol. 17, Issue 1: 8-21.

[12] Ibid.

The alleged estrangement of subjectivity from reality that Hegel objects to in Kant's philosophy is a subject that interestingly recurs in recent scholarship in the form of a debate over whether and to what extent Kant can be said to be a "realist." This is of course an ironic trend given the aforementioned legacy of Kant as arch anti-realist. Recently Kenneth R. Westphal has argued that Kant and the later Wittgenstein share a commitment to a form of realism that steers clear of empiricism.[13] He summarizes their shared non-empirical realism as the view that "physical objects and events exist and have at least some characteristics, regardless of what we think, say, or believe about them."[14] Westphal goes further to argue that self-consciousness and the skepticism that is its privilege would be impossible were not humans inhabitants of such a realistic world and cognizant of that fact. In a similar though differently motivated vein, Lucy Allais has argued that recent attempts to establish kinships between Kant and contemporary forms of anti-realism are at best, superficial.[15] While her aim is by no means to establish Kant as a straightforward realist, she finds Kant's views amenable to a substantive aspect of Michael Dummett's philosophy that leaves itself open the external existence of entities under skeptical scrutiny.

Westphal's and Allais' associations of Kant with realism are intriguing because they so run counter to the recent extensive work of Hegel scholar, Tom Rockmore. Kant's thinking is depicted by Rockmore to provide the foundation — and extending the characterization, Hegel's is said to provide the building material — of an epistemological subversion of metaphysical realism in mainstream Western philosophy.[16] In sum, Rockmore's recent work on Hegel presupposes an anti-realist view of Kant that is opposed to that of other contemporary scholars. For the sake of present purposes I cannot elaborate as to why, but I believe that Rockmore's account of Kant and Hegel as thoroughgoing anti-realists is correct, and certainly more persuasive than the realist depictions of Kant provided by Westphal and Allais. My aim now is to argue this by favorable appeal to Santayana's critique, which I shall turn to directly after first briefly indicating the anti-realist features of Hegel's thought.

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[13] Kenneth R. Westphal. "Kant, Wittgenstein, and Transcendental Chaos." *Philosophical Investigations.* 28:4, October 2005: 303-323.

[14] Ibid, 303.

[15] Lucy Allais. "Kant's Transcendental Idealism and Contemporary Anti-Realism." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies.* Vol. 11 (4), December 2003: 369-392.

[16] An especially relevant book by Rockmore in this regard: *Hegel, Idealism, and Analytic Philosophy.* New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2005. What is fascinating is that this perspective on the Kantian legacy is continually being rediscovered, and this sometimes without due credit to the Kantian tradition. To the undoubted surprise of many, in the book just cited Rockmore takes Richard Rorty to task for being a pre-Kantian "realist," yet Rorty, following Hilary Putnam, seems to avow a post-Kantian anti-realism without (at least in the one context I am about to highlight) recognizing its rootedness in Kant. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton University Press, 1979) Rorty chronicles the slow acknowledgment of a kind of Kantian anti-realism in Putnam's work, without seeing any parallels in Kant at all (see chapter VI; especially 294-311) — "[Putnam] says that what the metaphysical realist wanted, but could not have, is a view of 'truth as radically nonepistemic' " (294). If Rockmore is correct (and I believe he is), Kant denied metaphysical realists the possibility of nonepistemic truth over two-hundred years ago, which makes Putnam's identical recognition (contra Rorty's characterization) historically unremarkable.

Hegel as Anti-Realist

Hegel believed his conception of reason to be historically unprecedented, and he had good reason to so believe, because it signaled a revolt against an entrenched, existentially univalent conception of rational activity. Never before Hegel had reason been made so completely to serve both tendencies of the universal and the particular. When Hegel opined, contrary to popular belief, that philosophy deals in the concrete, he meant that this unique science seeks a "unity of distinct particulars," a special knowledge whereby the *idea* is "something general that is in and by itself, the particular and the definite."[17] Such an *idea* arises, in Hegel's understanding, through adherence to a developmental notion of truth, whereby absolute spirit is thinking itself towards greater and greater perfection. Getting to such a view of truth, from Hegel's perspective, requires going beyond the standpoint of individuality, the standpoint from which there is an "abstract antithesis of truth and error."[18] According to Hegel, only from the partiality of the individual perspective is it a contradiction that there are many different philosophies, yet one single truth. In Hegel's view traditional philosophy is structured around a logic that continually runs up against this contradiction: multiple philosophies, one truth. Why indeed, if truth is one, and philosophies aim at a single truth, is there not a single philosophy? Hegel argues that one's understanding of the very nature of truth must be transformed in order to surpass this problem.

Traditional logic, Hegel extrapolates, presumes a separation between truth and certainty, respectively the "content and form of knowledge."[19] Cartesian philosophy is an exemplary form of this traditional logic. The problem with this logic, Hegel argues, is that it subordinates thought to object. Truth, as the supposed content of knowledge, is alleged to be attained only when thought agrees with its object. As such, the object is alleged to exist unto itself, complete and without need of alteration, whereas thought must adapt, and achieve its temporary completion by way of veridical consummation. Hegel views this entrenched philosophic rendering of truth to be both prejudicial and false.[20]

In order to complete the reversal of realist logic that Kant had only perhaps half-accomplished, Hegel redresses the shortcomings of traditional logic he identifies with his highly original dialectical notion of truth. Hegel's dialectic is conceived in direct engagement with its Platonic and Kantian variants. He holds Plato's and Kant's versions of the dialectic to be importantly distinct, ultimately siding but also finding original problems with the latter. Plato's *Parmenides* is charged by Hegel to enlist dialectic as a "mere idle subjective craving" that "at best leads to nothing except the futility of the dialectically treated matter." By contrast, Kant's is a "higher" version, one affirming "*the objectivity of appearance* and the *necessity of contradiction* which belong to the very nature of thought determinations (SL 193). Hegel elaborates that Kant's reworked deployment of dialectic — departing from the null-gain Socratic *elenchus* — gave the operation a provisionally positive role, dictating for reason its options when it has surpassed its limits.

Kant's antinomies of reason signaled for Hegel a contribution to our understanding of the necessary presence of contradictoriness in thought: "primarily indeed in so far as [its] determinations are applied by reason to *things in themselves*" (SL 193). But, as Hegel goes on to argue, Kant's understanding of the dialectic was also insufficient due to its "abstract-negative aspect," indicating its propensity to shrink at the door of the infinite. For Kant the noumenal realm was to be grappled with, its contradictions embraced, but not cognitively explained; *this* Hegel saw as *his* task: to stretch the cognitive reach of reason so that it could explain noumena. But to do so Hegel had to finally collapse the divide between subjectivity and the real before which Kant's transcendentalism halted. The signature way in which Hegel surpasses Kant in this regard is his historical providentialism, a lavish, imaginative identification of the evolution of history with the movement of spirit towards absolute knowing.

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[17] G.W.F. Hegel, *The History of Philosophy*, excerpted from *The Philosophy of Hegel*, edited by Carl J. Friedrich. New York: The Modern Library, 1954: 164.

[18] Ibid, 163.

[19] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, excerpted from *The Philosophy of Hegel*, edited by Carl J. Friedrich. New York: The Modern Library, 1954:178. To be cited as SL.

[20] Ibid.

Santayana's Critique

Shifting directly to Santayana's critique, Hegel's decisive collapse of the divide between subjectivity and the real marks the general end of the kind of realism that commends philosophy to the living human, and the particular end of a naturalistic materialism that offers sane conclusions to the insane sallies of transcendental criticism. Santayana characterizes Hegel as a "solemn sophist" for making discourse the key to reality.[21] The spirit in which Santayana makes the remark is one of trying to come to terms with an untenable contradiction in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel, Santayana observes, purports at once to be a staunch realist, acridly insisting upon the providential march of history, and a fervent idealist, conceiving of the substance of history's march to be conceptual rather than material. For Santayana the latter idealism makes Hegel's realism a technical pose only, in the sense that while there exists in Hegel's thought an abiding loyalty to an extra-personal reality, that reality is paradoxically reduced to the conceptual preoccupations of his own nationality and historical context. While from the standpoint of Hegel's enthusiasts these fused contradictory features in his philosophy indicate its novelty and strength, Santayana understands them to issue in troubling equivocations, none of which are cleared up by his dialectical-historical method.

As Santayana observes, Hegel's historicism *might* have been deployed as an expression of humility, seeming to indicate his rejection of any explanatory principle supervening upon the historical. Moreover, Hegel's historically grounded approach could have been a means of achieving a greater understanding, by way of the sympathetic imagination, of the manifold trajectories of human endeavor. Unfortunately, Santayana charges, Hegel's philosophy is neither humble nor sympathetic. Its malicious egotism occurs in several interpretive modes, each of which belies a transparent ascription of providential divinity to the historical trajectory of Hegel's own Germany.

These characterizations, which Santayana provided in grand fashion in his infamous "monograph" *Egotism in German Philosophy,* prompted a ferocious critical response in Schilpp's *Library of Living Philosopher's Volume* from scholar and German translator, Edward L. Schaub. Besides taking exception to the presumption that there is something like a "German philosophy" or set of "German philosophers" who approximate Santayana's evaluations,[22] Schaub found fault with Santayana's characterization of the transcendental method as a form of "unaided introspection."[23]

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[21] EGP 70: "Hegel was a solemn sophist: he made discourse the key to reality."

[22] He succinctly refers to this presumption as nothing but a "fiction of the writer's will." "Santayana's Contentions Respecting German Philosophy," by Edward L. Schaub. See (PGS 409).

[23] Ibid, 407 (and quotes from Schaub that follow).

This characterization of Santayana's was unjust according to Schaub, both because the "express purpose" of the method is to "establish" a "public world" and because Hegel's very objection to (and justification for his own departure from) Kant's use of the transcendental method was that it failed to establish that "public" world.

I find Schaub's reaction to Santayana's assessments of German idealism revealing for at least a couple of reasons. First (as I can attest from personal experience), the same reaction can be expected from contemporary scholars of the tradition, and second, it fails to honestly recognize its tacit commitment to transcendentalist principles that Santayana and like-minded philosophers have very good reasons to reject. One of those commitments involves the use of transcendental method to validate the existence of metaphysics, and the other to establish revealed history. I shall move now in conclusion to a consideration of Santayana's rejection of these commitments, and in the process perhaps reveal something important about Schaub's critique of Santayana that is of much assistance to understanding theirs and similar disagreements.[24]

Santayana's Rejection of Metaphysics

In one of his shades of limbo Santayana provides a characterization suitable for situating Hegel's absolute idealism within the larger mad play of modernity, as an exemplary instance of the abnormal madness of action. Santayana identifies the abnormal madness of action as that in which actions are performed that are not suited to the situation or disposition of those performing them; in his words, "as when an old man makes love." (DL 41) The irreverence of this remark aside, and apart from the questionable seriousness more generally with which Santayana presents such characterizations, there is little doubt that he believes modern philosophy to suffer from varying forms of abnormal madness. In *Soliloquies* Santayana compares the modern philosopher to a "…thoughtful dog [who] has dropped the substance he held in his mouth, to snatch at the reflection of it which his own mind gave to him." (SE 216) Contrast this remark with the one he makes about Pre-Socratic Greek philosophy in the same context: "Sanity, thy name is Greece." (Ibid, 212)

The key to understanding Santayana's preference for the Presocratic Greeks over the modern's is his rejection of metaphysics. The Pre-Socratic Greeks were comparatively sane, Santayana argues, for their naturalism, and in taking for granted the cosmically situated nature of humans. Whatever speculative extravagances the Greeks were guilty of, and however burdensome their missteps in physical and astronomical sciences to future generations, they at least founded an honest attempt to advance a physics, ethics, and politics with a "certain noble frankness in the presence of the infinite world, of which they begged no favors." (SE 214)

Enter then the sophists, and Plato. What these two introduced — a kind of farcical "habit of treating opinions about nature as rhetorical themes" — may have been harmlessly amusing in its context, but it "had disastrous consequences for philosophy" (SE 214). Platonism and its sophistic foils introduced, more specifically, what Santayana understands as "metaphysics," which far from being an imaginative extension of conceptions of the physical cosmos, departed altogether from such into theories "constructed by reasoning, in terms of logic, ethics, and a sort of poetic propriety" that turned nature into a mirror of humans. (Ibid) This charge is just with regard to Kant, whose fundamental metaphysical tenet that all intuitions are "extensive magnitudes" enclosed in synthetic modes of space and time is accepted wholesale by Hegel. What Hegel adds to this metaphysics (whose systematic presentation, Santayana is right to object, disguises a poetic propriety), is a providential notion of history that alleges to establish once and for all the cosmic primacy of human will.

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[24] More broadly it is hoped that similar contemporary responses to Santayana's critique of German idealism can be more adequately anticipated.

Santayana's Rejection of Providential History

Taking cues from Santayana's panoramic speculations, Hegel can be argued to be the paradigm modern philosopher of the abnormal madness in action. His phenomenology of spirit — understood as the progress from a mere "science of consciousness" to the more-than-individual consciousness that is "spirit" — is alleged to be generated by "the dissatisfaction experienced in the inadequacy of the successive forms consciousness has assumed [along its journey to absolute knowing]."[25] Indeed, the primary standpoint that is to be surpassed in the Hegelian dialectic (as if such a standpoint was devoid of aesthetic, or existential depth), is that of "consciousness of a mere world of things." According to Hegel, consciousness becomes increasingly dissatisfied with this standpoint as it becomes aware of the complexities behind its simplifying natal perceptions. Yearning toward an absolute perspective, consciousness progressively turns against its own natural predispositions.

This absolute idealism obviously stands starkly opposed to any recognizably naturalistic view; it certainly does so with respect to Santayana's naturalism, which holds that one must accept and so make peace with natural predispositions. Hegel, and the critical phenomenology which is his philosophic legacy, would have one increasingly question these predispositions, encouraging a certain willful contrariety of action exemplary of Santayana's abnormal madman. From this perspective it is easy to see why Marx became the most influential heir of Hegel: the "left"-Hegelian trajectory he intitiated privileged that half of Hegel amenable to social revolution. Marx was exploiting that aspect of Hegel's dialectic most crucial to the purported realization of the absolute; namely, it's increasing dissatisfaction with present conditions.[26]

This is how Santayana's philosophy provides resources for understanding the revealed history of German idealism as the logical outcome of the abnormal madness of transcendental philosophy. Santayana's reversal of this mad play comes in his doctrine of essence, which conduces to a naturalistic materialism that respects rather than undermines the living human standpoint. For Santayana, transcendental criticism serves as a speculative housecleaning tool — laudable in its yielding the discovery of a realm of being framing all human experience, but overreaching if/when it conceives that discovery in absolutist terms. When once the heights of transcendental critique have been gained, instead of holding its discoveries against the distracting and preoccupying exigencies of natural experience, the wise course is to smile with whatever realm of being the latter power represents — called for convenience by Santayana, matter — and acquiesce in its allowances in contemplative appreciation of essences. Such is the only poetic propriety proper to human experience, affirming the normal madness of natural life over the abnormal madness of alien life.

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[25] Quentin Lauer, S.J. *A Reading of Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit. New York: Fordham University Press, 1982: 177.

[26] The coming wave of socialism was true human history for Marx. The future rather than the present or past gave concretion to the abstract speculations of social-political historicists. As Rockmore puts it: "For Marx, Hegel, who is concerned with the concrete, remains on the abstract plane. His position is the abstract, logical, and speculative expression of the historical processes, which, since it remains tied to present day society, or capitalism, is not yet the true human history." (Before and After Hegel: A Historical Introduction to Hegel's Thought. Indianapolis,: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993: 157-158) However much interpreters deem Marxian philosophy to be a distortion of Hegelianism, it was at least loyal to the latter's preordained sense of history. Marxism took hold in the early twentieth century because of this revelatory historical idealism—misleadingly called "materialism" by Marx for its so-called "world-historical" importance, rather than for any insight it provides into the nature of reality.

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New *Bulletin* Website: Other Santayana Sites

Martin Coleman at the *Santayana Edition* has kindly agreed to take on the maintenance of the website devoted to the archives of *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*. It becomes a part of the extensive Edition website, and will continue to contain the texts of current articles printed each year. As well, the earliest *Bulletins* have been scanned and will also be a part of the archive. The website was designed and posted by the IUPUI graduate intern, Christine McNulty. The site is:

<http://www.iupui.edu/~santedit/santayanatodaysociety.html>

Since all the archives will be verbatim scans of each *Bulletin* number, it is necessary to abandon the previous practice of occasionally posting papers that are somewhat longer than the original *Bulletin* version. There are two already posted papers of this type: David Dilworth’s 2005 “The Life of the Spirit in Santayana, Stevens, and Williams,” and Chris Skowronski’s 2006 paper “C. A. Strong and G. Santayana in Light of Archive Material.” These longer versions can still be found on the current webpage:

<http://www.math.uwaterloo.ca/~kerrlaws/Santayana/Bulletin/seville.html>

At a later time, these will be posted on the UIPUI site.

The website for the *Santayana Edition*, dealing with all aspects of the project is:

<http://www.iupui.edu/~santedit/>.

Tom Davis maintains a site dedicated, among other things, to Santayana citations and exchanges of opinion on various issues:

<http://members.aol.com/santayana>

Herman Saatkamp has prepared a site in the Stanford University philosophy series:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/santayana/>

As mentioned again below, the Spanish journal LIMBO maintains the site:

<www.hiperlimbo.com>

"Primeval Automatism"
Santayana's Later Aesthetics

> Reason, with its tragic discoveries and restraints, cannot stand alone; brute habit and blind play are at the bottom of art and morals, and unless irrational impulses and fancies are kept alive, the life of reason collapses for sheer emptiness. SANTAYANA

Writing to the art collector and critic Martin Birnbaum in 1946, Santayana pressed him on the difference between naturalistic and symbolic painting. The discussion was initiated by Birnbaum's recent book on John Singer Sargent.[1]

> I write to thank you very much for your reminiscences of Sargent, including those of Henry James and the plates of some of Sargent's paintings and drawings. I wish that you had gone more systematically into the problem of naturalistic *versus* eccentric or symbolic painting. It is a subject about which my own mind is undecided. My sympathies are initially with classic tradition, and in that sense with Sargent's school; yet for that very reason I fear to be unjust to the eccentric and abstract inspiration of persons perhaps better inspired. (L 7:218)

Any quick gloss of Santayana's early writings will show the measure of his sympathy with naturalism and classicism. And yet Santayana's letter stands out within his voluminous body of correspondence for its clear admission of indecision. Nonetheless, the feeling of indecision is a long-standing one and it haunts his aesthetic judgements from the beginning. Virtually the same remark appears in a letter written sixty years earlier to his friend Henry Ward Abbot: "Greek statues," he writes in 1887, "say so much more to me than any other form of art, and the Greek view of life and nature appeals to me so strongly, that I am unjust to other forms" (L 1:44). The sense of injustice toward those forms of art and thought that were foreign to his sensibility is something that comes up again and again in his correspondence.

At no point in *Sargent, A Conversation Piece* does Birnbaum explicitly take up the issue of naturalism versus symbolism in painting; most likely Santayana is referring to a passage like the following:

> As Henry James had admirably said, perception with Sargent was already by itself a kind of execution. It is true that for the most part, he, like Velásquez, was occupied with facts, not ideas. He told Arthur Rubenstein that he treated his themes objectively, not subjectively and therefore when his sitters were uninteresting, Sargent's portraits were not great successes … Referring, half in jest and half in earnest to this dependence on vision, and to his reserve, Henry James once said that Sargent "neither penetrates nor is penetrated." (JSS 12-13)

Sargent was a man whom the Germans might have called an *Augenmensch*. It was his reliance on sight and visibility, the premium he placed on details and exactitude — "facts, not ideas" as Birnbaum says — that characterizes his enterprise as a whole. It was also these traits that exasperated Santayana. Santayana goes on to query Birnbaum, and implicitly James, if they are perhaps mistaken in their representation of Sargent as a strictly "objective" painter. "I had always thought that, perhaps unawares he betrayed analytic and satirical powers of a high order, so that his portraits were strongly comic, not to say moral caricatures," he observes . (L 7:218). But upon further consideration he withdraws his lingering admiration: "But in thinking of what you say … I begin to believe that I was wrong, that he may have been universally sympathetic and cordial, in the characteristically American manner, and the satire that there might seem to be in his work was that of literal truth only" (L 7:218).[2] According to Santayana, Sargent is guilty of the cardinal sin of "all Americans," he is "too gentle, too affectionate, too fulsome." "Reality," he explains, "requires a satirist, merciless but just" (L 6:166). Sargent was just another representative, if not a late one, of "the genteel tradition." What satire reveals and what the genteel tradition could not admit was that "existence is absurd."[3]

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[1] Martin Birnbaum, *John Singer Sargent, January 12, 1856: April 15, 1925, A Conversation Piece* (New York: William E. Rudge's Sons, 1941); hereafter cited as JSS. Sargent was a close friend of Birnbaum's, leaving him many works when he died in 1925. When researching his next book, *Jacovleff and Other Artists* (New York: P. A. Struck, 1946), Birnbaum wrote to Santayana in Rome asking about his relations with artists he might have known at Harvard in the 1890s. The Sargent book was sent in exchange for these inquiries.

Satire, caricature, and the comic in general, are not terms in high regard in Santayana's early writings. His stress in nearly all of his writings between 1885 and 1911 when he finally quit the United States, is on the artist's struggle with reality, the outcome of which is necessarily tragic. Writing in 1896 of *Don Quixote*, for instance, he summarizes the moral of the story thusly: "the force of idealism is wasted when it does not recognize the reality of things." "What is needed," he concludes, is "that idealism … .either in literature or in life … should be made efficacious by a better adjustment to the reality it would transform."[4] Efficacious adjustment to reality slides off the writer's pen in the 1890s. Santayana reserves his highest praise for those artists who confronted brute reality and came out chastened and enlightened by the experience, their reason now sharpened, their wits more sober. Santayana revels in his early writings with not a little glee in the artist's tragic struggle with the hard, impassible "reality of things."[5]

The shaping content of art for the young Santayana is tragic. There is constant mention made in *The Sense of Beauty* of the "painful process" of aesthetic ideas being "brought into conformity with the facts" (SB 17). It is my sense that Santayana revels too liberally throughout these texts in the tragic fall to earth that inevitably accompanies the visionary flight of imagination. "There is continual need," he frequently remarks, for the artist "to go back to reality, to study it patiently, to allow new aspects of it to work upon the mind, sink into it, and beget there an imaginative offspring after their own kind" (SB 98). His constant stress in these early texts is the artist's docility to the facts of nature and the training of the imagination in contact with the hard materiality of daily life.

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[2] It is surprising to note that Santayana's words closely resemble those of Roger Fry in an article on Sargent in the November 1923 issue of *The Dial*. Santayana would have known Fry's discussion of "The Wertheimer Portraits" as he published an article on Freud in the same issue. Here is Fry speaking about the group of portraits recently purchased and on view at the National Gallery in London: "I used to imagine some trace of irony in Mr. Sargent's work. I think I was wrong: he is too detached, too much without *parti pris* for that. But that detachment has enabled him to miss no fact that might have social significance, so that the record of his observations lends itself, if one chooses, to an ironical interpretation." See Fry, "The Wertheimer Portraits," *The Dial* 75:5 (November 1923), 444. For Fry's most extended treatment of Sargent see "J. S. Sargent" in *Transformations: Critical and Speculative Essays on Art* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926), 125–135.

[3] George Santayana, "Marginal Notes on Civilization in the United States," *The Dial* 72:6 (June 1922), 568; reprinted in *George Santayana's America: Essays on Literature and Culture*, ed. James Ballowe (Chicago and London: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 160–176.

[4] George Santayana, "Cervantes (1547–1616)," in *A Library of the World's Best Literature, Ancient and Modern*, vol. 8, ed. Charles Dudley Warner (New York: The International Society, 1897), 3457.

[5] The phrase "reality of things," refashioned as "the authority of things," plays a key role in Santayana's last work, *Dominations and Powers*. "Rational authority," Santayana writes speaking of "The United States as Leader," "can accrue to governments only in so far as they represent the inescapable *authority of things*, that is to say, of the material conditions of free life and free action" (DP 457). As will become clear, Santayana's emphasis in his early writings is on an art that centers on these "material conditions" often at the expense of "free life and free action" mentioned here.

> This world [he tells his friend Lawrence Smith Butler in 1901,] is so ordered that we must, in a material sense, lose everything we have and love, one thing after another, until we ourselves close our eyes upon the whole. It is hard for the natural man to bear this thought, but experience forces it upon him if he has the capacity of really learning anything. (L 1:248)

While experience forces realism upon us, Santayana forces it upon us as well. (Santayana was seemingly quite comfortable admonishing his friends about the hard knocks of life and of the invaluable lessons which our daily struggle with existence can teach us.) What literature and art tell us is the hard wisdom that material possession inevitably leads to tragic ruin.

Looking back on his early writings Santayana describes the moral picture that guided them. Back then, he writes — it is now 1921 — "I maintained that the noblest poetry [like religion and morals] must express the moral burden of life and must be rich in wisdom. So anxious was I, when younger, to find some rational justification for poetry and religion, and to show that their magic was significant to true facts, that I insisted too much, as I now think, on the need of relevance to fact even in poetry" (SE 254). The magic of art was its cathartic effect. To view from the safety of one's chair the tragic downfall of Shakespeare's heroes could help to inure us to the pain which life would inevitably force upon us. The grandeur of tragic drama could show us a picture of mastery, of the ultimate tragic courage in acquiescence to fate. But now his thoughts have changed on the matter; rather than the poet paying inevitable homage to the tragic facts of existence, he now confesses his admiration for comic poetry, one that need not contain "much philosophic scope."

The earliest symptoms of his change of attitude occur around the time of his exodus from Harvard in 1911. Writing of the romantic poet Shelley at this time he reflects, "we may safely say, [he] did not understand the real constitution of nature. It was hidden from him by a cloud, all woven of shifting rainbows and bright tears" (WD 168). Far from decrying Shelley's "sensuous pageant" for its disregard of reality, Santayana celebrates his playful intelligence, his disregard for the trials of material adaptation. "His intelligence," he observes, "is not merely an instrument for adaptation … [His] constitution is a fountain from which to draw an infinity of gushing music, not representing anything external, yet not unmeaning on that account, since it represents the capacities and passions latent in him from the beginning" (WD 171). There is a good deal of philosophical content rooted in this remark. While it may seem uncontroversial to say that Shelley's poetry does "not represent anything external," that Santayana found this to be a mark of his poetic gifts and not a failure, marks a sharp departure from the author's earlier thinking.

Written as early as 1910, Santayana's essay on Shelley — "Shelley: Or the Poetic Value of Revolutionary Principles" — expresses for the first time the central attitude of his later aesthetics. Santayana will go on to name these latent "capacities and passions" from which the artist draws his powers the material "psyche." And it is from this source, and not that of external reality, that the artist will both contend and draw his energies. While Santayana still sees the artist's struggle with the "reality of things" to be one of the fundamental aims of art, this struggle now takes place on a new terrain. The following "confession" gives a vivid picture of his new orientation:

> I had been taught to assign no substance to the mind, but to conceive it as a system of successive ideas, the later ones mingling with a survival of the earlier, and forming a cumulative experience, like a swelling musical movement. Now, without ceasing to conceive mental discourse in that way, I have learned with the younger generation to rely more on the substructure, on the material and psychical machinery that puts this conscious show of [discourse] on the stage, and pulls the wires … When living substance is thus restored beneath the surface of experience, there is no longer any reason for assuming that the first song of a bird may not be infinitely rich and as deep as heaven, if it utters the vital impulses of that moment with enough completeness. (SE 254)

Any utterance, even the most momentary and fleeting, if it issues from the depths of the psyche, suffices for artistic perfection. One of the consequences of this reorientation is that Santayana no longer concerns himself with the philosophical, or broadly moral, import of the work of art, but rather to view it and justify it in terms of in its internal, often irrational, processes.

In a terse formulation from the preface to *The Realms of Being*, Santayana sets out the terms for his newly conceived *comic* outlook: "The tragic compulsion to honour the facts is imposed on man by the destiny of his body … but his destiny is not the only theme possible to his thought, nor the most congenial" (RB xii).[6] Although life itself may be tragic in its substance — it is fugitive, treacherous, and in constant flux — it is nonetheless comic in its existence. "The best part of this destiny," he goes on to say "is that he may often forget it; and existence would not be worth preserving if it had to be spent exclusively in anxiety about existence." "Play-life," he concludes, "is his true life."[7]

Aesthetic Metanoia

> The finality of the incidental is more certain, and may be no less perfect, than the finality of great totals, like a life or a civilisation. SANTAYANA

If we compare the language of the following two passages — one from his early period, one later — a surprising shift in aesthetic concerns becomes powerfully evident. The first comes from a well-known discussion of the poetry of "euphuism" from *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*.

> … while the purest prose is a mere vehicle of thought, verse, like stained glass, arrests attention in its own intricacies, confuses it in its own glories, and is even at times allowed to darken and puzzle in the hope of casting over us a supernatural spell.
>
> Long passages in Shelley's *Revolt of Islam* and Keats' *Endymion* are poetical in this sense; the reader gathers, probably, no definite meaning, but is conscious of a poetic medium, of speech euphonious and measured, and redolent of a kind of objectless passion which is little more than the sensation of the movement and sensuous richness of the lines. Such poetry is not great; it has, in fact, a tedious vacuity, and is unworthy of a mature mind. — This quality, which is that almost exclusively exploited by the Symbolists, we may call euphuism — the choice of coloured words and rare and elliptical phrases. (IPR 153-154)

Shelley and Keats give us mere "sensuous richness," casting upon the reader "a supernatural spell" with the hypnotic rhythm of their studied cadences. In works such as these the "medium" takes precedence over and against the world represented.

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[6] The preface was first published in the *Yale Review* as "A Preface to a System of Philosophy," 13 (1924), 417-430.

[7] The final chapter of *The Realm of Truth*, "Beyond Truth," well expresses Santayana's later view on a literally minded philosophy. The philosopher seeking truth, he explains, with Spinoza clearly in view, "marks rather a prosaic mind, a cold mind, a mind limited to the safe middle ground of competence and sagacity." (RB 540)

Shelley's and Keats's verse glitters, shines, and reflects all the colors of the rainbow but it does not bear a hint of tragic experience; their prose is unable to bear the weight of the "moral burden of life." Passages such as these are easy to come by in his early writings, and it is in these evaluations that Santayana's language becomes particularly vivid in its own right. Now compare this discussion with a passage written several years later; it comes from letter to the poet Arthur Ficke, his words are provoked by Ficke's recent book of verse, *Twelve Japanese Painters* (Chicago: The Alderbrink Press, 1913):

> [Here we find a] glimpse of life at some instant, of some ungrounded bird-note of life caught as it vibrates, we ask not why or in what a world; it is some shimmer of passion expressed economically, keenly, with wonderful dexterity, and without any comment ... Tints, lines, attitudes, stuffs all have a certain hypnotic power, a sensuous magic that enthralls us if we gaze at them intently. This I have always known, and it is the fault of our Renaissance, (from the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth, and even today among the academic and conventional artists) not to have felt this sensuous quality enough, to have had no natural idolatry, but to have been interested in a pompous completeness and discursive literary reports — Zolas on canvas. (L 2:136–137)

Ficke's books of poetry and criticism had a great impact on Santayana. According to his letters, they helped him find his way out of the traditional set of values.

In his later references to Sargent, Santayana used these same unflattering terms to describe the painter's work. Sargent's new work "seem[s] to be very vulgar," he reflects (L 3:100). "As a painter Sargent belongs to the spiritual world of Zola; he has the nineteenth century curiosity for things historical, decorative, and exotic; but he has no leaven of his own to make the dough rise" (L 3:100-101). Sargent's "material fulness and realism, [his] descriptive literary intentions, are foreign to 'modern art.' We are now spiritual, simple, eccentric, combining Il Greco [sic] with the Russian ballet" (L 3:136-137).

Despite Santayana's remarkable philosophical consistency — both in terms of tone and content — from his earliest writings to his last, here we are confronted with a broad shift in purpose. "Hypnotic power," "sensuous magic," "shimmer of passion" — this *was* the rhetoric of the enemy camp. (We are a far cry from the pernicious lure of the "supernatural spell" of Shelley and Keats.) Santayana goes so far as to declare his affection for a mediumistic poetry (the latter formerly restricted to an ideal of transparency). While symbols "have a sensible reality of their own, a euphony which appeals to our senses," he explained in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, more properly "language is a symbol for intelligence rather than a stimulus to sense" (IPR 152). Compare this again his later view on the matter: "It is always the play of sensibility, and nothing else, that lends interest to external themes" (OS 156).

Santayana offers his clearest presentation of the new terms of his aesthetic in "The Mutability of Aesthetic Categories" where he defines art as a "flash of instant intuition (something not stable at all)" (AFSL 425). In stark opposition to his earlier claims, he now explains "that a thing in order to be beautiful must seem beautiful again and again points … *away from* the sense of beauty." Whereas in his earlier writings the artwork is described as a piece of "petrified intelligence," a metaphor indebted to a sculptural ideal, now he suggests that the "lover of beauty will … turn his back on concert-halls and museums, and take to the fields." "Yet even the love of nature, and of all the aspects of human life," he adds, "must be spontaneous if it is to gladden the heart" (AFSL 426). The beautiful, a word he rarely uses in his later writings, is fully characterized in his later writings as fleeting, spontaneous and transitory. And it is the beautiful that stands in sharp opposition to "the aesthetic," which is "intellectual, historical and moral in the end and in [its] chief substance" (AFSL 428). The experience of art, he explains, should disintoxicate us from these latter considerations. How do we account for this shift in intentions? What could have inspired, or triggered, this aesthetic metanoia?

Although there is little evidence that Santayana took much interest in contemporary forms of art while living in the United States, upon his retirement to Europe there was a newfound interest in current forms of aesthetic production. While living in Paris over the summer of 1912 he was struck, as were so many, by the flurry of artistic and philosophical events buzzing around him. Japanese painting and poetry, Russian ballet, Post-Impressionist painting,[9] Freud and Fraser on the unconscious,[10] all contributed to a radical "change in climate." This change was precipitated by the introduction of that missing element in the naturalism of his early years: art, he now explains, need contain a moment of "natural idolatry." Once he had finally disentangled himself from the academic environment and everything it represented of the genteel tradition he had grown to despise, he renewed his appreciation of everything that tradition had suppressed or denied — the "ultimate catastrophe" that lies beneath civilized society became the guiding image of his aesthetic and philosophical enterprise. Looking back on his earliest writings he declared, "There was nothing subterranean acknowledged in it, no ultimate catastrophe, no jungle, no desert, and no laughter of the Gods" (IW 8).

To express this "catastrophe" artists must "frankly abandon the plane of [the] object and express in symbols what we need to know of [the world]" (OS 135). "Representative art," he goes on to say, "is at its best when it is selective, when it ignores the details of the model in order more emphatically to render its charm and its soul, so knowledge ... is at its best when it is frankly symbolic" (OS 137). And finally, "Let art abandon reproduction and become indication," he declares in "Penitent Art" (OS 158). Indication, sketch, caricature, gesture — hardly terms of high praise in his early writings — are now conceived as the essential means to grasp the "lightning vivacity of sensuous images." Art, he affirms, should be "rapid, pregnant, humorous" and "hypnotic" (OS 136).

Among the events that shaped his new aesthetic outlook was a 1912 performance at the Châtelet in Paris of Serge Diaghilev's production of *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune* set to the music of Debussy and choreographed by Waslaw Nijinsky. "The Russian ballet was, of all modern novelties," he later wrote, "the one that seemed to me to set the arts really on the highway again."[11]

> Here imagination and passion had fallen back upon first principles. Aestheticism had become absolute and violent, the appeal to the exotic and dream-like scorned to be accurate

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[9] Santayana remarks on Post-Impressionism in a 1913 letter to the five-year-old Polly Winslow, daughter to his Boston friends Mary and Frederick Winslow. "The world is very imperious, absorbing, jealous master," he tells her, "and the Kingdom of Post-Impressionist art is not of this world … The only 'art' Mr. Roger Fry now allows me to like [are] absolute forms in absolute colours … If I find any Post-Impressionist pictures [on my trip to Seville] I will send you one to see if you can be converted too" (L 2:163). In the 1920's Santayana grew increasingly hostile toward the universalizing tendencies in the criticism of Fry and Clive Bell. See "An Aesthetic Soviet," *The Dial* 82:5 (May 1927), 361–370; reprinted in (OS 249-264).

[10] Santayana recalls the impact of Freud and Fraser on his thought in "On the Unity of My Earlier and Later Philosophy" (PGS 18). For a further consideration of Freud see "The Censor and the Poet" (SE 155–159) and "Two Rational Moralists," a review of E. B. Holt's *The Freudian Wish*, reprinted in (AFSL 351-358).

[11] Letter of May 24, 1949, quoted in John McCormick, *Santayana: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 480.

> or instructive and was content to be vivid. Nor was elegance excluded, but it figured only as one *genre* among many … Delicacy was cultivated in its place, yet the way was left open in every direction to strength, to passion, to nature, and to fancy. (PP 273)

Nijinsky showed Santayana what the subterranean in art meant. Aestheticism had been stripped clean of its "curiosity." The "historical, decorative, and exotic," Sargent's realistic bag of tricks, what he now calls "delicacy," are reduced to purely symbolic motives and moved to the periphery. Strength, passion, vivacity, and nature — the first principles of art — are brought to the center. Above all, what this art studiously avoids is the taint of the aesthetic.

Non-human Beauty

> When I wrote the *Three Philosophical Poets* I had not got to the bottom either of the animal courage or of the irrational obedience to impulse that romantic passion implies and lives out dramatically. SANTAYANA

In the early years of the century Santayana was lauded as the founder of a truly American philosophy; in some quarters he was considered the greatest humanist America had yet produced. For Santayana, this warm reception was cause for concern. He never imagined that his "disinterested pessimism" (BR 49) could be so deeply misconstrued as to be part of, perhaps the utmost embodiment of, the "pleasant secularisation" of modernist thought. Above all, he rejected the reformational zeal of the humanists — their desire, as he saw it, to impose a singular morality on all forms of life. His increasing dissatisfaction with the genteel tradition and its pragmatist progeny ultimately resulted in a series of very public renunciations. Santayana put an end to his perceived humanism with his farewell address to the United States. "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy," presented before the Philosophical Union of the University of California at Berkeley in 1911, was a frontal assault on the New England ethos that he was a part of for nearly forty years.

> When you escape … to your forests and your sierras, I am sure again that you do not feel you made them, or that they were made for you. They have grown, as you have grown, only more massively and more slowly. In their non-human beauty and peace they stir the sub-human depths and the superhuman possibilities of your own spirit. It is no transcendental logic that they teach; and they give no sign of any deliberate morality seated in the world. It is rather the vanity and superficiality of all logic, the needlessness of argument, the relativity of morals, the strength of time, the fertility of matter, the variety, the unspeakable variety, of possible life … It is the irresistible suasion of this daily spectacle, it is the daily discipline of contact with things, so different from the verbal discipline of the schools, that will, I trust, inspire the philosophy of your children … From what … does the society of nature liberate you … ? It is hardly … that you wish to forget your past, or your friends, or that you have any secret contempt for your present ambitions. You respect these … you are not suffered by the genteel tradition to criticise or reform them at all radically. No; it is the yoke of this genteel tradition itself that these primeval solitudes lift from your shoulders. They suspend your forced sense of your own importance not merely as individuals, but even as men. (WD 213-214)

Santayana's bold testament to the "unspeakable variety of possible life" brings with it a new sense of the limitations not only of humanism, but of the human itself. Nature teaches the radical "relativity of morals," something that is not abundantly evident in his earlier writings. There is a new emphasis on the "non-human" and "sub-human," on what he starkly describes as the "wild, indifferent, non-censorious infinity of nature" (WD 214).[12] Genteel humanism is put to shame under the glare of the "non-human" world that surrounds us; we are relieved at once of our (unwarranted) sense of self-importance and of our egotistical desire to dominate nature. What is more is that this impinging sense of the natural is not only "non-human," but it forms the very core of our reputed humanity. There is within us a non-human "nucleus of hereditary organization" that guides our will against our conscious desires. Our will, our best and deepest intentions, are not fundamentally ours to enact. In one of his more extreme pronouncements, Santayana points to the centrality of matter impinging on us both from without and from within:

> The surface of human experience...is all an effect of sub-human or super-human forces … There must be something not chosen that chooses, something not desired that desires. This dynamic surd, this primeval automatism, within us and without, sustains the whole ideal structure of our language, our thoughts, and our interests, keeps them consecutive and brings forth the fruits that we promise ourselves and the catastrophes that we wish to avoid. (IW 7–8, 15–16)

The entirety of our human world inclusive of thinking, knowing, and desiring, are "*all an effect*" of a "primeval automatism" welling up within and around us. It is difficult to reconcile this claim with even the most nominal sense of conscious decision-making. Santayana, we know, had little interest in making this reconciliation. He boldly claimed to be a determinist especially with regard to himself. Nonetheless, there is some recompense for such an aggressive disciplining of human experience. Although we are unable, unequipped, to fundamentally alter our material conditions, we have a virtually unlimited power to *represent* that world to ourselves and to others. In *imagination* we can "celebrate and echo" the vast complexities of possible life "without being them" (WD 215). Giving up the strong claim to *know* (and control) the other, we can sympathize with the "not-I" without making them over into images of ourselves. True sympathy, Santayana concludes, comes through recognition of incommensurability: harmony is possible through the acceptance of radical difference.

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[12] In one of his boldest affirmations of the "barbaric" temper, Santayana makes "The Stranger" in *Dialogues in Limbo* declare his aversion to Socrates's "civilized soul":

> In us barbarians there is still something unreclaimed and akin to the elements, a spirit as of the hunter or the hermit or the wild poet, who is not happy in towns. The fields, the mountains, the sea, the life of plants and animals, the marvel of the stars or of intricate friendly forests in which to range alone, all seem to liberate in us something deeper than humanity, something untamable which we share with all of God's creatures and possibly with God himself. I confess that my own spirit is not very romantic, and yet at times it would gladly dehumanize itself and be merged now in infinitely fertile matter, now in clear and unruffled mind; and I am inclined to identify my being even now with these elements, in which I shall soon be lost, rather than with that odd creature which I call myself. (DL 153-154)

Philosophy as a Way of Life

Santayana filosofo. La filosofia como forma de vida
By Daniel Moreno Moreno
Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007, 229 pp.

The time has most definitely come to treat Santayana more universally and more comprehensively, and I believe that Spanish scholars have, at least theoretically, greater opportunities to do it better than American ones, for at least one reason: American commentators usually, I suspect, do not speak/read Spanish and have little access to Spanish books and papers on Santayana, not to mention any understanding of the Spanish mentality, whereas all or nearly all Spanish scholars read English books by Santayana and on Santayana, and, additionally to the native or national spirit they intuitively feel very deeply, they know much more about America, including Pragmatism and the Genteel Tradition, than Americans do about Spain, which, at the very beginning makes the Spaniards' panorama broader. Daniel Moreno Moreno's book *Santayana filosofo. La filosofia como forma de vida* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007) is a good and the latest example. Firstly, Moreno is Spanish himself, but does not promote Santayana's Spanishness by any means, as some of his compatriot scholars have tended to do. He tries to make his presentation well-balanced, and his references include all significant secondary literature, both in English and Spanish, which makes the whole thing actual, fresh, and timely. Secondly, he recognizes the broad spectrum of sources and inspirations one can trace in Santayana's philosophy, including the Ancient Greeks (Democritus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle), Spinoza, Germans (Lotze, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche), Americans (Emerson, Royce, James, Dewey, Critical Realists), British (Russell, G.E. Moore), and Spaniards (Cervantes, John of the Cross). Thirdly, he detects the political circumstances, cultural backgrounds, and social tensions of and in the places Santayana happened to stay, for instance the US under McKinley, England during the Boer War, Italy under Mussolini, and Spain during the Civil War, although, I personally would love to read much more about Santayana in the context of the domestic bloodshed in his beloved motherland in the 1930s, much more than that his age and the geographical distance kept him on the margin of affairs over there (p. 154). Fourthly, he embraces Santayana's thought from the points of view of his philosophical output, literary work and literary criticism (although Santayana's poetry has been excluded from the investigation) as well as practical life. Fifthly, he presents Santayana's philosophy as a system of thought rather than a position on, say, aesthetics, epistemology or ontology. Sixthly, he presents external points of references for Santayana's thought, for instance, the American Genteel Tradition and Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften*, although, strangely enough for a Spanish scholar, hardly anything about *La Generación del 98*, except a briefly expressed reservation about Santayana's connection with the movement due to his indifference to Spain's tragic lot during the military conflict with America (p. 153).

Within this, Moreno's narrative through much of his book points up binary oppositions. Thus: in Chapter I on philosophy as way of life, he has, among others, such subchapters as Ironic Nihilism, Platonic Materialism, and Spiritual Atheism; in Chapter II on cognition and reality, he has Scepticism and Animal Faith; in Chapter IV on LP, he has Reality and Fiction as well as Transcendentalism and Platonism; in the final chapter on Santayana's spiritual testament, he has subchapters on Apollo and Dionysius, on the Life of Reason and the Life of Spirit, and on Spiritual Life and

Materialism. This line, however, is scarcely continued in Chapter III, on social issues, although one could talk about Santayana's, say, "Conservative Liberalism" or "Undemocratic Liberty" instead of Moreno's On Liberalism and Democracy, although it must be admitted that the author recognizes the tension between aristocratism and democratism in Santayana. Let me add at this place that Moreno hardly explores another binary opposition; although, as I said above, he is not willing to promote Santayana Spanishness by any means, it does not mean that Santayana's Spanishness should be nearly ignored at the places where Santayana is a wonderful case to investigate the philosophical and cultural relations between America and Spain; this is the reason why, I would very willingly read something more about Moreno's view of Santayana in the context of the Spanish-American War of 1898 (much more than we already know from PP) as well as Santayana's (evolving?) relation to America in general — nowadays, in the era of Americanization in Spain, in Europe, and elsewhere this might have a double meaning.

The whole material is presented from the perspective of philosophy as a way of life, as the subtitle of the book indicates. To put it differently, the theoretical problematic in philosophy is assisted by the practical implementation of philosophy understood in a more or less similar way as in the Stoics, Michel de Montaigne, and Henry David Thoreau, although Moreno himself does not extrapolate these very names. In my personal opinion, Moreno strongly believes, as Santayana did, that philosophy is something more than a form of sophisticated reflection and that it is deprived of something very significant if left just to reason; therefore, he wants to re-read and re-examine Santayana in the fashion of the importance of philosophy to live a fuller life, which makes it possible for the whole work to assume a more general meaning and produce a more universal message.

Five chapters of this rich, interesting, and well written book are preceded by an Introduction and followed by a Bibliographical Appendix that offers important, although general and introductory, pieces of information for those who would like to have a sense of all Santayana's major works, including his own works, the editions, Spanish translations, the works about Santayana in English and Spanish as well as something about the present state of professional studies over Santayana and, last but not least, about the activity of both the George Santayana Society and *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*.

KRZYSZTOF (CHRIS) PIOTR SKOWROŃSKI
Opole University, Poland

Carta desde España

Beyond Daniel Moreno's book reviewed above, there has been considerable research and activity in Spain concerning George Santayana; a look at the bibliographic update below will demonstrate this. The latest number, 27, of the journal LIMBO ran a "Simposio sobre *Thinking in the Ruins*," a series of papers devoted to the book of Michael Hodges and John Lachs, whose full title is *Thinking in the Ruins:Wittgenstein and Santayana on Contingency*, published in 2000 by Vanderbilt University Press. The website associated with the journal,

<www.hiperlimbo.com>

may in the future include a translation into English; it is actively maintained.

The journal LIMBO recently selected its board members.

Editorial Board: Ramón del Castillo, UNED, Madrid. Pedro García Martín, Profesor I.E.S., Ávila. Cayetano Estébanez, Universidad de Valladolid. Graziella Fantini, ensayista e investigadora de Santayana, Italia. John Lachs, Vanderbilt University, Tennesee, USA. Angus Kerr-Lawson, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Herman J. Saatkamp Jr., Stockton College, N, J., USA. Fernando Savater, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Krzysztof (Chris) Piotr Skowronski , Opole University, Poland. Luis M. Valdés, director de *Teorema*, Universidad de Oviedo

Secretaries: Carmen García Trevijano, Universidad Complutense de Madrid. José Beltrán, Universidad de Valencia. Daniel Moreno, Profesor de I.E.S, Zaragoza

Director: Manuel Garrido, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

I have from Chris Skowronski the following indication of the growing presence of Santayana in today's Spain. He points to translations into Spanish,[1] special issues of respected journals,[2] books on Santayana[3] (not to mention numerous papers), and the stronger and stronger activity of *Limbo: Boletín internacional de estudios sobre Santayana*,[4] a journal dedicated to his thought. These manifest more and more intensive attempts to include him into the ranks of the greatest Spanish thinkers in general, and, in particular, one whose output has typically Castilian and *abulense* (ie from Avila) traits, and to see Santayana himself even as a member of the most eminent intellectual and artistic Spanish movement, the Generation of 98.[5] There are some good reasons for this: as soon as he was able to do so, Santayana left the USA permanently for Europe; he never gave up his Spanish citizenship; he called himself a "Castilian mystic" (PGS 603) and "Don Quixote sane" (PGS 604), as well as a man who "in feeling and in legal allegiance" has "always remained a Spaniard" (BR 134). He outwardly preferred Latinity over Americanism, Catholic festivity over Protestant rigor, the Mediterranean type of spirituality and imagination over that found in New England, and Europe's intellectual tradition over America's.

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[1] Amongst the newest are PP (*Personas y lugares*) by Pedro Garcia Martin, Madrid: Trotta, 2003; *La filosofia en America* (a collection of Santayana's essays on America) translated and edited by Javier Alcoriza and Antonio Lastra, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2006, PSL (*Platonismo y vida espiritual*), Madrid: Trotta, 2006, translated by Daniel Moreno Moreno.

[2] See: Archipielago. Cuadernos de critica de la cultura, 70 (2006): Jorge Santayana. Un hombre al margen, un pensamienot central; Teorema. Revista internacional de filosofia, vol. XXI/1-3 (2002).

[3] Amongst the newest books are: Jose Maria Alonso Gamo, *Un espanol en el mundo: Santayana*. Guadalajara: Aache, 2006 (2nd edition; 1st edition 1966); Vicente Cervera Salinas y Antonio Lastra (eds), *Los reinos de Santayana*. University of Valencia: Biblioteca Javier Coy, 2002; Jose Beltran, *Celebrar un mundo. Introduccion al pensar nomada de George Santayana*. University of Valencia, 2002.

[4] See the website: http://www.hiperlimbo.com/consejoeditorial.html

[5] See especially: Pedro García-Martín. El sustrato abulense de Jorge Santayana. Avila: Institución "Gran Duque de Alba" de la Excma. Diputación Provincial de Avila, 1989; Ramon J. Sender, Examen de ingenios, los noventayochos: ensayos críticos. New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1961; José Alonso Gamo, Un Español en el mundo: Santayana; poesia y poética. Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispanica, 1966 (2nd edition 2007).

Santayana's Limited Pragmatism

> [Knowledge] … expresses in discourse the modified habits of an active being, plastic to experience, and capable of readjusting its organic attitude to other things on the same material plane of being with itself. (SAF 172)

Introduction

The above assertion by George Santayana has an unmistakable pragmatist ring. It is unsurprising that some readers have seen him as a member of that school. But if Santayana exploits the key idea of pragmatism in his treatment of factual knowledge, he places this in an ontological setting of realms of being that is clearly alien to pragmatism. Thus Santayana takes a part of the pragmatist position and grafts it neatly into his materialism. It is evidently possible to detach a part — the key part — of pragmatist doctrine and detach it from the rest. This I attempt to do in the last section below, where I split off what I believe is the key insight of pragmatism from the empiricist setting in which it has traditionally been placed. Once this has been done, reasons come to light for questioning whether this is a happy union; the empiricist setting is in some ways not a congenial environment for the application of this important technique. I focus on just one of the areas where I see friction between the two: the key idea is naturally suited to a philosophy treating human action; whereas an empiricism that rejects substance in favour of reductive substitutes is ill suited for dealing with action.

What conception of nature would best facilitate human action? What philosophical language or system of categories would best serve with the various vicissitudes of life? Santayana poses these questions directly in the early chapters of *The Realm of Matter*; the conception of nature that he develops there is that which seems to him forced on philosophers in order for them to function effectively in the "field of action." Intelligent action requires us to reason about our bodies and other physical things with which we interact, without scruples about proving their existences. A radical merit of Santayana's epistemology of animal faith is its accommodation and justification of these obvious human practices, the wisdom of our intellectual heritage. In his eyes, empiricists are abandoning posits required for intelligent human action, this done for laudatory reasons that unfortunately lead to a "malicious psychology." I shall advance a part of Santayana's withering attack on empiricists, but will place it in a limited context. I do not here question their claim that, by dealing with reductive substitutes in place of physical objects and events, this special language is a satisfactory way of confirming assertions about nature (although Santayana does so). Rather I make the claim on behalf of Santayana that, whether or not this artificial construction has merit for epistemology, it would be an especially poor choice as a language suitable for dealing with human action. It seems to me that many of his arguments are best placed in this context.

Santayana applies the key pragmatist technique in dealing with things and events in RM, the locus for action; he does not apply it to his realms. As with the kernel of pragmatism itself, the result is a viable philosophy of action. However, conflict arises within pragmatism due to its setting in an empiricist theory, in which action is not well handled.

Action in the Dumb Philosophy of Orthodoxy

Santayana's four volume tome, *Realms of Being*, is by no means a recondite excursion into metaphysics; it follows a less lofty original inspiration. In its introduction, he says he will attempt to express and clarify the "dumb philosophy of the human animal, by which he rears his family and practises the arts and finds his way home" (RB viii). In the major civilisations a unique moral equilibrium has arisen — he names the Indians, the Chinese, the Moslems, and the Catholics — but there is a basic common wisdom underlying all of these:

> In fact, beneath these various complete systems which have professed but failed to be universal, there is actually a dumb human philosophy, incomplete bur solid, prevalent among all civilised peoples. … they necessarily possess, with [the] arts, a modicum of sanity, morality, and science requisite for carrying them on, and tested by success in doing so. Is not this human competence philosophy enough? Is it not at least the nucleus of all sound philosophy? (RB v-vi).

At the beginning of RM Santayana considers the field of action, and asks the question: What must be our understanding of the natural world in order for us to have a fruitful interaction with it? It appears reasonable to see this as one aspect of the "dumb philosophy," that concerning the interface of individuals with their surroundings in the natural world. How does one envisage external reality in this basic orthodox approach in order that action may bear fruit?

As a language and conceptual scheme for coping with the material world, that of physics might be seen as an obvious choice. However, he dismisses this theoretical apparatus as of limited use in practical matters, at least when complicated mathematical physics is considered. In the study of science, he finds, a mystery arises because of "the great difference in scale between the texture of matter and that of human ideas." Science turns to mathematics, "a perfect method of notation in which everything to be noted has disappeared; and the only truth of our accurate science turns out to be … utterly blind" (RB 274-5). The language and conceptual structure of exact science is not suitable for guiding us in the field of action; they do not offer a "butt for action." This does not at all represent a lack of respect for science, which he sees as a natural extension of common sense. However, in action the individual does not normally appeal to the abstract terms of science.

A second alternative that would surely be offered is a language and system inspired by the empiricist perspective, in which the things and events of ordinary discourse are treated at a distance in terms of some kind of substitute. Such a language has its origins in the search for a viable theory of knowledge. However, whatever value such a language is for epistemology, I hold that it is ill-suited to application in the field of action. Much of what follows later will pit a system of this type against that offered by Santayana, here presented. When I refer to an "empiricist perspective," I am thinking primarily of a few doctrines that are sore points with Santayana. Chief of these is the refusal within the school to refer directly to real physical things, which are replaced in their discussions by reductive substitutes. As substitutes, classical empiricism preferred to work with ideas, seen as moments of experience. More recently, other substitutes have arisen, including propositions, theories, and sets. This refusal has its source in the rejection of a category of (material) substance. Tied to this is the belief that knowledge has an idea as its object. According to Santayana, this amounts to the belief that knowledge is intuition, whereas he sees intuition as merely an accompaniment or mediator of knowledge; the *object* of factual knowledge is a physical thing, perhaps at a certain remove. It is correct that all factual claims must be confirmed by experience, but this does not justify a retreat into a philosophy of the foreground. Concepts like that of an absolute truth and others of his favourite categories play their part in ordinary commonsense reasoning, and are not to be thrown out as unreliable and metaphysical.

Santayana opts for materialism as his setting for human action. According to SAF, any philosophy that accepts knowledge must posit substance in some form; in order for this to be the arena of action, he argues in RM that this substance be the realm of matter. Philosophical modesty is not for him represented by doubts about the existence of this realm, but rather by a minimalist reading of its properties. His brief description of the sphere of action is given in one of his marginal summaries: "A world in which action is to occur must be external, spatial, and temporal, possessing variety and unity" (RB 202). Spatiality and temporality are two of five *indispensable* properties of the realm of matter. Tied to these is the property of "unequal distribution" in the realm of matter, which is *dispersed* through space and time. Santayana speaks of a *physical* space and a *physical* time, each of these being carefully distinguished from all representations we might have of them: pictorial space is just a human view of physical space; sentimental time and mathematical time are human perspectives of physical time. This is in keeping with his general dichotomy: on the one hand a piece of matter with a simple definition or ostensive designation; on the other a variety of descriptions through essence, as offered by scientists or others, these being as precise as is desired. However, due to our ignorance of the true nature of the physical world, none of these essences can be expected to render up the exact true essence of the piece of matter, so that reference to it cannot be as exact as the logician might like.

In natural philosophy as Santayana understands it, discourse is tailored to achieving successful action, and must be adapted so as to enlighten and guide that action.

> It is not the task of natural philosophy to justify this assumption [of a natural world], which indeed never can be justified. Its task, after making that assumption, is to carry it out consistently and honestly so as to arrive, if possible, at a conception of nature by which the faith involved in action may be enlightened and guided. (RB 194)

Now action requires that we allow some things to effect others causally; some way must be found to bring such considerations into the language. With the above dichotomy, it is possible to refer directly to space, time, things, events, causes, and other aspects of matter that must be dealt with in a satisfactory approach to action.

The Empiricist Position Does Not Explain Action

David Hume tells us that causality is no more than constant conjunction and that personal identity no more than a sequence of fleeting experiences. However, in our daily discourse we assume more. For one event to cause another, there must be some underlying, perhaps invisible mechanism operating. Some may think of themselves in terms of their conscious experiences, but most do not, and this is certainly no common way in which to think of others. It appears that some other terms are needed in ordinary discourse to speak of these.

In Santayana's philosophy, it is assumed that an event like an eclipse has a cause in the naïve sense. In earlier times, the cause might have been seen as some angry god; but people have learned to take a more enlightened view of the situation.[1] The cause is not some logical construction of an infinity of repetitions, but is a hidden source or origin located in the material world. Again, a follower of this dumb philosophy is not so dumb as to think that a man planning to throw a spear at him is a complex collection of ideas. In both the case of causality and that of personal identity, it is clear that for purposes of a helpful philosophy of action something is wanting in Hume's account. One must look beneath the superficiality of the account for underlying reasons, which the naturalist will seek in the realm of matter. Empiricist followers of Hume do not accept this, finding it impertinent to deal with such underlying forces and things lacking immediate confirmation in experience. Seeing causality in terms of constant conjunction appears to them as an improvement over the commonsense philosophy envisaged by Santayana. Of the empiricist position, Santayana is ever ready to cast a pejorative glance: it is "violently artificial … Experience and knowledge are clarifications of animal faith … [and] are by no means composed of a multitude of clear intuitions associated or conjoined … " (POML 120).

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[1] I note that, although he never settled on a full account of causality (despite several attempts) he does appeal to the concept in RM.

Some of Santayana's best arguments against the empiricists invite them to admit that the world does not consist of ideas or moments of experience or propositions; it is not to these that they *actually* direct their faith. However, his efforts to portray philosophers who refuse to accept and posit material things in a physical world as somewhat hypocritical would not likely change the stand of empiricist epistemologists who are merely looking for confirmation of factual assertions. For them, evidence comes from experimental (or experiential) data alone. In their eyes, the postulate of substance here adds no fresh data and is at best a redundancy. For purposes of distinguishing between true or reliable claims and faulty ones, then, there is perhaps no call for posits of substances. However, when these philosophers go beyond the technical confirmation just described, and claim for instance to be offering a conception of philosophy in which action fits nicely or at all, then I think Santayana's criticisms hit their target. So long as empiricists confine themselves to questions of confirmation, it is difficult for Santayana to undermine their text. He does not refute them by insisting that nobody has access to the literal truth. However, when empiricists try to apply their artificial dialectic of sensations or language of observation sentences to the problems of philosophy and life, Santayana's attack is justified. In their narrow reading of experience, they are really ignoring the lessons of experience, the hard won understanding that we are parts of a material world whose inner structure is hidden from us. The empiricist dialectic is inappropriate as a language of action.

Rather than further pursuing Santayana's attack on empiricism, I ask in the next section if he can defend his own position and meet the objections expected from critics; can Santayana answer the standard criticisms of systems that accept substance? He gives his own formulation of these objections, which he accepts as a fundamental challenge to his position calling for a response.

The Empiricist Challenge

In "Knowledge is Faith Mediated by Symbols," Chapter XVIII of SAF, Santayana gives his version of the objections that his position elicits in empiricist critics. It is neatly summarized by the last sentence in the following paragraph: "If I know things only by representations, are not the representations the only things I know?" Here is a more complete expression of this idea:

> I revert now to the question how it is possible to posit an object which is not a datum, and how without knowing positively what this object is I can make it the criterion of truth in my ideas. How can I test the accuracy of descriptions by referring them to a subject-matter which is not only out of view now but which probably has never been more than an object of

> intent, an event which even while it was occurring was described by me only in terms native to my fancy? If I know a man only be reputation, how should I judge if the reputation is deserved? If I know things only by representations, are not the representations the only things I know? (SAF 169-70)

This, he concedes, is a "fundamental challenge," and one that is answered only by a sweeping change in our concept of knowledge. At the end of the chapter, he presents the familiar formula that knowledge is "true belief grounded in experience." While this is a familiar formula, his interpretation of it is very different from the usual. For him, belief or faith is foremost, whereas he sees the Western tradition as fixing on the truth or correctness of the representation, to the detriment of the primary nature of belief in some existence. There are boundlessly many different essences that we might take to represent a thing (or event), and but one that is its full ideal description; we cannot expect any of the former to be a true replica of the thing, and indeed even if it yields useful knowledge, will surely differ greatly from the true essence of the thing. With this interpretation, we can scarcely see representational success as the chief part of knowledge — and Santayana does not at all wish to do this. Knowledge is *faith* in something referred to, along with a intuitive grasp of some better rather than worse representative essence, one that arises through some kind of genuine contact with that thing. This is a rich conceptual setting in which to seek out a congenial approach to human action.

His exact response to the challenge is based on this revision in the notion of natural knowledge. Knowledge is not intuition; and the challenge is based on the assumption that it is.

> Knowledge is knowledge because it has compulsory objects that pre-exist. … It expresses in discourse the modified habits of an active being, plastic to experience, and capable of readjusting its organic attitude to other things on the same material plane of being with itself. The place and the pertinent functions of these several things are indicated by the very attitude of the animal who notices them; this attitude, physical and practical, determines the object of intent, which discourse is about. (SAF 172)

We know through physical interaction, either direct or indirect; representation is helpful — indeed essential — but Santayana insists that it plays a secondary role. We know things through out material interface with them, not by pure intuition. What we know is not the essence intuited but the thing or which the essence is a representation.

I note that empiricist critics, along with claiming the epistemic high ground, as well make continual claims to the *logical high ground*. In dealing with experience, they begin with well-defined basic sentences from which a clear cut logical development is easily carried out. This is not the case when one is dealing with something substrative, something latent but not observed, something to which one cannot assign a manifest exact sense. Of course, Santayana can readily formulate a more precise theoretical description of the thing; however, this is a mere essence, and Santayana insists that this essence not be confused with the thing. I do not think that everybody confuses the two. However, he is right that the empiricist tradition trades on this confusion, and he puts his finger directly on the problem. Cursory readers might allege that the vagueness of his treatment here betrays weakness in logic, but this is not the case. And, just because a philosophy of experience offers a better setting for logical formulation and argument does not prove that this philosophy is best. In any case, his response to the logical objection is the same as his response to the above challenge. It is not the case that knowledge is intuition

Pragmatism Restricted to Natural Knowledge

Without doubt, Santayana's account of natural knowledge is strongly influenced by pragmatism. Ideas arise, as it were, when organisms interface with inorganic matter so as to stimulate ideas in the mind of the former: "These two conditions [organ and stimulus] must normally come together, like flint and steel, before the spark of experience will fly" (SAF 23). The ideas attain their validity by the extent to which they reflect properties of that matter. Ideas are merely symbols and may be misleading if they are not closely tied to action. One can easily perceive the influence of William James on his young student. This influence has not gone unnoticed, and several have seen Santayana as espousing pragmatism in some form. However, given his open hostility to the entire school, this is a difficult case to make. In the past, I have questioned any view of his philosophy as pragmatist. For one thing, three of the realms in which he presents his philosophy, those of truth, essence, and matter, are all of them alien to a philosopher like Dewey, who Santayana describes as a philosopher of the foreground. I made this case in the 1992 number of *Overheard in Seville*, in the paper "An Abulensean Pragmatist?" However, I now look at the question a bit differently. Perhaps it is possible to clarify the situation, through a consideration of the variety of occasions where Santayana appeals to essences. I believe that with some kinds of essences, it makes sense to apply pragmatic criteria, but for others, it does not. He can rightly be called a pragmatist in that he appeals to something like pragmatist criteria in just those situations where this makes sense, according to his categories.

The ideas (essences) that arise in expressing knowledge of natural things and events are all of them perspectival; no exact true intuition of the real nature of physical things is to be expected of a perceiving animal organism. The ideas that guide our animal faith in the material world are more or less helpful, but they are subjective impressions; and their merit rests, both for the pragmatist and for Santayana, on their being conducive to effective action. C. S. Peirce describes how scientific ideas have to be adapted to experimental results, and how they are empty of content when they fail to do so. The representational concepts we use both in ordinary life and in science are subject to something very like the pragmatist method, which thrives on working out concepts that yield useful perspectives.

However, he also appeals to other quite different applications of essence. In one of these, he uses essences to apply in objective fashion to the real nature of individual things, facts, and events, seen as it were in a view from nowhere. Because of his scepticism about literal knowledge, we cannot expect to have an intuition of these essences. But a thing (or an event) has one character rather than another; and among the plenitude of essences, one and only one will describe this character. Here he makes a striking departure from most pragmatists, who will ask what use such an essence can be, since it is so remote from anybody's apprehension. One of Santayana's applications of these essences (which to the empiricist are metaphysical) is to establish his scepticism; for, if one takes seriously his claim that any thing has one character rather than another, as represented by a particular essence, then it is scarcely possible to believe that the observer will intuit that very essence. There is little risk that somebody would try to apply the pragmatic maxims to such complex essences. Likely this kind of concept would not be used at all; and, even if it were, the pragmatic criteria would naturally be applied to attempted representations of the things, essences of the above first type, rather than to the complex essences of the things.

A third application of essence is quite different, and rather difficult to describe. I speak of his main categories, including those of essence, truth, and spirit, along with various other general terms to which he appeals. Like the second type, these are not perspectival; however, they are suitable for conceptualization in discourse and do not have the unmanageable complexity of the essences of physical things. Because such concepts are not perspectives, if I am correct about Santayana's position, they would be unsuitable for a pragmatic analysis. The genius of pragmatism is its ability to fashion from the perspectival constraints on a concept a working version of it.

Of course, truth is a concept that pragmatists from James on have sought to analyse according to their favourite criteria. For Santayana, however, truth is an absolute notion, an eternal ideal record of what is, what was, and what will be. Efforts to give the concept a pragmatic reading in terms of knowledge or of human language very quickly erase what for him are its two most important features: the unchanging nature of truth, and its independence from anything human. Many of today's pragmatists reject any such absolute notion of truth, finding it metaphysical and remote from experience; frequently they pursue the Jamesean project of a pragmatic analysis of truth. Since the pragmatic method is seen as a good instrument for exposing false and pretentious metaphysical concepts, this is taken to be a natural approach.

On the one hand are concepts like Santayana's realms that for him are not perspectival and are not open to a pragmatic analysis. On the other hand, pragmatists typically reject these concepts as metaphysical, and offer versions open to this analysis. The pragmatist technique is one thing and the range over which it is to be applied is quite another. Santayana is a skilled practitioner of the technique, fully in sympathy with pragmatism as a philosophy of action; but he retains concepts like the realms that resist any such analysis. The hostility toward these concepts, I hold, is not based on any misunderstanding about the key idea of the pragmatist discovery, but is based on the empiricist setting in which it has been placed. I maintain that one can separate out the kernel of the pragmatist discovery from other ideas commonly merged with it, ideas that reflect the empiricist tradition. Once such a separation is carried out, I suggest, Santayana's ontology of matter and essence is a good alternative setting within which to exercise the pragmatic technique. Concepts under analysis can be retained as essences, but the parts of the realm of matter that generate these are also retained, as required by a philosophy of action.

The sense of the term 'pragmatism' includes much more than the basic inspiration of pragmatism. It includes idealist and empiricist notions that influenced Peirce and James, and which have become an integral part of pragmatist doctrine. The original inspiration is one of the jewels of American philosophy. Knowledge of our physical surroundings is represented *symbolically* by ideas that arise in our material encounters with it. The ideas are sharpened when we poke into the interface and run experiments. This is pre-eminently a philosophy of action. Traditionally (and I think unfortunately), this pragmatic inspiration has been embedded in an empiricist system imported from overseas. I suggest, tentatively, that in some ways this is not a happy union. According to my argument above, this system is *not* suited to a philosophy of action. As well, empiricism imposes on the pragmatist discovery the alien notion, tracing back to Locke, that knowledge is of ideas. However, in the original inspiration ideas are *signs* which guide us in our knowledge of *things*, with effective action as the result. There is no incentive to remove the things from consideration.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHECKLIST
TWENTY-THIRD UPDATE

The items below will supplement the references given in *George Santayana: A Bibliographical Checklist, 1880–1980* (Bowling Green: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982) prepared by Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. and John Jones. These references are divided into primary and secondary sources. Except for the book reviews, the following articles and books are classified according to their years of publication. Readers with additions or corrections are invited to send these to Kristine Frost, Santayana Edition, School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI, INDIANAPOLIS IN 46202–5157.

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF PRIMARY SOURCES

2006

Fragmentos de correspondencia romana: George Santayana a Robert Lowell. Edited by Graziella Fantini. Rome: Instituto Cervantes, 2006, 108p.

Platonismo y vida espiritual. Translated and with an Introduction by Daniel Moreno Moreno. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, S.A., 2006, 83p.

Santayana: La filosofía en América. Writings selected and translated by Javier Alcoriza and Antonio Lastra with an Introduction by Antonio Lastra. Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2006, 228p (“Clasicos del pensamiento” series). The volume includes a preliminary study titled “Hacia una lectura definitiva de George Santayana” (9–22), “Nota sobre esta edición y bibliografía escogida” (23–27), un “Cronología” (31–38), and the following essays:

- “La tradición gentil en la filosofía americana,” pages 41–63 (“The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy,” *University of California Chronicle,* 1911).
- “Shakespeare americano,” pages 65–70 (“Shakespeare: Made in America,” *The New Republic,* 1915).
- “La opinión filosófica en América,” pages 71–84 (“Philosophical Opinion in America,” *British Academy Proceedings,* 1918).
- “El trasfondo moral,” pages 85–102 (“The Moral Background,” chapter I of *Character and Opinion in the United States,* Scribner’s, 1920).
- “Notas marginales sobre la civilización en los Estados Unidos,” pages 103–21 (“Marginal Notes on Civilization in the United States,” *Dial*, 1922).
- “La tradición gentil en apuros,” pages 123–57 (*The Genteel Tradition at Bay*, Scribner’s, 1931).
- “Prefacio a *Los reinos del ser*,” pages 159–72 (“Preface” to *Realms of Being*, one-volume edition, Scribner’s, 1942).
- “Tom Sawyer y don Quijote,” pages 173–78 (“Tom Sawyer and Don Quixote,” *Mark Twain Quarterly,* 1952).
- “Comentario al Discurso de Gettysburg,” pages 179–224 (chapters XXVI through XXXIV of *Dominations and Powers*, Scribner’s, 1951).

"Tres filósofos americanos," pages 225–28 ("Three American Philosophers," *American Scholar*, 1952–1953).

1981

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1949

"Aus den Erinnerungen eines Philosophen" (From the memories of a philosopher). *Der Monat* 12 (September 1949): 72–80, in the section "Im alten Deutschland" (In old Germany). A translation of "Germany," chapter I of *The Middle Span*.

1932

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1919

"Croce on Goethe." In *The Athenaeum*, 4665 (26 September 1919).

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF SECONDARY SOURCES

2007

Brodrick, Michael. "Spirituality and Moral Struggle." A paper presented at the Royce/James Conference on 25 May 2007, Harvard University.

Flamm, Matthew Caleb, and Krzysztof Piotr Skowroñski, eds. *Under Any Sky: Contemporary Readings of George Santayana*. Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Moreno Moreno, Daniel. "Descripción de los escritos de George Santayana." *La Torre del Virrey* 2 (2006/7): 63–71.

_____. *Santayana filósofo: La filosofía como forma de vida*. Madrid: Trotta, 2007, 229p.

Skowroñski, Krzysztof Piotr. *Santayana and America. Values, Liberties, Responsibility*. Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

2006

Archipiélago: cuadernos de crítica de la cultura 70 (2006) is dedicated to "Jorge Santayana. Un hombre al margen, un pensamiento central" and includes the following essays:

- "*Una visita a Santayana*" by Arthur C. Danto
- "*Avila, marco espiritual de Santayana*" by Pedro García Martín
- "*El aroma de Santayana*" by Fernando Savater
- "*Santayana y sus murallas*" by José Jiménez Lozano
- "*El animal humano*" by Jacobo Muñoz
- "*El cristianismo poético de Santayana*" by Ignacio Gómez de Liaño
- "*La sonrisa de Parménides, o el naturalismo irónico de Jorge Santayana*" by Manuel Garrido
- "*La biblioteca secreta de George Santayana*" by José Beltrán Llavador
- "*Santayana, lector de Platón*" by Daniel Moreno Moreno
- "*El cosmopolitismo de Santayana*" by Krzysztof Piotr Skowroñski
- "*Avila, Boston, Roma. Pensar a partir de la ciudad*" by Graziella Fantini
- "*El español Jorge Santayana*" by María Zambrano

Beltrán Llavador, José. "Sueños de pájaro enjaulado: Santayana en España: una aproximación bibliográfica." *Limbo* (*Teorema* 25.3) 25 (2006): 3–26.

"Carta desde España." *Limbo* (*Teorema* 25.3) 25 (2006): 49–50. (Translation of "Carta desde España." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 24 (Fall 2006): 39.)

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Rubin, Richard Marc. "The Philosophical and Interpretive Import of Santayana's Marginalia." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 24 (Fall 2006): 12–18.

Skowroñski, Krzysztof Piotr. "C. A. Strong and G. Santayana in Light of Archive Material." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 24 (Fall 2006): 23–27.

Stambovsky, Phillip. "Royce, Santayana, and the Relational Form of the Ontological Argument." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 24 (Fall 2006): 1–11.

Tiller, Glenn. "The Unknowable: The Pragmatist Critique of Matter." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 42 (Spring 2006): 206–28.

2003

Lachs, John. "The Past, the Future and the Immediate." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39 (Spring 2003): 151–62.

REVIEWS OF SANTAYANA'S BOOKS

Dominations and Powers
"The Smile of Santayana." *Tomorrow* (August 1951): 51–54. (Christopher Isherwood)
Fragmentos de correspondencia romana: George Santayana a Robert Lowell. Edited by Graziella Fantini.
"Robert Lowell y Santayana." *Limbo* (*Teorema* 25.3) (2006): 27–31. (Antonio Lastra)
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Book-of-the-Month Club News (December 1943): 2–3. (Christopher Morley)
Platonismo y vida espiritual. Translated and with an Introduction by Daniel Moreno Moreno.
"Santayana recuperado." *Revista de Occidente* 309 (2007): 141–46. (José Beltrán Llavador)

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Under Any Sky

We call attention to the appearance of *Under Any Sky: Contemporary Readings of George Santayana*, (See 2007 Secondary Sources above) containing the papers presented at the Second International Conference on George Santayana in Opole, Poland, in the summer of 2006, as edited by Matt Flamm and Chris Skowronski.

Overheard in Seville

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Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works

Page numbers given with no further information on the edition will refer to a volume in the critical Santayana Edition, where this exists, or to the Scribner's edition in most other cases.

AFSL	*Animal Faith and Spiritual Life*, ed. John Lachs
BR	*Birth of Reason and Other Essays*
COUS	*Character and Opinion in the United States*
CP	*Complete Poems*
DL	*Dialogues in Limbo*
DP	*Dominations and Powers*
EGP	*Egotism in German Philosophy*
ICG	*The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*
IPR	*Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*
LP	*The Last Puritan*
LR	*The Life of Reason, or The Phases of Human Progress*
LR1	Vol. 1. *Reason in Common Sense*
LR2	Vol. 2. *Reason in Society*
LR3	Vol. 3. *Reason in Religion*
LR4	Vol. 4. *Reason in Art*
LR5	Vol. 5. *Reason in Science*
OS	*Obiter Scripta*
PGS	*The Philosophy of George Santayana*, ed. P. A. Schilpp
POML	*Physical Order and Spiritual Liberty* ed. John and Shirley Lachs
PP	*Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography*
PSL	*Platonism and the Spiritual Life*
RB	*Realms of Being* (One volume edition)
RE	*The Realm of Essence*. RB Bk. I
RM	*The Realm of Matter*. RB Bk II
RT	*The Realm of Truth*. RB Bk III
RS	*The Realm of Spirit*. RB Bk IV
SAF	*Scepticism and Animal Faith*
SB	*The Sense of Beauty*
SE	*Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies*
TTMP	*Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy*
TPP	*Three Philosophical Poets*
WD	*Winds of Doctrine*