

Overheard in Seville

Bulletin of the Santayana Society

No. 11
Fall 1993



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of the
Santayana Society*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

i	Table of Contents
ii	Announcement of the 1993 Annual Meeting
<i>Thomas Alexander</i>	1 Santayana's Unbearable Lightness of Being: Aesthetics as a Prelude to Ontology
<i>John J. McDermott</i>	11 A Sometime Companion
<i>John P. Anton</i>	15 Santayana and Greek Philosophy
<i>John M. Michelsen</i>	30 George Santayana: A Pyrrhonian Sceptic of Our Time
<i>Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.</i>	41 The Santayana Edition

The Bibliographic Update will resume in the next number

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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

SANTAYANA SOCIETY

1993
ANNUAL MEETING

Presentation of a brief update on the Santayana Edition:

Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.
Texas A&M University

Speaker: *Henry Samuel Levinson*
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

"The Truth about Matters of Spirit:
A Response to My Critics"

Commentators: *John Lachs*
Vanderbilt University

Angus Kerr-Lawson
University of Waterloo

7:30 - 10:30 P.M. 28 December
Sydney Room
Atlanta Marriot Hotel

Santayana's Unbearable Lightness of Being: Aesthetics as a Prelude to Ontology

One of the most fascinating and totally unproductive exchanges between two major American philosophers commenced with Santayana's review of Dewey's *Experience and Nature* and Dewey's rather cranky rejoinder, "Half-Hearted Naturalism." Santayana's review was wickedly insightful, highlighting just about everything Santayana detested about America: pragmatism, metaphysics, idealism, romanticism, optimism, the busy foolishness of industrial democracy, naivete — in short, John Dewey. Dewey's outlook was irredeemably "boyish" and "near-sighted," focusing on the human foreground rather than upon Nature, which herself had no foreground or background. Dewey's "naturalism" was tainted with the loathsome Hegelian bacillus; it lacked a discipline of spirit in which Nature's power was acknowledged but not worshipped. Ideals are not magical causes in the bosom of matter. Only the materialist, seeing Nature for what it was, could love the ideal for what it was: alien, indifferent, and lovely. Santayana, Dewey shot back, was a dogmatic materialist, "kneeling before the unknowable," with a "broken-backed" rather than robust naturalism due to an intellectual "hang-over" from Platonism.¹

It is not my purpose to rehash this debate and fault each philosopher for misunderstanding the other. I wish instead to explore a theme which is shared by Dewey and Santayana in their attempts at a "naturalistic metaphysics," or, to use Santayana's preferred term, "ontology." The role of the aesthetic I find particularly crucial. I hope to show how Santayana approached the question of "Nature" or "Being" through this avenue. I will also indicate briefly at the end that Dewey's and Santayana's very different conceptions of the aesthetic may account, ultimately, for their very different philosophies. The moral I draw from this is that the aesthetic may well prove to be a more important domain of philosophical inquiry, especially for metaphysics, than hitherto suspected. I will state for now, broadly and indefensibly, that I take imagination to be central to the philosophical enterprise and, granting this, the traditional idea of ontology must be rethought. Dewey and Santayana will emerge as truly "postmodern philosophers," a term which I am sure makes Santayana's shade in Limbo wince in disgust.

Before treating Santayana directly, I will make some broad claims about the classical conceptions of ontology found in the Greeks. I find myself in company with Martin Heidegger in designating Parmenides as the "fateful" figure for Western thinking. It was Parmenides who enumerated the various signs (*semata*) of Being (*to eon*): uncreated and deathless, without past or future, "since it is now" (*epe i nun estin*), one, indivisible, continuous, everywhere alike, at rest, limited, whole, nameable, necessary, immanent to the mind (*nous*) rather than the senses: in short, it is "full"

¹ See George Santayana, "Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics," *The Journal of Philosophy* XXII (1925) pp. 673-88, reprinted in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. Paul A. Schilpp, and in *Obiter Scripta*, and John Dewey, "Half-Hearted Naturalism," *The Journal of Philosophy* XXIV (1927), pp. 57-64, included in *Later Works* 3.

This paper was read to the Santayana Society in Washington, D.C. on December 28, 1992.

(*empleon*), complete, and so *perfect*. It is alone what is thinkable and knowable, "For *Being* must be the same for thought and speech." (DK, 6, 8) The guiding metaphor in this description is that *Being* is "full" and "complete," hence it has no "emptiness" or "need." It is "perfect" in the sense of *perfected*: brought to fulfilment, "finished" in the way a work of art is when to add or detract would ruin it. Whatever modifications would be introduced by the Sons of Parmenides, they would be addenda to what I call "the ontology of perfection."

Being is most fully exemplified in what is perfect, and perfection means that it is "self-sufficient" (needing nothing beyond itself and so self-caused and self-sustaining). It also means that it is without change, movement or growth, that is, it is "timeless," an ever-present *now* which does not have a history or a future. Plato applies this canon to his Forms, Aristotle to his divine principle, the Unchanging Changer, Democritus to his material atoms, Origen and Augustine to God.

Because *Being* is conceived here as that which is *essentially finished*, it can be thought of as *finite*, that is, as something whose nature is *fixed* — something which has no surprises in it because it is over and done. Its "necessary" character lies, I am suggesting, in that what is "timeless" is really presented in terms of something which is *past* and brought to an end, as the "perfect" tense implies. Parmenides shattered the implicit connection of growth and development, *phusis*, with "reality" or *Being*, that about which a *logos* was possible. But in fact the idea of "perfection" relies upon the assumption of time, process, and development toward some end. Parmenides, in making *Being* "perfect," was in fact thinking of a process which *had been perfected*, and so it was in principle knowable with certainty. As Hegel's system attests, nothing is so certain as the past. The problem, as Kierkegaard (and James, following him) says, is that we live forward. But if you want an absolute science of *Being*, it helps to think of *Being* as that which has no future to it, as something which is "perfected." If, on the other hand, you have the pragmatist's sense of the future, your ontology better have multi-modal dimensions in which chance, individuality, and growth have a share.²

The implications of collapsing the finished, perfected past into the idea of an "eternal present" which was necessary, finite, and "sayable" (capable of being brought into the domain of *logos*, "rationality") resulted in the identification of *Being* with the Knowable. Put another way, the primary way in which *Being* manifested its true essence was through intellectual insight (*nous*). Conversely, given the understanding of *Being* as the completed and fully articulate, knowledge itself came to be understood as that which "came to rest" in this luminous vision. Ideally, "metaphysics" would be a demonstrative science based upon first principles realized through such a direct insight into the nature of *Being qua Being*.

It was one of the projects of modernity to reformulate the categories and concepts of classical metaphysics so as to fit the needs of the emerging new science. However much Aristotle's concepts of form and matter, actuality and potentiality, hierarchical causes and internal principles of self-development or change came to be jettisoned, the fundamental commitments stated above remained. Physics aspired to a science of nature

² I have discussed this at somewhat more length in "Dewey and the Metaphysical Imagination," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* XXVIII (1992), pp. 203-215.

whose substance, in itself, was changeless, and whose laws of motion were ideally expressible in the transformational equations of mathematics. For matter to be *known*, it had to be conceived in the classical manner as something essentially fixed and determined. Motion in the world-machine, for Descartes, Leibniz, and Newton, had to be introduced from without: if not *Deus ex machina*, then *Deus extra machina*, God outside the machine!

I will not tell the long, lugubrious tale of the unravelling of this project, from Kant and Mill to Heidegger and Wittgenstein to Foucault and Kuhn to Derrida and Rorty. The moral here is that metaphysics is a mistake and "Philosophy" is at an end, dying in a rather long-winded and melodramatic manner. Instead I would like us to consider an alternative, that from the beginning metaphysics had been ravished by an aesthetic ideal and that the prospect of metaphysics may lie more with our susceptibility to further forms of rapture, to falling in love again, perhaps more wisely this time. If our condition as human beings is, as I maintain, suffused by an aesthetic horizon, not finite, focused, or at rest and yet a condition of all we can delimit and cognize, then we may find that imagination is at the root of all meaning and that the quest of metaphysics may not be to seek completion in a perfected science but to open up the possibility of an art of existence, of a wisdom which is polymorphous and erotic.

Though Plato, obviously, had connected the themes of desire and beauty to the question of Being and there are echoes of this throughout the Medieval tradition (as when Augustine calls God, "Beauty, so ancient and so new"), the "aesthetic" has not really been taken seriously as an approach to ontology, although, I believe it could be shown, it has always been used.³ *Aisthesis*, recall, for the Greeks meant perception of the changing world of nature; "aesthetics" as the coinage of Baumgarten in the Enlightenment, meant *cognitio inferior, clara sed non distincta*, "inferior knowledge, clear without being distinct." It is here, I believe, that the comparison of Santayana's and Dewey's approaches can be of value to us. If our ways of understanding ourselves and our world are fundamentally constituted through an aesthetic awareness, our prereflective understanding of the "aesthetic" may well determine the ontology we articulate. Santayana and Dewey begin with radically different understandings of the aesthetic and, I will argue, end up with the conflict that they have over "naturalistic metaphysics" as a result of this.

When Dewey published "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism" in 1905, he was, I believe, entirely aware of his radical break with the Western tradition which identified the nature of reality with the object of knowledge. The "postulate" that "things are as they are experienced *as*" led Dewey to the claim that things may be experienced in a variety of ways *other* than as the outcome of a process of inquiry. To claim that Reality was only what it was for a *knower*, Dewey stated, is "the root paralogism of all idealisms" and "if not the root of all philosophical evil, at least one of its main

³ See Augustine, *Confessions* X, 27. This statement may seem unfair to the whole Platonic tradition as well as to such German idealists as Schelling and Hegel. Nevertheless, the aesthetic is there treated at best as a facet or moment of complete Being.

roots." ⁴ This was also the year in which *The Life of Reason* began to appear. In the Introduction, Santayana wrote "the Life of Reason is another name for what, in the widest sense of the word, might be called Art"; impulse and ideation are fused so that action is expressive and aims at happiness. Moreover, "Every genuine ideal has a natural basis...." ⁵ But Santayana was already careful to point out that

This ideal, far as it is from practical realisation, has so dazzled men that in their religion and mythical philosophy they have already spoken as if it were already actual and efficient. This anticipation amounts, when taken seriously, to a confusion of purposes with facts and of functions with causes. (RCS, 7)

Both Santayana and Dewey have rejected the claim of idealism, that the ideal is the real. But for Dewey, this opens up the possibility for a reconception of what is meant by "Reality"; for Santayana it points to the need to avoid making "ideals" into causal powers; a careful distinction between the two is needed. The implications of these views would be worked out, respectively, with Dewey's *Experience and Nature* (1925/1927) and *Art as Experience* (1934) and Santayana's *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923) and *Realms of Being* (1927-1940).

I will begin by focusing on the role of imagination in Santayana's earlier period. At the beginning of *The Life of Reason* we get a natural history of the genesis of reason itself, since it is a living thing which has a life. Reason emerges gradually from the flux of preconscious nature. Consciousness itself, however, is by no means inherently "rational." It begins "lost in its objects" and even when it thinks it cares for itself, "it really cares only for its ideals"; practical concerns are peripheral: "the core is an irresponsible, ungoverned, irrevocable dream." (RCS, 49) Dreaming is prior to thinking; perception is the merely first school of our birthright lyric madness on its way to normalcy. As Santayana astutely comments: the failure of British empiricism was in trying to get experience from ideas, but "The great difficulty in education is to get ideas out of experience" (RCS, 51). Indeed, our only hope lies in the possibility for the dream to become orderly and productive of a happy life.

Thought itself does not arise from innate logical principles, for Santayana, but from a prerational "witches' brew" (RCS, 65). It develops with the spontaneous ability for experience to become infused with memory and, by action, anticipatory of immanent ends. "Thought is a form of life," says Santayana, "and should be conceived on the analogy of nutrition, generation and art" (RCS, 67). It comes to sense the order of the world in a rhythmic, progressive way, rather than by inherent empty intuitions of Euclidean space and Newtonian time. Repetition of the same sound is not mere succession of identity; it is the growing *insistence* of the experience, as in the tolling of a bell. The important point here is that the patterns in experience emerge as *growing forms* which *imaginatively* and *creatively* shape the experience as it develops:

It is not identity in the substance impressed, but growing complication in the phenomenon presented, that makes possible a sense of diversity and relation between things. The identity of substance or spirit, if it were absolute, would indeed prevent comparison, because it

⁴ "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism," in *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (1910), p. 229. Reprinted in *Middle Works*, 3.

⁵ *Reason in Common Sense* (1905), pp. 5-6. Hereafter cited in text as RCS.

would exclude modifications, and it is survival of past modifications within the present that makes comparisons possible. We may impress any number of forms successively on the same water, and the identity of the substance will not help those forms to survive and accumulate their effects. But if we have a surface that retains our successive stampings we may change the substance from wax to plaster and from plaster to bronze, and the effects of our labour will survive and be superimposed upon one another. It is the actual plastic form in both mind and body, not any unchanging substance or agent, that is efficacious in perpetuating thought and gathering experience. (RCS, 70-71)

I quote this passage at length because it contains an important clue, one which I think Santayana himself eventually ignored. Our imagination need not be thought of as a faculty *opposed* to reason; rather, reason itself can be seen as our imagination at work in making sense out of the process of the experience of an organism in constant interplay with its world. There may be any number of possible patterns which can be developed from our active, embodied existence which quite effectively "organize" our lives. Our ability to exist not merely from moment to moment, but to have a past and a future which are actively fused in the creative transfiguration of the present, means that we cannot evade our pervasive temporality. In a more Heideggerian way we might say that human temporality is our "*Dasein*," our "Here/There-Being." This temporality gets narrowed to the vanishing point and so misunderstood and devalued in the claims of Parmenidean ontology in which "Being" is the perfected present of a completed deed, the ultimate "*fact*" (or *factum*: something which has been accomplished and is no longer underway).

Santayana, however, read the moral differently, in a way which, with the wisdom of hindsight, prefigures the direction of his later ontology. The discipline of nature upon the imagination leads ultimately to a distinction between two realms:

When reflection, turning to comprehension of a chaotic experience, busies itself about recurrences, when it seeks to normalise in some way things coming and going, and to straighten out the causes of events, that reflection is inevitably turned toward something dynamic and independent, and can have no successful issue except in mechanical science. When on the other hand reflection stops to challenge and question the fleeting object, not so much as to prepare for its possible return as to conceive its present nature, this reflection is no less unmistakably in the direction of ideas, and will terminate in logic or the morphology of being. We attribute independence to things in order to normalise their recurrence. We attribute essences to them in order to normalise their manifestations or constitution. Independence will ultimately turn out to be an assumed constancy in material processes, essence an assumed constancy in ideal meanings or points of reference in discourse. (RCS, 73-74)

This passage clearly prefigures Santayana's later distinction between the realms of matter and essence, with the former eventuating in scientific knowledge and technology, the latter contributing to the free disport of the life of spirit. But a deeper issue is involved here: the discovery of essence is possible only with the systematic, categorial *separation* of the aesthetic from the temporal existence of the animal body and its situation. Essence is intuited only when time and knowledge are given over to their proper domain:

To catch the passing phenomenon in all its novelty and idiosyncrasy is a work of artifice and curiosity. Such an exercise does violence to intellectual instinct and involves an aesthetic power of sinking into the stream of sensation, having thrown overboard all rational ballast and escaped at once the inertia and momentum of practical life. (RCS, 75)

Aesthetic apprehension is due to an ability to *exclude* or *suppress* the world, the body,

and time. It requires an ability to concentrate on the passing phenomenon as a pure object, disregarding its order of genesis or its semiotic import.

Santayana's later conception of Being arises from this interpretation of the aesthetic, and many of the differences we can find between his philosophy and Dewey's can be traced to their different ways of interpreting aesthetic experience and its relation to the world. Before contrasting Dewey's own approach, I would like, briefly, to examine Santayana's ontology and his theory of intuition, which is the basis for his conception of the "spiritual life."

Scepticism and Animal Faith marks an introduction to the later system; it is a strange and unusual book for Santayana — a laborious, technical "philosopher's book." It serves to introduce the later system by asking the reader to undergo a self-imposed discipline of skeptical reduction, the result of which will reveal the nature of matter as "that-which-is-not-essence," an unintelligible urgency of power, a dynamism of external relations, and the nature of essence as "that-which-is-not-matter," a limpid, luminous domain of possible objects of intuition, each self-enclosed by necessary internal relations and sublimely indifferent to nature. By this progressive disillusionment, Santayana wishes to reveal the possibility for the liberation of spirit.

Santayana's ontology, then, is not written from some sort of "value-neutral" standpoint or methodology. As he himself says, "my philosophy is like that of the ancients a discipline of the mind and heart, a lay religion".⁶ By clarification of the "basic categories of common sense," he undertakes to discern the various meanings of the word "is" not to show the structure of Being as it stands in itself or to some all-knowing subject, but to show the basic, useful distinctions for the possibility of living a spiritual life. The aim is not a supreme science of sciences or even an extension of cosmology; the aim is wisdom. His system, then, can be described as a "grammatology of Being." The result should be for us, readers of *Realms of Being*, a new kind of life, a *vita nuova*, in which aesthetic apprehension is actively cultivated, for it is the only salvation which we will know. The good news is that it lies close at hand; it merely needs disentangling from all that would distract or disperse it, all that would make us submerge the radiance it offers in the worries and concerns of a struggling animal in the mechanical flux of nature. The key to the kingdom is intuition.⁷

But what is this "intuition"? Santayana says, "by intuition I mean direct and obvious possession of the apparent without commitments of any sort" (RB, 646). It is "always with us, but dispersed"; hence the aim should be to gather it together. But all activity is a function of the realm of matter. The act of intuition is based on the nutritive and gestational conditions of the mothering psyche; in itself it is, like any organic action, "a process and not an image, an event and not an idea, an existence and not an essence" (RB, 648). Yet somehow it transcends the lowly origins of its birth and, though itself a temporal, existential, embodied event, concentrates the object of its attention into a timeless unity, recognized and enjoyed simply for being only what it is.

⁶ *Realms of Being* (1942), p. 827. Hereafter cited in the text as RB.

⁷ I have developed this claim in "Santayana's Origin of the Ideal of the Sage," paper delivered for the first International Conference on George Santayana, May 29, 1992, Avila, Spain.

Spirit is thus "the fruition of an organ" and requires a vast, slumbering preconscious "vital background" (RB, 650). Yet it does not realize itself if it does not ignore all the biological hullabaloo that makes it possible. It lives only in the appropriation of essences. But how is this possible? By "synthesis," says Santayana.

Intuition is in some sense always a synthesis, even when the datum is an inarticulate feeling, like a scent or pain. ... Yet the word synthesis is highly ambiguous and misleading, like other Kantian terms that have become inconvenient or indispensable. The danger is that what occurs in the realm of matter should be interpreted by literary psychology as occurring in the realm of spirit. In the realm of spirit there is no machinery, nothing compounded, dynamic, mysterious, or latent; therefore there is no synthesis at that level.... A synthesis may therefore be said to have occurred, but not in consciousness. (RB, 651)

The grand error of idealism lies in just this transference of the act of synthesis from the body to its blossoming effect: take Husserl as an example.

The peculiar consequence of all this for Santayana's position, however, is that in no sense can consciousness or spirit be said to be "autonomous" — self-governed, self-determining, a master of its own destiny. It lives and dies by the grace of its animal host. So in what sense, then, can even "literary psychology" be of any use in helping others to awaken to the possibility of the spiritual life and sharpen their aesthetic powers of concentration? At best, Santayana says, intuitions may return to the same vicinities of the Realm of Essence, each mortal intuition discerning a new face or aspect of a field of related essences, such as we would find in mathematics or in an author's exploration of a certain literary world, like Lear's kingdom or Tolkien's Middle Earth. There may be ways in which intuitions can be organically cultivated, suggests Santayana. But

...successive intuitions can never be synthesized. They are events, they are unsubstantial, they blaze for a moment and vanish into nothing. But the deliverances of those moments may supplement one another as descriptions of the same object, or as mere experiences; and a subsequent intuition springing from the organic soil so tilled and fertilized may repeat those intuitions or variations of them in a fresh description of the object, or poetic suggestion of it in its wholeness and its destiny. Imagination may thus evolve, and knowledge may increase, not by an impossible synthesis or breeding of dead intuitions, but by the training of organisms and the completion of instruments, orchestrating a richer but no less fugitive life in the spirit. (RB, 652-53)

Consciousness for Santayana is, to borrow a term, sublimation. But it can unmask its pretenses and, at best, it can rejoice in what light it finds at its disposal. The spiritual life is one in which we learn to concentrate upon the pure aesthetic character of the infinite experiences close at hand which so silently offer themselves to the busy, bypassing dwellers of the world. "Art" is not to be identified with the high culture of the museum elite any more for Santayana than Dewey; as for the Zen master, the Buddha-nature of each thing needs only to be seen; the only thing which can see it is the "no-mind" of the enlightened being. In a late letter, Santayana recalls Berenson running into him and blathering on about a Veronese exhibition "as if we were still in the 1890s," while ignoring a beautiful sunset such as Veronese would have loved to paint.⁸

I think now we can see that Santayana's aesthetics falls in line with the tradition

⁸ Santayana to Mrs. C. H. Toy, Oct. 10, 1929 in *The Letters of George Santayana* ed. Daniel Cory (1955).

of post-Kantian formalism, including the "art for art" movement, Clive Bell's doctrine of significant form and Susanne Langer's impressive extension of it. The aesthetic stands revealed when the practical world is somehow pushed into the background and something which is "pure" and "only itself" stands forth. Santayana's Realm of Matter is very much the Hobbesian hurly-burly of mechanical cause and effect promising the possibility of some technological control; his Realm of Essence is very much the Platonic world of objects which can always be recognized since they forever are only what they are, an ontological Hollywood of sublime personalities. Santayana's Realm of Essence, it is true, lacks Plato's systematic and hierarchical order. Essences for Santayana form no ultimate domain for a theoretical science to explore by painful dialectic and then axiomatically expound. They stand in paradoxical, contrasting, surprising, humorous, or hostile relationships submitting only to the rule of the law of identity — the anarchist's law of only being yourself.

Thus, I find, in the end Santayana accepted the Parmenidean thesis, changing it only in that for him "perfection" meant "emptiness" of existence and its sordid moral and epistemological imperatives. Essences were static, self-identical, timeless objects, only irrelevantly connected with the world. The moment in which they were manifested, though itself in time, mysteriously conjured the sense of time suspended. Because he conceived of the aesthetic as the "lightness of Being," the illusion of floating the magician performs, it liberates us from the weighty concerns of our existential lives and personal selves. As in a performance, intuition is an event in which time somehow seems to stand still, and the disconnected plurality of a madly whirling world consolidates, briefly, into a luminous mask of unity and order, evoking a cry of astonishment and selfless love.

Santayana's ontology and conception of the aesthetic is predicated on a different kind of *life* than Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics and doctrine of consummatory experience. I do not have time to draw out the comparison, but some brief remarks are possible. Dewey agrees with Santayana about the naturalistic basis of the aesthetic: "Every living experience owes its richness to what Santayana calls 'hushed reverberations.'⁹ But Dewey insists that these reverberations cannot be dismissed from the apparition of the aesthetic itself. This includes two aspects which I think Santayana ignores: the temporal nature of the aesthetic as process and the penumbral, circumambient nature of the unifying quality, the "felt horizon" which gives the experience meaning.

As to the first, Dewey says, "Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reenforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is" (AE, 18). The past and future are constitutive features of the present, so that we experience the aesthetic as the *consummation* of a process: time is not merely a condition, but part of the *felt meaning* of the experience. The experience has finitude because it has this sense of drawing together and fruition: its closure is one of development: "closure is a consummation and not a cessation. Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience" (AE, 35). Hence Dewey's well-known description of *an* experience as a

⁹ *Art as Experience* (1934), p. 10. Hereafter cited in text as AE. Reprinted in *Later Works*, Vol. 10.

process: "In such experiences, every successive part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks into what ensues. ... There are pauses, places of rest, but they punctuate and define the *quality of movement*. They sum up what has been undergone and prevent its dissipation or evaporation" (AE, 36; emphasis added).

There is a pervasive sense of the whole which contextualizes each of the phases as phases of *its* development. This is the unifying quality for Dewey, but it does not have the character of a bare identity: "The existence of this unity is constituted by a single *quality* that pervades the entire experience in spite of the constant variation of its constituent parts" (AE, 37). Aesthetic quality is a pervasive qualitative sense of unity in the *temporal* sense of having a transformative growth within it. Its unity is that of *continuity* rather than bare *identity*. Continuity involves the idea of a process in which changes take place, but nevertheless contribute to a whole narrative order. The notes with which a symphony ends are not necessarily those with which it begins. But the beginning has developed and carried us through so that the ending is a closure of a meaningful event and not just another rupture in nature. The aesthetic, for Dewey, not only can but must embrace the world and acknowledge its history and its worldly connections.

Thus Dewey's sense of form, as "*the operation of forces that carry the experience ... to its own integral fulfilment*" is different from Santayana's concept of form as static (AE, 137). Form is the function of interest, says Dewey. In his criticisms of formalists like Roger Fry, he says that without the focusing interest of our embodied perception, there would be no form to see (AE, 87-88). Nor is the aesthetic quality a mere datum, without any further depth than its own simple facade for Dewey. We do not perceive mere "data," but *meanings*, and these point to the web of contextualizing relations immanent in the focus of any aesthetic experience. It is in ordinary experience that this horizon is forgotten or ignored, but in the aesthetic it is brought to the fore.

Finally, in contrast to Santayana's solitary moment of pure intuition, Dewey must see the aesthetic as an engagement in which a dialogue of expression and response goes on, even if it is only within ourselves. The rhythms of the social self continue in our solitary moments, shaping the objects of experience into expressive forms, as at the very least *potential* objects of communication and sharing.

Though I cannot expand upon this theme now, I think this is why Deweyan metaphysics, like Santayana's, is connected to an art of imagination. If imagination is not a mechanical process, thematically irrelevant to the intuition of spirit, but itself the a dynamic way in which possible developments of order are projected from our current experience, then intelligence does "make a difference" in the existential world without invoking transcendental egos. Just such a view of imagination has recently been proposed by the philosopher Mark Johnson and the linguist George Lakoff. By their account, making sense of the world involves a network of dynamic paths of making significant connections. These originate in our preverbal experience, deriving from the active structures of our animal embodiment, such as the patterns we get from being vertical, symmetrical, bipedal beings. They call these patterns "image schemata." As Johnson explains, "An image schema is a recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual

interactions and motor programs that gives structure and coherence to our experience"¹⁰

One of the major implications of this view is that "rationality" is inherently and irrevocably built upon using these patterns across a variety of experiences; in other words, our rationality is essentially metaphorical. Metaphor

is conceived as a pervasive mode of understanding by which we project patterns from one domain of experience in or to structure another domain of a different kind. So conceived, metaphor is not merely a linguistic mode of expression; rather, it is one of the chief cognitive structures by which we are able to have coherent, ordered experiences that we can reason about and make sense of. (BM, xiv-xv)

One example here might help. We have the structure of "Source-Path-Goal" which shapes our understanding of "Action." This becomes elaborated in understanding something like a process of growth or development: e.g., the seed "aims" at becoming the plant. We thereby get the idea of the end of a process as the *consummation* of a beginning. We also have the idea of full-empty from our biological existence as creatures who can *be* full or hungry. What may have happened with Parmenides, from this standpoint, is that the "meaning of Being" was read through the schema of "full" and "consummation" (as "*perfect*," recall), but was then detached from the idea of process. If we went back to Parmenides' "signs of Being," we would see not so much a "rational argument" as a series of metaphors guided by an image schema which implicitly relies on the ideas of organic processes.

What if we took the whole living body and its image schemata as the field for discerning "Being"? The meaning of Being, from such a basis would look very much, I think, like Dewey's plan for a transactional, ecological metaphysics. We are constantly connecting various fields of meaning, actively structuring and reconstructing them. We are always imaginatively constituting our world, and so are guided by a plurality of possible meanings which are not so much intellectually discerned and cognized as aesthetically felt, immanent senses of the situations we are in. The question of metaphysics is intrinsically bound up with the aesthetics of human existence. The aesthetics of our existence is also that of the world which draws us to it through our projects. We experience the world through an Eros for meaning which cannot be divorced from life. The "generic traits" of nature are discerned so as to guide us toward a life of wisdom in which dualisms are avoided and intelligent distinctions are made so that the material conditions of our social lives are secured for the end of sharing the world in that embodied beauty called love.¹¹

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¹⁰ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind* (1987), p. xiv. Hereafter cited in the text as BM.

¹¹ Please see Richard Wilbur's poem "Love calls us to the things of this world."

A Sometime Companion

Inspiring and deft are the words that come to mind as one reads the foregoing essay by Thomas Alexander on Santayana's aesthetics. Alexander's paper can be seen as a seminal piece, for it has hints and leads that send us in helpful new directions and intriguing byways. Approached otherwise, Alexander's essay can be viewed as a revisiting of the antique and never-to-be-resolved philosophical tension in the comparative positions of Heraclitus and Parmenides, played out by Alexander, *mutatis mutandis*, between Santayana and John Dewey.¹

As is well known, we have a surface conflict as well as some acrimonious attitudes operative in the long-standing relationship between the persons and thought of Santayana and Dewey. Yet, given reflection on Alexander's version of the apparent conflict between the positions of Santayana and Dewey, I offer the possibility of a helpful rescue mission, that is, one which takes their respective contentions as due to focus, personal style and the consequent aesthetic sensibility. Put differently, perhaps what we find in this comparison is a difference in 'shading' rather than in 'ground'.

We can say of Santayana's aesthetics, as we can say of his person, that they evoke a response which points to the fey, the effete and a style that reaches for the luminous, and, on occasion, the numinous. For me, these are not to be construed as negative terms or as an unwelcome search. It is so, nonetheless, that the mode of discourse and personal presence effected by Santayana is characteristic of 'high culture'. In this fundamental approach to the aesthetic, Santayana's work and person is quite traditional and one which draws intense opposition from both Marx and Dewey. The latter, Dewey, decries the separation of the 'fine arts' from the affairs of the ordinary, holding that the task of an aesthetic "... is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience."² The politics of such an aesthetic constitute an extremely important and controverted dimension in our evaluation of both the meaning and function of art. The question before us is whether the savage critique of fine art by Marx as a baleful manifestation of 'class consciousness' and Dewey's equally strident opposition to the granting of special, separate status to the works of high culture should result in a depreciation and depreciation of Santayana's aesthetics. I think not.

In personal terms, I do have a fascination, proletarian though it be, for Santayana's sensibility as to the luminous and the sublime. Both experiences, however, are rarely within my reach. Yet, the ecstatic and the revelatory, each of which are possible eruptions from the aesthetic of the ordinary, are occasional occurrences for me.

My drift here is that although, post-mortem, this may distress Santayana, and Dewey as well, I believe that Santayana's aesthetics can be found as resonant in Dewey's version of the 'felt-horizon'. Following Alexander, elsewhere on Dewey,

¹ This paper was read to the Santayana Society in Washington, D.C. on December 28, 1992, as a response to Thomas Alexander's paper printed above.

² John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (*The Later Works* - 10, 1934), ed. Jo Ann Boydston, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), p. 8.

"... tacitly felt horizon ... provides the ultimate determining ground of meaning." Thereby, "this horizontal aspect is largely ignored in ordinary experience, but it is made manifest in those moments which are peculiarly aesthetic."³ It is precisely those moments cited by Dewey of which Santayana writes so evocatively.

Continuing with the contrast between Santayana and Dewey, it is to be noted, as Alexander wisely does, that Santayana's materialism, be that as it may, if it be at all, is far closer to Dewey's naturalism than either of them was willing to admit. Often overdrawn, as well, are the contrasts between them relative to 'embodiment', the understanding of America, temporalism and the aesthetics of the everyday.

As his letters attest, over and again, Santayana did not live a disembodied life. In fact, one could argue that bodily presence was far more characteristic of Santayana than of Dewey. This judgment receives special sustenance when one takes into account costume and personal decor as indicative of a daily aesthetic messaging, as I do. And although Dewey loathed the American genteel tradition and felt disaffected and insecure by virtue of its hegemony in the world of intellect and culture, nonetheless, it was Santayana who openly and ferociously attacked that tradition. Often lost in commentary on Santayana's version of America was his contention that a deep, native philosophical wisdom abided in America as found outside, nay, in spite of the academy, given its suffusion by Boston-Brahmins. Certainly, Alexander is aware of Santayana's affection for the obvious as over against the precious, an attitude revealed when Alexander recounts Santayana's chastisement of Bernard Berenson for his missing the actual, present sunset, while pining over the museum hung Veronese. Alexander also tells us that for Santayana, the task is to obtain ideas from experience. Is not the immediate foregoing version of Santayana, in effect, characteristic of vintage Dewey?

Now it is precisely that affection for the ordinary in Dewey's aesthetics, that I find so personally attractive. In fact, I attempt to live my life in that way, reflectively. For reasons hidden from me, I always lived that way, experientially, a foretelling of obvious, even, if not always present, good sense, for as Dewey holds, "There is apparently, no conscious experience without inference; reflection is native and constant."⁴ Consequently, every moment of our conscious living is both pregnant and fraught with inference, had we the will to listen, to see and to be touched. Unquestionably, this is a rich version of our everyday. Yet, there is a disturbing mission in Dewey's aesthetic as there is in his philosophy, *überhaupt*, namely, the stress on "outcome."

Thomas Alexander is perceptive when he writes: "the 'postulate' that 'things are as they are experienced as' led Dewey to the claim that things may be experienced in a variety of ways other than as the outcome of a process of inquiry." But the wise rejection of the imperial power of epistemic outcome, does not keep Dewey from focusing on outcomes elsewhere, as in his politics, pedagogy and, yes, in his aesthetics.

³ Thomas Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. xix.

⁴ John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," *The Middle Works - 10*, 1917, ed., Jo Ann Boydston, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), p. 6.

To the contrary, as Santayana well understood, not by outcomes alone, doth one live.

Some events, either by plan or by surprise are of such affective quality, that they constitute for us indelibly 'felt horizons' and a perpetual ambience, which potentially bathes all of our subsequent experience. The 'outcome' is not intended and rather, is serendipitous. These 'happenings' can be as startling as a *satori*, the Japanese Zen way of describing an undergoing that yields immediate insight. Or, again some of our experiences bequeath a sense of the radiant and still others, the fulfilment of a vague hope, however different than the original intention.

A personal, high art, anecdote may serve to assist us in what I call the difference between outcome and upshot, the latter a gift of surprise. Some twenty years ago, while standing in a Rembrandt room at the Hermitage in Leningrad, there came upon us a bevy of wide-eyed small children, clutching their lunch bags. Upon inquiry, I learned that they had travelled many thousands of miles and many days by train from Tashkent, to see the Rembrandts. To this day, my visual memory of the magnificent Rembrandt room pales before the memoried faces of those children. It strikes me that given his response to Berenson apropos of the Veronese painting, Santayana would both appreciate and understand my vivid recollection of the Rembrandt children.

I accept Dewey's contention that the power of great art is an horizon which has exploded from ordinary experience as its necessary root and fount. Still, Santayana is wise as well when he offers that a rich aesthetic experience of art yields "hushed reverberations," that bathe each and all of our experiences, fore and aft. Contrary to the judgments of Dewey and Alexander, I see this position of Santayana to be ineluctably and irreducibly temporal. This temporalism of Santayana should come as no surprise for as Alexander writes powerfully of him, neither consciousness nor spirit can be said to be 'autonomous'. And how can Santayana be accused of ignoring the temporal when Alexander, himself, notes the 'spirit' of Santayana, "lives and dies by the grace of its animal host."

The meaning of "host" in this context can be taken in at least two ways. The first way is that as "animal host," we face both material and ontological oblivion resultant from the passing of time. On this interpretation, Santayana and Dewey are in agreement. The second meaning of "host" derives from the Roman Catholic liturgy. Made of simple, unleavened bread, the host is transubstantiated to become the embodied Christ, literally, actually, not simply figuratively or symbolically. Then, in the abode of liturgical piety, by bodily ingestion (Dewey's nutrition?), the host feeds our personal spirit as embodied. However one takes the truth of this claim for transubstantiation, clearly this liturgical experience bequeaths "hushed reverberations." Religious skeptic though he be, the Spanish Catholic lineage of Santayana enabled him to grasp the paradox of host as both animal and spirit.⁵ Dewey's New England Congregational lineage forbade and prevented an equivalent understanding of the rich deposits within a religious liturgy. Still, the contrast is not final for this distance between the aesthetics of Santayana and Dewey is bridged if we read the latter as 'offering', as in 'offertory', a secular liturgy.

In Dewey's secular liturgy, we are alerted to the rhythms of experiencing, in turn,

⁵ cf. John McCormick, *George Santayana: A Biography*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987).

the inchoate, the anaesthetic, the aesthetic and the consummatory. Concomitantly, to be avoided as paramount dangers to the live creature are the listless, the humdrum, the shrouds of boredom and *ennui*. They, among others, constitute for Dewey a mortal threat to spiritual nutrition. Nonetheless, in truth, the felt horizons and hushed reverberations of Santayana's high culture aesthetics are as essential to Dewey's quest as are those events which enable us to elicit nectar from the ordinary.

Thomas Alexander provides us with a telling and convincing emphasis on the necessity to nurture the "important domain" of the aesthetic, especially in its Deweyan pre-reflective meaning. Well and good, but I would push further than Alexander. Taking a text from Dewey's "Postulate of Immediate Empiricism," which both he and I see as a bedrock for making a Deweyan turn, namely, the 'postulate' that "things ... are what they are experienced as,"⁶ leads me to hold that the "as" is the very rhythm which is no less than constitutive of who we are, 'how' we are. Hereby, the "as" of Dewey's text is not simply descriptive or even diagnostic. Rather, the "as" in its limitless perturbations is our affective presence. I am following Santayana here in that I, too, see myself as an 'animal host', struggling to live in and out of the 'hushed reverberations' that lace all of my experience, potentially. Other than this affective presence, however paltry it may be, I have no other presence. In this way, I am also following Dewey, whose aesthetics is a metaphysics in that it provides the ontological twining of both 'how goes it' and 'how are we'. In responding to those Deweyan metaphysical questions, Santayana's aesthetics is necessarily present as a sometime companion, a reach for a star, a glimmer in an all-too dark and foreboding human-scape.

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⁶ John Dewey, "The Postulate of Immediate Empiricism," *The Middle Works - 3*, 1905, ed., Jo Ann Boydston, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1977), p. 158.

Santayana and Greek Philosophy

I

This is a very broad topic.¹ My discussion will be limited to the identification of Santayana's relationship to Greek philosophy and the tracing of the early phases of his approach. Two major topics will be explored, (a) The salient features of Santayana's interpretation of classical Greek philosophers, and (b) his evaluation of the contribution of the Greek thinkers he believed best represented the classical mind: Heraclitus, Democritus, Plato and Aristotle. Both topics are intimately connected with certain fundamental principles that figure dominantly as the backbone of his own philosophy and, as expected, pervade the critical treatment of his entire approach to the history of philosophy: materialism, scepticism and the theory of essences. I will also have occasion to tie to the discussion certain remarks concerning his indebtedness to the Greeks, a topic that has been variously appreciated by his sympathetic critics, among them Irwin Edman, who often placed him too close to the Greeks, as highlighted passages from Santayana's writings like the following taking in isolation would tend to support:

Harmony which might be called an aesthetic principle, is also the principle of health, of justice, and of happiness. Every impulse, not the aesthetic mood alone, is innocent and irresponsible in its origin and precious in its own eyes; but every impulse or indulgence, including the aesthetic, is evil in its effect, when it renders harmony impossible in the general tenor of life, or produces in the soul division and ruin.²

As I hope to show, Santayana proved to be an ἀστονδος φίλος, an implacable friend yet free of malice. The expression I have just used is meant only to draw attention to his appreciation of a tradition he greatly admired yet could not embrace freely.

In order to proceed with my discussion I must draw attention to a fundamental distinction between two types of metaphysics in the history of Western philosophy: the

¹ This paper was presented to the first International George Santayana Conference at Avila, Spain, on May 29, 1992.

In writing this paper on "Santayana and Greek Philosophy" my main concern is to understand his lasting interest in Greek ethics and the attraction he felt toward the ancient Greek thinkers. Without trying to make marginal the stronger philosophical thesis he elaborated around 1923 in his *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, that was centered on the problem of the immediate, the gist of his critique of Greek philosophy was already present in *The Life of Reason*. The main theses that were finally appealed to in his fuller and final critique were the first principle of materialism, the principle of immediacy, and the doctrine of essences.

² "A Brief History of My Opinions" in Adams George P. and William Montague, eds., *Contemporary American Philosophy*; Personal Statements. (New York, Macmillan and Co., 1930), 2 vols., v. 2, pp. 239-257; repr. in *The Philosophy of Santayana*, edited with a new preface and an introductory essay, by Irwin Edman. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 1-20; references to this edition (p. 20). In his appreciative brief obituary in the *Saturday Review* (October 18, 1952), Edman wrote: "The deepest sources of Santayana are in ancient Greece. His *Life of Reason* is the wisdom of Plato and Aristotle in modern dress."

Metaphysics of Being, which is a Greek thesis, and the Metaphysics of Experience, which is the fruit of the modern epistemological preoccupation with the quest for certain knowledge and the assignment of unquestioned priority to the mind as the starting and terminating agent of theorizing. The Greeks, all of them, were metaphysicians of Being — “ontologists” would be the proper term. The most difficult problem that modern philosophers had to face as historical philosophers was how to assess the attainments of the Greek metaphysics of Being, the ontologies of the Greeks. Their problem could be phrased as follows: How to place the Greeks and their fundamental thesis about the priority of Being, as the starting point of the quest for wisdom, within the framework of the metaphysics of experience, which assigns priority to the epistemic function of the mind. We have here the makings of a real conflict, for the crucial question that must be answered is now “How can the metaphysics of experience assimilate, without distorting the conceptual apparatus of the opponent, the fundamental principle of Being?” To phrase the same question differently, “How to refer to *ousia* without distorting the Greek conception of reality, without forcing it to fit an alien or rather inverted mode of thought?” In essence, my paper is an examination of Santayana’s answer to this question and the way he faced the problem it poses. As I hope to show he, like many others in modern times, who joined the front line of the battle between the ancients and the moderns, proved to be not an outright enemy of the classical tradition in philosophy but an ἀστονδος φίλος. That the question of affinity is still with us and as perplexing as ever, is another story. In this respect, Santayana’s response is a valuable study case for those who intend to do serious work in the history of philosophy.

II

The first critical phase of Santayana’s response to Greek philosophy was formed during the writing of his 1889 doctoral dissertation on Lotze. It prepared the ground for the second and more systematic phase of his selective assimilation of Greek philosophy, as we see him developing his response in 1905-1906 in the *Life of Reason*. The third and final phase coincides with the stance he advanced around 1923 and continued in his later works with the radical formulation of the problem of knowledge in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, and developed later as a metaphysics of the spirit in his *Realms of Essence* (1927-1940), *Platonism and Spiritual Life* (1927).³ The vastness of the subject demands that I confine my present analysis to the first and second phases, hoping that the third may become the object for a future study. When he started philosophizing as a student at Harvard, he confesses regret that the Greeks were not available: “Of the Greeks, however, I knew very little: the philosophical and political departments at

³ The doctrinal shift from the second to the third phase but seen from the point of view of metaphysics rather than their pertinence to his critical interpretation of Greek philosophy, has been the object of much discussion and led Santayana’s critics to raise serious questions about the consistency and continuity of the doctrine of essences. See, for instance, the rather stern criticism Sterling P. Lamprecht advanced in an article titled “Santayana, Then and Now,” *The Journal of Philosophy*, 25 (1928), 533-50; reprinted in John Lachs, ed. *Animal Faith and Spiritual Life*, (New York, 1967), pp. 305-25.

Harvard had not yet discovered Plato and Aristotle.⁴

It was Paulsen in Berlin who revealed them to him. But the framework for accepting them was already in place: James' *Principles of Psychology*, reinforced by the philosophy of Lotze. It is to the latter I must now turn my attention.

III

The Lotze Dissertation (1889). The yeast for the basic ideas that form the core of Santayana's interpretation of Greek Philosophy is present in his doctoral dissertation, and owes much of its strength to the critical discussion of Lotze's philosophy. Paul Kuntz in his discussion of three assumptions in Lotze's "relevance to contemporary philosophy," has argued that in his dissertation Santayana shared only the first two, specifically (a) positivism, past and recent, has failed to outmode metaphysics or reduce it to nonsense, and (b) whereas the need of system is perennial, as such it must not be deductive;⁵ and (c) the metaphysical tradition concerning an autonomous and independent substance was a *mistake*. In order to fill the vacuum created by this mistake, Lotze had introduced a new type of metaphysics: being *in change*, i.e. temporal in character.⁶ In explaining Santayana view vis-a-vis this third assumption, Kuntz writes:

Santayana recognizes some of these heresies in Lotze, because he was searching for orthodoxy. For the same reason he underestimated the new type of metaphysical system as an alternative to the old type (70).

Kuntz has brought up a critical issue that deserves to be discussed. I must consider one relevant point, although I cannot go into the complexity of the arguments that support the rejection of the metaphysics of substance, especially how convoluted they become when properly placed within the historical framework of Neo-Kantian and Hegelian epistemological principles. Given the rise of the metaphysics of experience, it should be of no surprise that Santayana also came to reject the tradition of the metaphysics of substance. The upshot of the dissertation is that Santayana became critical of the Greeks for holding a metaphysics of substance although he praised some of them, notably Democritus, for their daring vision of physics. In fact from the very start, whether he knew it or not, Santayana had become the ἀσπονδος φιλος of the Greeks. His stance, often articulated in the idiom of a philosophical platform, was present in all three phases and projected into his critical and appreciative assessments with the aid of strong attitudinal elements.

He began his career as a *modern* philosopher and as such he worked with a problem that brought him within the camp of the rising metaphysics of relations and experience. His own commitment was to a metaphysics of experience rooted in his

⁴ "A Brief History of My Opinions," p. 12.

⁵ See George Santayana, *Lotze's System of Philosophy*, edited with an introduction and Lotze bibliography, by Paul Grimley Kuntz (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1971); "Introduction," p. 69.

⁶ Kuntz notes this new metaphysics rejects the antecedent reality of the Platonic forms as well as space and time "as real containers of things and events," thus rendering inadequate for the new metaphysics the subject-predicate logic (*Ibid.* 69).

understanding of voluntarism.⁷ He was in Royce's debt when he was writing his dissertation and also familiar with Plato, Hume, Kant and Schopenhauer. When he examined Lotze's system, as Kuntz has shown, on the issue of realism, he saw no reason why reality "should not be the total of discrete momentary perceptions"⁸ There was a strand in Santayana's thinking, argues Kuntz, which has no logical connection with his phenomenism, scepticism, and voluntarism, one that lies at the basis of Santayana's defence of Plato and Aristotle whenever Lotze makes a disparaging remark about the ancients. Kuntz call this strand "Santayana's classical realism."

The defense aside, the presence of such a distinct strand in Santayana is questionable, and at best problematic. Let me explain. When Lotze took the position that Plato's ideas were abstractions, Santayana thought it a distortion of Plato:

His [Plato's] ideas were not abstractions but types, goals of thought, things we mean to speak of when we have thoughts ... something transcendent that our thoughts aim at.⁹

Prima facie, Santayana's view is closer to Plato than to Lotze's Neo-Kantian approach. However, holding a more correct interpretation did not commit Santayana to a version of Platonism such that would allow the inference that he also was committed to a "classical realism." Kuntz insists that it is there, for he writes: "Santayana, in spite of his phenomenism, scepticism, and voluntarism, seemed convinced by the doctrine of the really real ($\delta v t o \varsigma \delta v$). 'That it is a deeper reality than our real things'" (101). This may be a realist position, but it is not necessarily either Platonic or classical in some broader sense of the term. Kuntz, however, thinks it would be proper to ask whether Santayana can be "both a Jamesian voluntarist and a classical realist."

This is a serious problem, and Kuntz believes that it gave Santayana reason later on "to break with voluntarism." He is only partly right, for any realism would have sufficed to supply the reason. Hence the diagnosis of a commitment to classical realism is not convincing. It is at least debatable whether the early Santayana had embraced a Platonism of sorts i.e. a transcendent reality that mirrors somehow the realm of eternal and unchanging ideas or the as yet embryonic stage of a thesis that was to blossom as the doctrine of essences. I am not convinced that there is a discernable clear-cut classical realism in the dissertation period. We have to wait for Santayana's later writings for a decisive answer. Be that as it may, Kuntz correctly observes that "Santayana's criticism of Lotze is that he has not done justice to the ideal as a realm or mode of being Santayana is critical of Lotze because he is insufficiently realistic" (103). He finds the needed support in Santayana's own note: "The thing in itself... by strength of analogy ... may be anything: a law, a will, a

⁷ Kuntz notes that it was a voluntarism that "reduces the logical to the psychological order," and adds that "Santayana uses voluntarism to defend human values. Far from being tertiary qualities or merely subjective, they are the basis of whatever is real for us." And further down: "Like a pragmatist, Santayana is far from wholly sceptical and consequently arbitrary about the real and the good" (99).

⁸ Kuntz quotes Santayana to show that he did at that time call his position "phenomenalism," a perspective rooted in the epistemologies of Hume and Kant (90).

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 100; see also Kuntz' discussion of Lotze's critique of Plato in the Introduction, pp. 44-5.

purpose, a substance, etc." Once again, we are thrown back to the problem of classical realism. The quotation from Santayana makes us suspect that he is replying to Kant and also searching for a way to escape ontological scepticism. At best, the position hinted in the quotation points to a mixture of being and experience, a half-hearted subjectivism, forged in the Neo-Kantian laboratory of a metaphysics of experience and its attendant epistemology and primacy of the mind.

Santayana's more profound acquaintance with Platonism came after the dissertation period. In his *Persons and Places*, referring to his early years as a teacher at Harvard, he tells about a course titled "philosophy of history" he taught in 1895-1896, and adds: "What then most enticed me in philosophy was Plato, and I had always had a great respect for Aristotle, especially for his *Ethics* and *Politics* . . ."¹⁰ He then adds that he used these, along with Bacon, Locke, Montesquieu and Taine, to work out the lectures for the philosophy of history course, which he taught not as dealing with "a providential plan of creation or redemption, but merely retrospective politics" (394). At the end of the academic year, Santayana as a Harvard instructor went to Cambridge and was admitted to King's College as an advanced student. He did his work under Henry Jackson, his tutor. His philosophical friends were "Bertie" Russell, G. E. Moore, and MacTaggart. He studied Plato's Dialogues under Jackson, attending Jackson's lecturing on Being in the second part of the *Parmenides*. He tells us how this reading influenced his own philosophy:

Without attributing any historical insight to this view, I found it a useful thread through that labyrinth; and it also had an important influence on my philosophy, because it helped me so see that Being, the One, the Many, etc., were names of categories, not of existent things, so that all cosmological theories relying on dialectic (such as that of Leibniz) were sophistical. They played with essences, and thought they were disclosing facts. But there are no necessary facts. Facts are all accidents. They all might have been different. They all may become different. They all may collapse altogether.¹¹

In 1897 he began a new course at Harvard, *Philosophy 12*, titled "Plato and Aristotle," which he says "remained my chief subject, until almost the end. I lectured on the *Republic*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*. These books were assigned to be read in translation" (*Ibid.* 394-5). What held his fascination was the ethics and politics of Plato and Aristotle, not their ontology and physics. This position became clear with the publication of *The Life of Reason* (1905-1906).¹²

¹⁰ George Santayana, *Persons and Places*. Fragments of Autobiography. Edited by William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., with an Introduction by Richard C. Lyon. (Cambridge: MIT Press, trade edition 1987), p. 393.

¹¹ *Persons and Places*, p. 439.

¹² See Santayana's ruminations on Platonism in his *Apologia*, Part IV: "Relation to Platonism" (542), where he admits to have adopted a slanted interpretation of Plato when writing the *Life of Reason*, and explains how and why it was proposed: "My lesson from Plato in particular was learned in 1897 and in the years immediately following, when the experts did not tell us what they tell now, and when I was meditating the *Life of Reason* and intent on ethics to the exclusion of ontology. I therefore overlooked almost on purpose the Pythagorean side of Platonism and dwelt only on the Socratic side, as if doing Plato the injustice to retain the part of

IV

Reason in Common Sense and Greek Philosophy. Paulsen's teaching on Greek ethics he heard in Germany in 1886, the influence of the tutorials under Henry Jackson in Cambridge, and the courses on Greek philosophy he developed in Harvard were poured into the pages of the *Life of Reason* (1905-1906).¹³ The Aristotelian tradition was put to good use. In *Reason in Common Sense* (1905), Santayana wrote:

... If we use the word *life* in a eulogistic sense to designate the happy maintenance against the world of some definite ideal interest, we may say with Aristotle that life is reason in operation. The *Life of Reason* will then be a name for that part of experience which perceives and pursues ideals—all conduct so controlled and all sense so interpreted as to perfect natural happiness. (3).

Two brief quotations re-enforce this point: (a) "The Life of Reason is another name for what, in the highest sense of the word, might be called Art" (6), and "... For the Life of Reason, being the sphere of all human art, is man's imitation of divinity" (7).

When he wrote *Reason in Common Sense*, he believed that the Greeks thinkers led a rational life and gave honest answers to the problem associated with the pursuit of ideals. Presumably an honest answer was in its own context a true answer. The next item to be decided was to see whether the honest and true answer was also one of perennial value. Convinced that "the immediate is what nobody sees, because convention and reflection turn existence, as soon as they can, into ideas," he concluded that although mysticism, scepticism, and transcendentalism, as they "fall back on the immediate" they actually interfere with the purity of direct observation, for each adds

him that seemed sound. I have since seen the egotism of that procedure, and the dangers of it. The non-Socratic cosmological elements in Plato were the most influential and perhaps the most profound" (543).

¹³ Santayana's indebtedness to the Greeks, especially during his year of studies in England, 1896-1897, is evident in the result of his systematic study of Plato and Aristotle under Henry Jackson at Cambridge, the outcome of which was *The Life of Reason*. In his "A Brief History ...," he writes: "This book was intended to be a summary history of the human imagination, expressly distinguishing those phases of it which showed what Herbert Spencer called an adjustment of inner to outer relations; in other words, an adaption of fancy and habit to material facts and opportunities. On the one hand, then, my subject being the imagination, I was never called on to step beyond the subjective sphere. I set out to describe, not nature or God, but the ideas of God or nature bred in the human mind. On the other hand, I was not concerned with these ideas for their own sake, as in a work of pure poetry or erudition, but I meant to consider them in their natural genesis and significance; for I assumed throughout that the whole life of reason was generated and controlled by the animal life of man in the bosom of nature. Human ideas had, accordingly, a symptomatic, expressive, and symbolic value; they were the inner notes sounded by man's passions and by his arts: and they became rational partly by their vital and inward harmony—for reason is a harmony of the passions—and partly by their adjustment to external facts and possibilities—for reason is a harmony of the inner life with truth and with fate. I was accordingly concerned to discover what wisdom is possible to an animal whose mind, from beginning to end, is poetical." In *Contemporary American Philosophy: A Symposium*, repr. in *The Philosophy of Santayana*, edited by I. Edman, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 1-20; for passage quoted, pp. 14-15.

to it "some myth, or sophistry, or delusive artifice" (15).¹⁴ His reading of the history of Greek philosophy from Thales down to Aristotle was carried out in light of the implication their views had for the principle of immediacy. He felt comfortable about his own conception of reason and the conditions for its proper function. He writes in Ch. 1, "Introduction":

Reason accordingly requires the fusion of two types of life, commonly led in the world in well-nigh separation, one a life of impulse expressed in affairs and social passions, the other a life of reflection expressed in religion, science, and the imitative arts. In the *Life of Reason*, if it be brought to perfection, intelligence would be at once the universal method of practice and its continued reward. All reflection would then be applicable in action and all action fruitful in happiness (5).¹⁵

Although his own stance toward intelligence and the practical life is conspicuously utilizing maxims characteristics of the Greek rational attitude, Santayana brings in the views of the Greeks thinkers for critical evaluation. He states that they thought straight in both physics and in morals: the Presocratics are re-examined with respect to the mode of reflection on existence, Socrates for his contribution to the ideal of action. Thus the two domains within which Santayana will place the philosophy of the Greeks are (a) physics and (b) morals. Both reflect his theoretical engagement to focus attention on the nature of immediate experience and the valued perfections of rational imagination.

(a) *Physics*. Two great thinkers radicalized human thinking about nature: Heraclitus and Democritus. According to Santayana's understanding of their insights, the Greeks

... leapt at once to the conception of a dynamic unity and general evolution, thus giving that background to human life which shrewd observation would always have despaired, and which modern science has laboriously rediscovered. Two great systems offered, in two legitimate directions, what are doubtless the final and radical accounts of physical being. Heraclitus, describing the immediate, found it in constant and pervasive change ... but as in the human soul, so in nature, all was instability, contradiction, reconstruction and oblivion (14-15).

Heraclitus remains the honest spokesman for immediacy. Santayana holds him in high esteem for not obscuring or confusing the concept of the immediate object by adding to its direct observation "some myth, or sophistry, or delusive artifice," as did his later expounders (15). Yet, Heraclitus had opened the door to another region: the realm of rational surrogates. Santayana was quick to note that

... had he [Heraclitus] passed through, his philosophy would have been greatly modified, for permanent forms would have forced themselves on his attention no less than shifting materials. Such a Heraclitus would have anticipated Plato; but the time for such a synthesis had not yet arrived.

¹⁴ The explanation for the interference is due to impulse and ideation. In a somewhat cryptic passage, Santayana writes: "The rational animal is generated by the union of these two monsters. He is constituted by ideas which ceased to be vain" (6).

¹⁵ These reflections provide the platform from which Santayana proceeds to criticize the modern schools of philosophy, positivism in particular, the limitations of the mythical character of Christian philosophy, and the liberal theology of Protestant bodies as being a superstitious attitude toward a natural world, often fostering fanaticism reminiscent of orthodox Hebraism. 'Fanaticism' he states "consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim" (13).

Santayana had become a critic of speculative metaphysics. What was needed was deliverance from the opaqueness that the constructed surrogates imposed upon the immediate obstructing thereby its view. At the opposite end of the spectrum of immediate experience was intelligibility, awaiting to be accounted for. The application of the rule of criticism of Heraclitus was also a tribute:

Heraclitus remains the honest prophet of immediacy: a mystic without raptures or bad rhetoric, a sceptic who does not rely for his results on conventions unwittingly adopted, a transcendentalist without the false pretensions or incongruous dogmas (15).

Santayana insists that Heraclitus must not be read as having anticipated Plato. Transcendentalist he is, for he envisaged the reality of reason as the guarantor for the recurrence of law, the hidden *logos* behind everything in flux. The door into another region was now open, but Santayana confidently asserts that his cautious and wise Greek did not pass through it; hence the greatness of Heraclitus. Others, later, will commit the great error of crossing the threshold of immediacy, which is what Plato did, and thus populating reactively that region with permanent forms. Once the region of reason was revealed and available as consciousness, wise men fancied it powerful to envisage the being of eternal forms. The coming of synthesis was only a matter of time. With Heraclitus, the great moment of philosophy made its presence felt: "At the opposite pole of immediacy lies intelligibility" (16).

The contribution of Democritus' speculation lies in his rational vision of the atoms and their geometrical forms, hence physical essences ...¹⁶ Democritus reduced phenomena to constant elements under permanent laws valid for ultimate particles as well as psychic existence. Santayana readily excuses the grossness of the Democritean chemistry while praising the clarity of its mechanistic ideal:

We owe to Democritus this ideal of practical intelligibility [describing at every level the practical and efficacious structure of the world]; and he is accordingly an eternal spokesman of reason. His system ... represents an ultimate ideal, every advance in science reconstitutes it in some particular. Mechanism is not one principle of explanation among others. In natural philosophy, where to explain means to discover origins, transmutations, and laws, mechanism is explanation itself (17).

Democritus' contribution was not simply in the active interest to experience the immediate, but in the coordinate enterprise to understand it.¹⁷ The next development in physics, by which Santayana means the understanding of the theoretical reformulations of the immediate, will be written by Plato. Santayana makes the

¹⁶ Democritus comes up repeatedly for special comment in Santayana's writings, e.g. in the *Apologia*, p. 508, he is referred to as a "rationalist, . . . to my mind not materialistic enough."

¹⁷ Santayana also means to draw attention to the ethical function of Democritus' vision. In a way, his philosophy is the documentation of Santayana's conviction that "there is no opposition . . . between materialism and a Platonic or even Indian discipline of the spirit." And finding happiness meant to Santayana securing the "supreme expression of human will and imagination," and this alone to him was "genuine philosophy . . . , the life of reason" ("A Brief History of My Opinions," p. 11). But to reach it, imagination had to be sane, what Randall called "the naturalization of the imagination." The model for the fullest use of this faculty, Santayana believed, was only once established in the history of thought, by the Greeks. See John Herman Randall, Jr. "George Santayana—Naturalizing the Imagination," *Journal of Philosophy* 51 (1954), 50-2, reprinted in *Animal Faith and Spiritual Life*, ed. John Lachs (New York, 1967), pp. 9-12.

peculiar remark that whereas Heraclitus had "the good fortune of having his physics absorbed by Plato," meaning the doctrine of the experience of the immediate, Democritus did not have such luck with Aristotle, who rejected the mechanistic model of *understanding* of the immediate. The thrust of the criticism is that Aristotle failed to see the Democritean axiom, namely, whereas the experience of the immediate is *flux* understanding the immediate requires *mechanism*, i.e. conceptual constants. Democritus appeared too late to be incorporated into the Socratic philosophy, and dialectical physics carried the day by the middle of the fourth century. As a result, the trends were so firmly established that Aristotle could not have prevented "the building of his natural philosophy on a lamentable misunderstanding, and condemning thought to confusion for two thousand years" (18). These sweeping remarks on the impact of scientific insights on philosophy and vice versa, carry no conviction today. Only the polemicist takes them seriously and fails thereby to notice the functionalism of Aristotle. One wonders at this point whether Santayana would have issued this castigating missile had he studied Aristotle with Trendelenburg instead of writing a dissertation on Lotze under Royce's command.

(b) *Morals.* After noting that Socrates' science had its roots in the agora of Athens, a product of social experience, Santayana notes that the Greeks emerged as the first moralists, owing this achievement to having "happy political freedom," just as they were the first natural philosophers because of having a comparable freedom from religious dogma (18). Yet ideal science is not the mirroring of nature to be understood as deciphering of its secrets. It only lives in discourse and its sum total is "to know thyself," viz. one's own mind. Such is the canvas on which Santayana will draw his tribute to Socrates' contribution in *Reason in Common Sense*:

Having developed in the spirit the consciousness of its meanings and purposes, Socrates rescued logic and ethics for ever from authority. With his friends the Sophists, he made man the measure of all things, after bidding him measure himself, as they neglected to do, by his own ideal. That brave humanity which had first raised its head in Hellas and had endowed so many things in heaven and earth, where everything was hitherto monstrous, with proportion and use, so that man's works might justify themselves to his mind, now found in Socrates its precise definition; and it was naturally where the Life of Reason had been long cultivated that it came finally to be conceived (19).

Plato gave the Socratic ethics "its sublimest expression." Plato, the moralist, is a true Greek and a true lover who "wished to see beauty flourish in the real world" (20). This is Reason as Art. And Plato "left nothing pertinent unsaid on ideal love and ideal immortality" (*Ibid.*). Santayana is viewing Plato as a thinker who has accepted the flux of the immediate, tried to understand it, though not *know* it, and whose main contribution lies in articulating a vision of an ideal of the spiritual life: poetry. He states with confidence the following: "Beyond this point no rendering of the Life of Reason has ever been carried" (20).¹⁸ What then, we may ask next, was left for

¹⁸ Santayana's relation to Platonism has been criticized, and for good reasons. The problems concerning the relation to Plato were underscored in C. A. Strong's tribute to Santayana in the Schilpp volume, pp. 447-9). Strong wrote: "As a final question I would ask him [Santayana]: Is your Platonism really consistent with your Materialism? It depends on how he conceives the former. If Platonism means simply the recognition of essences, the tracing of their logical relations to one another, the celebration of their importance in human life and thought, it

Aristotle?

The direct reply is that for Santayana Aristotle made explicit the natural basis for the spiritual life, meaning that Aristotle's contribution is to be seen not in the understanding of nature, nor in that of the immediate, but in revealing the conditions of the Life of Reason. He did introduce major improvements in detailing the workings of consciousness and indeed offered refinement of precision in the study of some parts; he also maintained "greater fidelity to the common sentiments of his race," where Plato would often reach beyond the limits of the Hellenic region, even the limits of the rational. Thus:

In Aristotle the conception of human nature is perfectly sound; everything ideal has a natural basis and everything natural an ideal development.

It is important not to take this maxim out of its original context and make Santayana say things he did not mean, for the maxim was not intended to cover Aristotle's science of nature, not even the foundations of his logical theory. Aristotle's ethics, when supplemented, as needed, with Platonic expositions, grants to the understanding of the spiritual life a touch of finality, leading to the conviction that the Life of Reason finds there its classic explication. The upshot is that whereas Plato articulates the ideal, Aristotle gives it its objective form. Both are moralists of the Life of Reason. This depiction may have its fascinating aspects but it leaves out much that is valuable and useful in Aristotle to jettison without protesting the dumping: teleology, politics, education, the analytic of excellence, the relation of nature and human nature in their continuity, to mention only a few.

The words entelechy and act or actuality, which I have used often to designate consciousness are borrowed from Aristotle; and indeed I think that no other philosopher has conceived the relation of body to the mind that animated it as fairly and squarely.¹⁹

Santayana has limited his commentary to a restricted list of thinkers, and to passing, almost casually, sweeping remarks on the rest. Thus nothing of substance is said on the Milesians, the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the leading Sophists, Anaxagoras, Empedocles, or the leading figures of Hellenistic philosophy.²⁰ The criteria of selecting thinkers for discussion were two: their reflections on the problem of the experience of immediacy, and their views on the art and morals pertaining to the Life of Reason. Aristotle was disqualified for inclusion in the first group but was considered most important for meeting the second of the two criteria.

In general, Santayana's admiration for the greatness of the Greek genius is fully reflected in passages like the following:

is consistent; if Platonism means that essences are prior to and determinative of existents rather than posterior to and expressive of existents, that essences have a being independent of the being of existents and would continue to be if all existents were annihilated, then it is inconsistent. The latter view is a species of Idealism, the goodness of which may serve conveniently to balance the badness of Materialism, without there being any logical tie between them" (448-9).

¹⁹ "Comparison with Other Views," in Lachs, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

²⁰ The new Platonists were treated incidentally, and what Santayana says is hardly of interest. His review of B. Fuller's *Plotinus and the Problem of Evil*, became the 1913 essay-review "Plotinus and the Nature of Evil," (*Obiter Scripta*, 1936). For his reflections on Plotinus in *Soliloquies in England*, see "Reversion to Platonism."

As it is improbable that there will soon be another people so free from preoccupations, so gifted and so fortunate as the Greeks, or capable in consequence of so well exemplifying humanity, so also it is improbable that a philosopher will soon arise with Aristotle's scope, judgment, or authority, one knowing so well how to be both reasonable and exalted . . . But times change; and though the principles of reason remain the same the facts of human life and of human consciousness alter (21).

We now have come to the blending of constancy and change: principles of reason supply the former, the facts of life and consciousness the latter. The implication is that the classical formulations of facts and consciousness, however true, were time and place bound, nevertheless "they diagnose what is profound and universal in natural morality by embodying it in images which do not belong to our life . . . We do not find there our sins and holiness, our love, our charity, and our honour" (22). Again:

The Greek too would not find in our world the things he valued most . . . : piety, country, friendship and beauty; and he might add that his ideals were rational and he could attain them, while ours are extravagant and have been missed. . . It would be impossible for us to go back and become like him. To make the attempt would show no sense of reality and little sense of humour (22).

To speak of reality when referring to the changing social and moral scene amounts to compromising what is a technical concept. What he is referring to is not reality but the changing winds of the spiritual life and the adventures of the fluctuating employment of reason. Still, he feels that an effort must be made to detect and adopt what is assimilatable in that era:

What we can adopt from Greek morals is only the abstract principles of their development; their foundation in all the extant forces of human nature and their effort toward establishing a perfect harmony among them. These forces themselves have perceptibly changed, at least in their relative power . . . The movement of conscience has veered; the centre of gravity lies in another part of the character (23).

Here Santayana is getting deeper into the advocacy of pragmatism as a policy of cultural change bent on justifying the new and the current. What he says in the next paragraph is a striking *non-sequitur*. Scientific experimentalism has led to the jettisoning of old physics, be it Aristotle's, Plato's, or that of any other thinker: "Plato had no physics and Aristotle's physics was false" (24). But how do we get from physics to morals? The exposition shows that the Greeks were not on good grounds regarding their explanations of the phenomena viewed as immediacies although they were correct in identifying the problem of the immediate (Heraclitus). Some gave the wrong answers to the correct problem (Aristotle). For instance, "Plato substituted the many Socratic ideas, all of which were relevant to appearances, for the one concept of Parmenides. The ideas thus acquired what is called metaphysical subsistence" (24-5). It is in passages like these where Santayana is forcing the Greek metaphysics of Being to speak the idiom of the metaphysics of Experience, and since it cannot be done without distortion or contradiction, it must be rejected as false.

It would follow that the modern, being primarily a metaphysics of experience, is superior, for it sets the pace for change, provides for alternatives, and allows for more change without being afraid of self-refutation. Socrates' followers made the mistake of not abstaining from bad physics. At least Plato can be excused on the basis of having myths in lieu of physics, but not Aristotle, who thought that essences might still be operative in nature, thus ending by compromising the principle that could have prevented the resultant opaqueness of the immediate. Furthermore, instead of endorsing

the idea of mechanism, he opted for teleology and final causes, which are precisely what modern science had struggled for centuries to eliminate from explanations. Be that as it may, when Santayana turned to Aristotle's supreme final cause, he complimented the Greek view by saying that "it is mythical only in its physical application; in moral philosophy it remains a legitimate conception." And further down: "The absolute intellect described by Aristotle remains, therefore, as pertinent to the *Life of Reason* as Plato's idea of the good" (27-28). His verdict on post-Aristotelian systems waxes expectedly caustic: "The rest of ancient philosophy belongs to the decadence and rests in physics on eclecticism and in morals in despair" (28). Next, he moves to draw the lesson from history that helps illumine the path to the present:

Such are the threads which tradition puts into the hands of an observer who at the present time might attempt to knit the *Life of Reason* ideally together. The problem is to unite a trustworthy conception of the conditions under which man lives with an adequate conception of his interests. Both conceptions, fortunately, lie before us. Heraclitus and Democritus, in systems easily seen to be complimentary, gave long ago a picture of nature such as all later observation, down to our own day, has done nothing but to fill out and confirm. Psychology and physics still repeat their ideas, often with richer detail, but never with a more radical or prophetic glance.

And, on the problem of morals and the ancient sources, he writes:

Modern theory has not done much to help us here, however, as it has in physics. It seldom occurs to modern moralists that theirs is the science of all good and the art of its attainment ... They deal with the secondary question What I ought to do? without having answered the primary question, What I ought to be? They attach morals to religion rather than to politics, and this religion unhappily long ago ceased to be wisdom expressed in fancy in order to become superstition overlaid with reasoning (30).

The inspiration that lamentably led the moderns to obfuscate the moral issue, he tells us, came from industrialism, democracy, the French Revolution, the Renaissance, even the Catholic system. And the chapter ends on a precis, although the attendant recommendation is not altogether free of ambiguity:

Here then is the programme of the following work: Starting with the immediate flux, in which all objects and impulses are given, to describe the *Life of Reason*; that is, to note what facts and purposes seem to be primary, to show how the conception of nature and life gathers around them, and to point to the ideals of thought and action which are approached by this gradual mastering of experience by reason. A great task, which it would be beyond the powers of a writer in this age either to execute or to conceive, had not the Greeks drawn for us the outlines of an ideal culture at a time when life was simpler than at present and individual intelligence more resolute and free (32).

The error of the Greeks, entrenched in tradition, he brought into full light in an essay titled "The Progress of Philosophy," in *Soliloquies in England* (1922):

The Greeks in their sanity discovered not only the natural world but the art of living well in it. Besides physics they founded ethics and politics. But here again progress was prevented by the rejection or perversion of the greater thing in the interests of the lesser The habit of treating opinions about nature as rhetorical themes or as more or less edifying myths, had disastrous consequences for philosophy. It created metaphysics After Socrates a theory constructed by reasoning, in terms of logic, ethics, and a sort of poetic propriety, was put in the place of physics; the economy of the human mind was projected into the universe; and nature, in the works of the metaphysicians, held the mirror up to man

... . Platonic metaphysics projects into the universe the moral progress of the soul.²¹

Whether this is the way the Greeks erred and by so doing affected negatively the course of philosophy is open to serious doubt. Santayana's diagnosis is not unique to his writings nor limited to his perspective. Whatever its suggestive merits, the above passage raises a number of unanswered questions. Is it indeed the case that metaphysics came about in the way the passage presumes, i.e. that is first by creating myths and then transforming them into opinions about nature—in the form of rhetorical themes—only to project them onto nature? If this be exalted anthropomorphism, does it necessarily portend the intellectual seduction of the later generations of thinkers lulling them to accept the disastrous consequences it had for science and philosophy? There is also the hidden assumption that Santayana's reader knows what the term "philosophy" means in the context of the essay. Did Santayana mean by the phrase "disastrous consequences" that the Greeks misled the Christians and forced the uneducated barbarians into adopting the intellectual habits the Greeks had so firmly engraved in the marble of the intellect, as it were? These and many other questions come to mind when we read what this charming δοκονδος φιλος wrote about the darker side of the Greek tradition for over half a century.

V

In 1951, when he published his *Dominations and Powers*, in the Preface of this book Santayana expressed second thoughts about his early reflections on the Greeks. He wrote:

Many years ago, in the second volume of *The Life of Reason*, I drew a sketch of human society inspired by the ethics of Plato and Aristotle. I was then a judicial moralist, distinguishing the rational uses of institutions and deciding which were the best. If now I submit to the public some subsequent thoughts on the same subject, I do so with a more modest intention. I have become aware that anyone's sense of what is good and beautiful must have a somewhat narrow foundation, namely, his circumstances and his particular brand of human nature; and he should not expect the good or the beautiful after his own heart to be greatly prevalent or long maintained in the world. Plato and Aristotle spoke with authority for the ancient city then in its decline; their precepts are still pertinent to the art of government; but they hardly consider non-territorial powers, such as universal religions, nor the relation of the State to the non-political impulses of human nature. What to them seemed absolute and permanent was in fact relative and temporary. (vii).²²

Santayana, now a contextualist and relativist, has re-evaluated his own Plato and Aristotle of the 1905-1906 period, to allow for criticism that has shifted to other serious issues. He found that the scope of inquiry the Greeks had undertaken was less inclusive than their theorizing could have normally investigated, viz. such wide cultural practices as religious conduct and the place of political institutions in regulating the affective side of humanity, what Santayana presumably means by "the non-political

²¹ In *Soliloquies in England*, repr. in *The Philosophy of Santayana*, ed. Edman, pp. 360-1.

²² The position expressed in this passage from *Dominations and Powers*, is quite distant from what a statement, echoing Aristotle, conveys in *Reason in Art*: "Human nature, for all its margin of variability, has a substantial core which is invariable, as the human body has a structure which it cannot lose without perishing altogether." (205).

impulses of human nature." One begins to wonder at this point whether the issue could have existed and thus become the object of serious attention for Greek political philosophy in view of the fact that theirs was not a "State" but the organized community of the *polis*. And given the experience and the institutions of the *polis*, it is difficult to give credence to the charge that the so-called non-political impulses were actually neglected in the extensive discussions on the passions and the emotions from Protagoras to Aristotle and Epicurus.

In the concluding paragraph of the same Preface he tells us what he offers in that work:

All that it professes to contain is glimpses of tragedy and comedy played unawares by government; and a continual intuitive reduction of political maxims and institutions to the intimate spiritual fruits that they are capable of bearing. (ix).

A rational society now is one in which institutions and values are but the instruments and means by which private values come to fruition. Human nature is now viewed from the other end of the instrument that had telescoped the immediate during a lifetime; gone are the former constants and permanencies of human nature. Skepticism took deeper root in his ripe old age, and with it went the confidence in the sweet reasonableness of Greek philosophy.

In trying to assess Santayana's account, critique and evaluation of Greek philosophy, two things had to be brought to the reader's attention: (a) Santayana's own philosophy and the changes through which it passed as a succession of basic frames of reference and within which he was modifying his views on the features he had selected from the spectrum of the Greek mind. The complexity of the issues I would agree call for far more discussion than I have offered in this paper in order to relate them to the changes that emerged with each stage in Santayana's development. I had occasion to examine them in two basic frameworks, the "dissertation" and the *Life of Reason*. My objective was not to engage in a debate nor challenge his own philosophical stance, but initiate a critical discussion of certain theses Santayana asserted in his sustained interest to assimilate what he thought creative and thus understand the Greeks better. With that in mind, I tried to identify the uses he found for the fruits of their thinking. (b) Given the limits of my talk, I have centered the discussion on the highlights of Santayana's approach to the Greeks, and then mainly to explain the grounds of his criticism of the Greek mind as he moved from an early phenomenism to his later epiphenomenalism. Yet at no point did I find him fall short of sympathy with the Greeks.

"Intellectually," Irwin Edman wrote once, "he may be called the last Greek."²³ As a characterization it is but a half-truth, as I trust to have shown. For, given what he said in his early statements and how he concluded his conversation with the Greeks, it can be doubted whether the ancients would have wanted to ask Santayana to serve as their appointed spokesman to earn a place for them in the prospective that Harvard was developing early in this century. Santayana, for all his admiration and strong claim to having an affinity to the Greeks, was but another brilliant modern thinker who treated the Greeks only insofar as the ancients could be accommodated within the parameters of his philosophy of essences, that is as they fit into his conception of the order of organized perfections of the spiritual life. The difference between Santayana

²³ See Edman's Introduction to *The Philosophy of Santayana*, p. lxi.

and his other contemporaries regarding their interpretations of Greek philosophy is a matter of a difference in outlook that determines the respective uses each assigned to the classical achievement. Santayana repeatedly admitted the fascination the Greeks exerted on his spirit and how he sought to treat the felt impact with the seriousness his vision of them compelled a response. In other words, he saw the Greeks as a major yet fruitful problem he decided neither to ignore nor dismiss. He kept the profits.

The seeds of Santayana's views about the Greeks, as we have seen, are found in rudimentary form in his doctoral dissertation on Lotze. But in a more general way, we can glean his understanding of the important lessons the Greeks had taught him on how to face the challenge of philosophy, from his 1930 "A Brief History of my Opinions," where he writes: "The necessity of naturalism as a foundation for all serious opinions was clear to me from the beginning" (8). He states further down that he had early in his life—before going to Germany—become "interested in all religions or metaphysics systems, but sceptical about them and scornful of any romantic worship or idealization of the real world" (10). For a while the Greeks provided him with a modern Ariadne's thread to exit the labyrinth he had entered voluntarily and to enjoy the illusion of having slain the Minotaur that was holding the "immediate" chained to a wall erected with the fictive projections of reason abused.

In place of a conclusion, I would like to quote a passage from Santayana's Preface to the second edition of *The Life of Reason*. He wrote in 1948: "The oracles of spirit all have to be discounted; they are uttered in a cave" (vi). One feels tempted to say the same about most of his own condemnatory comments about the Greeks. Yielding to the temptation, however, may lead to admitting that even these present comments on Santayana's comments have been uttered in a cave. This is therefore a prudent place to stop.

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George Santayana: A Pyrrhonian Sceptic of Our Time

Those of us who are committed to Santayana's philosophy may not be especially troubled by the fact that we constitute a rather small group amongst academic philosophers today. There is after all something attractive about being associated with the esoteric and exclusive, and it is no mark of distinction to think that Plato, Aristotle, Hume, and Kant are some of the greatest thinkers in our tradition. And yet there is something disturbing about the fact that so few recognise the greatness of one's own favourite, and one is led to speculate about the reason why it is so. We know that Santayana was widely read and highly respected as a philosopher in his own time, and yet his philosophy has come to be almost entirely eclipsed by other currents of thought since the Second War, and his name has receded into considerable obscurity. There is of course nothing unusual about this: fads and fashions change, and so do the fortunes of great thinkers. But there is frequently something of considerable importance entailed by a radical change of fortune, and I believe that this is so in the case of Santayana. His waning fame is frequently attributed to the fact that he is old-fashioned, that his prose style is excessively florid, that his philosophical writings are lacking in the type of argumentation requisite for philosophical respectability, and that his philosophy itself is merely eclectic. All of this points in the right direction but does not really capture the truth of the matter, and I think that this is largely because we have not so far been very clear about what kind of philosopher Santayana was. I will therefore address the basic question: how is Santayana's philosophy to be situated both historically and geographically? and I will seek to answer it not so much in terms of *influences* as in terms of *affinities*.

Santayana addresses this question to some extent himself in his "Apologia Pro Mente Sua,"¹ where he responds to the suggestion that he is an American. He concludes his brief discussion by saying that "it is as an American writer that I must be counted, if I am counted at all." As a prediction this has certainly been borne out, for he is almost universally classified as an American philosopher, even by the Spanish I believe, and it is certainly to the American intellectual community that we owe our gratitude for the fact that his name has been kept alive at all. But as a characterisation of his philosophy it is rejected by Santayana, and I believe correctly so. Much could be said about the influence of America and Americans upon Santayana's thought, but I leave that for others to spell out. What he says himself is sufficient for my purposes. What he addresses is the suggestion that his *naturalism* is American. This he dismisses by pointing out that his *cosmological* naturalism derives from Democritus, Lucretius, and Spinoza, and that his *critical* naturalism — "the habit of reducing ideas to their human origin ... rather than to truths or errors to be tested by logic or by external facts" — is something that he claims to have seen no signs of in American philosophy. He

¹ *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed. Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1940, pp. 600-604. Herein referred to simply as the *Apologia*.

adds that the moral dimension of his naturalism - the tendency "to sanction discipline, organisation, and tradition as the natural conditions of any notable or fertile achievements" — is something which in his time at least would have sounded un-American.²

After disposing of the suggestion that his thought is to be considered American, Santayana considers two other "compliments": he has been called "an antique sage," and "a Castilian mystic." About the latter he says some interesting things. Were it not for the qualifying term "Castilian," to call him a mystic would be inappropriate and even offensive; but given that restriction he happily accepts the appellation, for Castile, he says, can breed nothing nebulous:

That word Castilian dries the wind, clears the jungle, lays bare earth and sky alike, infinitely apart yet separated by nothing, as the soul and God should always remain. The mere mystic might be anything, good or bad; but the Castilian mystic is vowed to an unflinching realism about the world and an unsullied allegiance to the ideal. He is *Don Quixote sane.* (*Apologia* 603-4)

This unity of realism and idealism is touched upon elsewhere in the *Apologia*³ where he in talking about his poetry says both that his poetry is a "poetry of things" rather than of words or concepts, and that it moves "in the realm of essences, not in that of accidents." This dual commitment to *things* (by which he understands "events and interests as well as objects" and to *essences* is central to his entire outlook, and it reflects both his "southern respect for the great world, for fate, for history, for matter" (as opposed to "the northern respect for the inner man", by which I take him to refer among other things to the tendency towards subjective idealism in modern philosophy, whether British, French, of German) and his Platonising habit to review and recast all emotional experience into a new mold, "giving it a moral unity and intensity that it never had before." I take Santayana to be suggesting that this dual allegiance to fact and essence, world and ideal, is not only paradigmatic of the spirit of Castile but characteristic of the southern or Mediterranean experience as such; hence the natural connexion between the Castilian and the Greek dimensions of his own thought. This amalgam of world and idea may well seem foreign to the philosophy of Plato, or at least to how it is generally understood, but it is central to Santayana's Platonism, the core of which is the insight that through the imagination, and in the realm of essence, the world and human experience is somehow transformed or transfigured.

Returning to his brief discussion of how his thought is to be situated in historical and geographical terms, it is interesting to observe that he does not elaborate upon the suggestion that he is to be thought of as "an antique sage." Why is that? Is it because the connexions with ancient philosophy are so obvious as to need no comment? This

² If one were to point out that this characterisation ignores the affinities between Santayana's philosophy and *pragmatism*, I would respond that there is to be sure a pragmatic element in Santayana's philosophy, but that this is nothing uniquely American: every late 19th century thinker who was not a neo-Hegelian of some sort was a pragmatist of one sort or another, whether he was a European, a Briton, or an American.

³ *Apologia*, page 598-600.

is probably part of it, for no-one has missed the connexion between the doctrine of essence and Plato's so-called theory of Forms, or that between Santayana's naturalistic analysis of the self and that of Aristotle. But there is more to it than that. As I have already suggested, his characterisation of Castilian mysticism already contains an implicit reference to Greek thought, and this becomes even more clear if one looks at the earlier part of the passage quoted above where the emphasis is on clarity, and the laying bare of earth and sky alike. What Santayana identifies as Castilian is what many have come to identify with that glorious light of Greece and the spirit which it breeds: the habit of making clear distinctions, the tendency towards clarity and clarification which is inseparable from transformation. In terms of systems of philosophical thought what we find above all is a capacity for descriptive accounts of the world and human experience which is inseparable from a concern with ideas and ideals. To read the Greeks primarily with a view to examining arguments in support of scientific hypotheses is to misread them, and the same is the case with Santayana. As he says of himself: "I detest disputation and distrust proofs and disproofs."⁴

We are already touching upon what I take to be the most important point to be made in an attempt to situate Santayana correctly: namely that it is as an antique sage, or an ancient philosopher in modern guise, that he is to be considered. It is however not my intention to elaborate upon the obvious links with Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy; not just because they are already so well known, but rather because there is an affinity which is so much more important: the affinity with Pyrrhonian scepticism. And here I must repeat that I am talking about *affinities* rather than *influences*, for I don't think Santayana was much influenced by Pyrrhonism. In fact I suspect that he did not read Sextus Empiricus' account of Pyrrho's philosophy very carefully, for his few remarks addressed to it suggest that he was guilty of the same misunderstandings that characterise most discussions over the last several centuries. This lack of knowledge does however make Santayana's scepticism all the more interesting, for he can be said to have developed, on his own as it were, a modern and far more thorough and adequate version of the scepticism developed by Pyrrho in the 3rd century B.C.

Pyrrho of Elis was a young man when Aristotle was old, and he probably travelled with Alexander the Great to India and was influenced by the philosophers of that region. The basic insight of Pyrrho was that for every judgement, whether this be the expression of a sense perception, a logical or mathematical principle, or a moral ideal, an opposite judgement could equally well be formulated. This insight was expresses by saying that there is *τοσσθένεια*, or equipollence in opposing judgements, propositions, beliefs, and appearances. Pyrrho maintained further that sceptics, who are aware of and troubled by this equipollence and unable to decide between opposing claims to truth, see that the only sane attitude to adopt is a suspension of judgement, *ἐποχή*. In suspending judgement about these matters the sceptic therefore distances himself from both of the competing philosophical orientations: unlike the *dogmatic* philosopher he does not claim to have discovered the truth; and unlike the *academic* philosopher he does not assert that truth can not be apprehended. As a sceptic he keeps on searching. Pyrrho's third main and perhaps most significant claim is that a

⁴ *Ibid.* page 604.

consequence of universal suspension of judgement is a state of $\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\alpha\xi\alpha$, tranquillity or quietude. Pyrronian scepticism is therefore according to Sextus Empiricus that philosophical orientation which is most likely to lead to a condition of happiness, for freedom from perturbation is a defining feature of happiness. Since the bulk of the writings of Sextus Empiricus consists of almost endless, and frequently tedious and highly sophistical, arguments in support of the principle of equipollence, it is easy to form the impression that Pyrrhonism is a mere academic exercise, and a rather boring and pointless one at that. It is therefore important not to lose sight of the fact that for its founder at least it was a way of life whose aim was a state of being free from anxiety and inner turmoil, the path to which lay in an undogmatic stance toward the world and all human experience. It is my conviction that the same can be said of Santayana's philosophy, and that it contains a far more adequate working out of the basic principles involved than what is found in Sextus Empiricus. Let me give some indication of how this claim can be supported.

Pyrronian scepticism has been subjected to severe criticism ever since its origin in antiquity, and in modern times especially it has frequently been said to be an impossible and even destructive attitude. By this is meant both that universal suspension of judgement is impossible and that, were it possible, the result would be the cessation of life rather than the realisation of a tranquil and happy state. David Hume, for instance, says in a famous passage⁵ that the sceptic would have to acknowledge "that all human life would perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease... ." Although the Pyrronian may momentarily dazzle and confuse with his profound reasonings, says Hume, "...the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples... ."

This sort of criticism rests upon two misconceptions about Pyrrhonism. First, it is thought that the sceptic may not believe anything; and second, it is thought that the claim regarding the connexion between the sceptical stance and the state of $\alpha\tau\alpha\rho\alpha\xi\alpha$ is not substantiated. Although a careful reading of Sextus shows that these are misconceptions, one has to admit that they are to some extent warranted, in that much that is essential to Pyrrhonism is not much more than hinted at in the writings of Sextus. Since this is not the occasion for a careful analysis of these writings, and since my main concern is to show that Santayana's philosophy is essentially a more thorough working out of the same principles, my discussion of the writings of Sextus⁶ will of necessity have to be very brief.

On the question whether the true sceptic may believe anything, the best brief answer on behalf of Pyrrho is to say that what he renounces are not beliefs but assertions of certitude. What this means is that doubt is applied only to that which is non-evident:

⁵ David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, §XII, Part II.

⁶ Reference will be made to two of the works by Sextus Empiricus: *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, cited as *PH*, with Roman numerals referring to Books, and Arabic figures referring to Sections; and *Against the Ethicists*, cited as *M* with Arabic figures referring to Sections. Both are in the Loeb Classical Library, with an English translation by R. G. Bury.

[the sceptic] states what appears to himself and announces his own impression in an undogmatic way, without making any positive assertion regarding the external realities. (*PH* I 15)

In the famous example of honey, which appears sweet to us but may on occasion or to some other animal appear bitter, the sceptic has no reluctance to say that it appears sweet,

but whether it is also sweet in its essence [or "in itself"], is for us a matter of doubt, since this is not an appearance but a judgement regarding the appearance. (*PH* I 20)

It would be no exaggeration to say that Santayana's entire epistemology⁷ amounts to an elaboration and defence of this distinction between appearance and that which transcends appearance. Cast in his terminology the distinction, on the epistemic level, is between *intuition* and *knowledge*. Intuition is the direct acquaintance with the datum of cognition, and this is always an *essence* which in itself offers no evidence for anything beyond itself. Knowledge, by contrast, is always a going beyond the given datum, it is a belief in things *not* given; rather than the apprehension of an *essence* in *intuition*, knowledge involves the postulation of an *existent* object through *intent*. Knowledge is never complete or adequate to its object, it is never literally true but always symbolic in character. Knowledge is faith mediated by symbols. Santayana arrives at this position by means of the application of a sceptical method which is reminiscent of that of Descartes, but much more thoroughgoing. It issues in what Santayana calls "solipsism of the present moment," and this state contains the insight that "Nothing given exists." By this he does not mean that the datum, always an essence, is unreal. It is perfectly real in its own realm, but it is completely contained in a single intuition, and nothing outside it can belong to it at all. To assert that the datum *exists*, as Santayana uses that term, is to hypostasise it, to place it in relations which are not internal to it. Existence, for Santayana, "... is a conjunction of natures in adventitious and variable relations" (*SAF* 48). Existence is the domain of flux and dynamic forces, it is the spatio-temporal world of nature. The realm of essence, by contrast, is the realm of eternal and immutable entities,

It is simply the unwritten catalogue, prosaic and infinite, of all the characters possessed by such things as happen to exist, together with the characters which all different things would possess if they existed. It is the sum of mentionable objects, of terms about which, or in which, something might be said. (*SAF* 77).

The ultimate sceptic, who is willing to rest content with that which is given to him in intuition, and has suspended all interpretation of the datum and all belief in anything that might lie beyond the given in the realm of existence, finds himself in the presence of objects which are more luminous and less equivocal than are the objects of belief — facts and events. There is nothing vague or ambiguous in the datum: it is just what

⁷ As worked out especially in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Constable and Company Limited, London, 1923. Herein referred to as *SAF*.

it is, and the sceptic, by definition, does not worry about how it compares with another datum, or what it may mean or stand for. Having adopted this attitude, the state of the sceptic is marked by absolute certitude; it involves no possible error or uncertainty, for error comes from belief about things beyond the given. So when Pyrrho says that the sceptic restricts himself to what appears to him and refrains from saying anything about "the external realities," this corresponds to Santayana's claim that certitude attaches only to the intuition of an essence, and that to assert that the essence intuited is a facsimile of the natural or existent object, or that it is the same thing as that object, is to go beyond what is warranted and to make a fundamental mistake. When Pyrrho says in effect that it is all right for the sceptic to believe things but also that he must suspend judgement about all things, Santayana's analysis makes sense of this by showing that all knowledge claims transcend the given, that they all involve an element of interpretation. The sceptic therefore is not someone who refrains from belief, but rather someone who recognises the tenuousness of all beliefs. The sceptic is the opposite of dogmatic.

This leads me to the second and most important of the two misconceptions about Pyrrhonism mentioned above, that having to do with the connexion between the suspension of judgement, $\delta\pioxi$ and a tranquil state of being, $\delta\tauapa\xi\alpha$. On this point Sextus seems to many readers simply to beg the question and to assert dogmatically that $\delta\tauapa\xi\alpha$ follows upon $\delta\pioxi$.⁸ There is however one passage which is more helpful. It is generally overlooked by scholars, and it deals, significantly, with the ethical realm:

... as he was thus in suspense there followed, as it happened, the state of $\delta\tauapa\xi\alpha$ in respect of matters of opinion. For the man who opines that anything is by nature good or bad is forever disquieted ... [whereas] the man who determines nothing as to what is naturally good or bad neither shuns nor pursues anything eagerly; and, in consequence, he is unperturbed. (*PH* I 27)

Here we have at least the hint of an explanation.

The essential thing is not to believe that anything is by *nature* good or evil, for so to believe leads to perturbation, and since unhappiness is virtually defined in terms of perturbation ("every unhappy state occurs because of some perturbation" (*M XI* 112)) — it follows that someone who believes in natural goods and evils cannot be happy. But what is it to believe in natural goods and evils, and why is it that doing so leads to perturbation? The belief that (at least) some things are by nature good or evil is contrasted with a thoroughgoing relativism, according to which

... nothing is by nature an object of desire any more than of avoidance, nor of avoidance more than of desire, each thing which occurs being relative, and, owing to differences of times and circumstances, being at one time desirable, at another to be avoided (*M XI* 118)

⁸ In one passage, for instance, he says that the sceptics "found that $\delta\tauapa\xi\alpha$, as if by chance, followed upon their suspense, even as a shadow follows its substance." (*PH* I 29) Passages like that abound in the *Outlines*, but — although colourful as metaphors — they hardly explain much.

If there did exist anything by nature good or evil, "this thing ought to be common to all men and be good or evil for all" (*M* XI 69). But experience shows that values are notoriously variable, and there is no non-controversial standard by which one can judge between the competing tables of virtues and vices. The sceptic, as a relativist in values, does not deny that there are things good and evil, he does not refrain from pursuing or avoiding things which are to him objects of desire or aversion; but, unlike the dogmatist, he does not go beyond accumulated experience (and not necessarily just his own experience!) and declare that these objects are by nature good or evil. Put differently, the sceptic restricts himself to appearances and suspends judgement about the "real existence" of values.

The reason for adopting this stance is that to transcend experience and the realm of φαινόμενα and to declare that values are universal and absolute leads to perturbation and hence unhappiness. This is because one's desires become excessive once one believes that the objects of one's desires are somehow "objectively" desirable. One becomes overly eager in one's pursuit and avoidance of things, one experiences excessive joy and pain at the possession of things good and evil, and one's pursuit of something which is declared to be by nature a good, e.g. wealth, honour, or pleasure, tends to become onesided and obsessive, hence an evil. Although Sextus Empiricus does not use the terms, one might say that one's life becomes competitive and fanatical, for he talks of the jealousy, ill will, and envy that accompanies the possession of something one considers by nature good, and the fear and anxiety one experiences in connexion with things thought to be by nature evil. In short, the dogmatist suffers not only the unavoidable pain that the sceptic suffers; in addition he suffers avoidable pains which are due to his beliefs about evil things, just as his joy at possessing good things is tainted by his belief that those things are by nature good.

The sceptic, being a thoroughgoing relativist who suspends judgement about things which go beyond experience, is by contrast "liberated from the distress due to the belief that something [by nature] evil or good is present" (*M* XI 118). It is also said that "when reasoning has established that none of these things is good by nature or evil by nature, we shall have a release from perturbation and there will await us a peaceful life (εἰρηναῖος βίος)" (*M* XI 130). The notions of release, λύσις, and liberation, ἐλευθερία, are extremely important, and so is the claim that it is through reason that this is achieved, for the sceptic does not claim that his life is entirely peaceful and free from trouble: he escapes only from the suffering that is due to "a distortion of reason (τὴν τοῦ λόγου διοιστροφὴν)" and foolish belief (τὴν φαῦλην δόξαν) (*M* XI 148). Above all else, the life of the sceptic is marked by *moderation* (μετριοπάθεια), and this is both because the suffering that is unavoidable is relatively minor and — more importantly — because he escapes the suffering, both avoidable and great, which is due to false reasoning and belief.

This discussion shows that, as far as the ethical realm is concerned at least, Sextus gives a fairly detailed and quite plausible account of the connexion between ἔποχή and ὀταραξία. He does however not as far as I can see give any explanation of why in other realms, such as sense perception and metaphysics for instance, the same connexion should obtain. Once more we find Santayana's philosophy far more adequate. I trust it will not be necessary to elaborate upon the obvious parallel between the ethical relativisms of the two thinkers.

What does need to be discussed is Santayana's general position on the

consequences of scepticism, and the following passage is a good starting point:

Thus a mind enlightened by scepticism and cured of noisy dogma, a mind discounting all reports, and free from all tormenting anxiety about its own fortunes or existence, finds in the wilderness of essence a very sweet and marvellous solitude. The ultimate reaches of doubt and renunciation open out for it, by an easy transition, into fields of endless variety and peace, as if through the gorges of death it had passed into a paradise where all things are crystallised into the image of themselves, and have lost their urgency and their venom. (SAF 76)

This quite wonderful passage captures the most fundamental claim about scepticism: that it is a spiritual discipline which opens to the mind what Santayana calls the realm of essence, and that when the mind abides in this realm it is freed from all care and anxiety and attains to a state of tranquillity. And why is such a transformation effected? It is because, through scepticism, the mind is "cured of noisy dogma," and this in turn is possible because, as he says, "all things are crystallised into the image of themselves." But what is it for something to be transformed into an image of itself? and why is it that the transformation has such a liberating and eirenic effect on the spirit?

This is all to be understood in terms of his epistemology which has been touched upon above. The significance of Santayana's sceptical theory of knowledge is that he maintains that the datum of cognition can not only be distinguished in theoretical analysis by means of the distinction between essence and existence, but that it can in fact be isolated in experience in such a way that one can in fact "reduce" one's experience so that one abandons all beliefs and all tendencies to feign or to interpret. It is, in other words, possible to be so completely absorbed in the given as given that the totality of one's attention is contained in the moment. This "solipsism of the present moment", which Santayana likens to mystical rapture and sometimes calls "a timeless aesthetic trance," can of necessity be only short-lived, for it is after all a moment in the conscious life of an animal, which as such is intent upon survival in a material environment. But even though this intense concentration upon the essence given, to the exclusion of everything else, is very difficult to realise and impossible to maintain for very long, the reality of it still has enormous and dramatic consequences for the philosopher who fully appreciates its significance: those consequences are — as I have already pointed out — the beauty and tranquillity which are made possible by the sceptical way.⁹

There are two reasons why Santayana's sceptical way has these wonderful rewards. One lies in the intrinsic value of the unfettered intuition of essence, and the other lies

⁹ I should point out at this stage that there is a certain ambiguity in Santayana's use of the term "scepticism" which sometimes causes confusion in the reader. Sometimes the term is used as a synonym for "solipsism of the present moment," and then scepticism is said — for obvious reasons — not to be possible as a complete philosophy or way of life. Other times "scepticism" is taken to mean a philosophy which recognises the possibility and significance of such solipsism and accepts the theoretical consequences thereof. Santayana's own philosophy is the paradigm of such a scepticism and is not only eminently possible but also enormously valuable.

in the philosophical understanding of the nature of consciousness and knowledge which follows upon the recognition of the significance of such moments.

Let us take these in turn. What is so good about a timeless aesthetic trance? As with all claims regarding the intrinsic value of certain kinds of experience, the ultimate "evidence" is the testimony of those who have had the experience. Although an experience completely free from *all* elements of belief and interpretation must be a rare if not an impossible thing, I believe there are many experiences which approximate to it, and their value depends at least in part on the degree to which they do so. One such kind of experience is listening to music, the value of which depends to a considerable extent upon the degree to which one is absorbed in the experience and able to attend to the music alone as music, which is to say that one's experience is free from *distraction*. Although the possibility of such undistracted attention depends on many "external" factors, not the least of which is the quality of performance, it surely depends also on the degree of spiritual discipline one has developed, which is to say the capacity for attending to a portion of the realm of essence. And that is precisely what such experiences open up for one: the infinitely variegated realm of essence. Put differently, what one becomes acquainted with is the world of imagination, fantasy, and intelligence. In a world which idolises facts and existence it is, I believe, apposite to remind ourselves of the incomparable value that lies in attention to fantasy and essence.

What about the value of a philosophy which accepts the significance of the sceptical claim that nothing given exists? Why is such a philosophy liberating? Why does it lead to *άταπαξία*? Put very briefly, it is liberating because — although it doesn't by any means deprive us of all beliefs — it does free us from unwarranted dogmas regarding the absolute status of the structures of common sense, morality, science, and religion. This liberation of spirit from the shackles of dogmatism leads to tranquillity not only because one can more fully appreciate the intrinsic peace and beauty of the realm of essence, but also because one comes to be content with one's place as a conscious organism in a natural and cultural environment, much of the nature of which must of necessity lie beyond one's ken. This means among other things that one is freed from unnecessary anxiety regarding the unknown or even unknowable, in whatever dimension of reality. This does not mean that one comes to rest content with the *status quo* in knowledge. On the contrary, as in the case of Pyrrhonism, this philosophy forms the most adequate basis for inquiry, for it opens up for us unlimited cognitive vistas.¹⁰

¹⁰ A few more words about the details of this sceptical philosophy. The sceptical insight that is captured in the slogan "nothing given exists" has essentially two independent theoretical consequences, one to do with the nature of spirit, or consciousness, and the other to do with the nature of knowledge. The intentionality of consciousness is inseparable from the symbolic nature of knowledge. Since knowledge is always a going beyond the given involving faith in the not-given, the essence given is said to be a sign or symbol for the not-given. Although there are interesting and important differences between such things as sensuous knowledge, scientific theories, moral principles, and religious myths, what they have in common is the fact that they are all symbolic structures, or structures of meaning whereby we order our experience. To recognise this is to realise that there is an enormous freedom on the part of consciousness, and that there is no such thing as absolute and final truth in our common sense conception of the world any more

I hope that I have in the foregoing succeeded in showing not only that Santayana's philosophy is in its essential features akin to Pyrrhonism but also that it develops in greater depth and detail the insights of Pyrrho. But does it follow that Santayana is to be thought of essentially as an ancient philosopher in our time, and does it really have any bearing on how well or poorly his philosophy has been received? In the discussion in the *Apologia* with which I started, one of the three "compliments" which Santayana considers is the suggestion that he is "an antique sage." I have treated this phrase as if it were synonymous with "ancient philosopher," and to a considerable extent this is justified. But we must pause for a moment at the word "sage," for what that connotes is *wisdom*, something which does not seem particularly to concern present day philosophers, especially if one uses that term loosely as a synonym for "professors of philosophy." Ancient philosophers did however aim to be wise, and they had a lot to say about wisdom. It was also the case that most if not all of them conceived of philosophy as a way of life, a fact which is frequently mentioned in textbooks but almost always ignored when we come to deal with their philosophical writings. But it is perhaps the most important thing to bear in mind when we reflect upon ancient philosophy, and it makes it less difficult to understand why several of the greatest thinkers of that period, amongst them Pythagoras, Socrates, and Pyrrho, did not commit any of their thoughts to writing, or at least did not publish those writings: what mattered most was how one lived, and it was important to have *followers*, often referred to as *disciples*, rather than just *readers*. When philosophers did write and publish a great deal, which many of the ancients did and most of their modern counterparts, Santayana included, it is tempting to think that to study their writings is the same as to understand their philosophy. As far as the ancients are concerned, this is in my view an error, and so it is in the case of Santayana, whose philosophy is found as much in the story of his life as it is found in his published writings. I have said that for Santayana philosophy was a spiritual discipline. This is given further corroboration in the fact that he frequently refers to the thinkers of ancient India when he seeks to express what his own philosophy is all about. "It is the Indians," he says in one passage, "who have insisted most sincerely and intrepidly on the non-existence of everything given, even adjusting their moral regime to this insight" (*SAF* 51). This reference to a moral regimen is significant, for more important than the fact that the Indians had sound philosophical insights is the fact that they developed and practiced a spiritual discipline into which they incorporated those insights; and it is primarily because of this discipline that they were able not only to "free the spirit from idolatry," but also to "free the realm of spirit ... from limitation."

And now we touch upon what I take to be the essential reason why Santayana is not taken very seriously today, at least amongst academic philosophers, for they tend not to know anything about philosophy as a spiritual discipline and are inclined to sneer at any talk of philosophy as a way of life. But it is against this backdrop that one has to understand the fairly legitimate "complaints" about Santayana's philosophy

than in science, religion and morality. Although spirit is of necessity tethered to the animal organism, it is in its own nature entirely free, and this freedom is most fully realised when the subject leaves the domain of domestic cares and devotes itself to the life of the arts and imagination.

that it is old-fashioned, that it is more descriptive than dialectical, that it is lacking in lucid and sound arguments, etc. Of course it is all of these things, and so is that of the great ancients! What this means is that to read Santayana with the proper understanding is to be taken back to the ancients, where not only the earliest but the greatest Western philosophy is found. But, more importantly, this understanding of the essential nature of Santayana's philosophy makes one realise that a renewal of interest in Santayana may well signify a re-birth of philosophy itself.

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The Santayana Edition

Although the Santayana Edition is largely on schedule, there have been two major setbacks this past year, and we hope to overcome both during the coming year.

NEH Funding

The greatest setback was that NEH did not renew our funding for 1993-95, and, unfortunately, the Peirce Project was also not funded. This is a serious matter. Without funding we cannot continue. Editorial work at Texas A&M University is conducted by the General Editor, an Associate Editor, two research assistants, a graduate research assistant, and an undergraduate student worker. The Textual Editor and an assistant also work at Bucknell University. All the editorial staff work part-time, and the General Editor receives no financial compensation. Even so, it would not be possible to continue the requisite editorial work without funding to support staff salaries and project expenses. Therefore, we asked NEH to reconsider, and we re-applied for funding to begin in April 1994. The College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University has provided bridge funding until then, and we are quite grateful to Deans Daniel Fallon, Ben Crouch, and Woodrow Jones for their support in a difficult time.

Also, I am grateful to the more than sixty persons who wrote letters to NEH on behalf of the edition. The letters were eloquent indications of the need for the edition and for Santayana scholarship.

In addition, Sr. Javier Jiménez-Ugarte, Director General of the Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, is asking for support from Spanish foundations. It appears that we may receive funds from the Comité Conjunto Hispano Norteamericano and from the Relaciones Culturales del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores. Sr. Jiménez-Ugarte has been a longstanding friend of the edition and has written an article on Santayana.

The support from the Spanish foundations clearly will help further the work of the edition, but without additional support from NEH, or another source, it will not be easy for the project to continue.

The Last Puritan

The second setback will be a positive one in the end. It was the discovery of the second part of the typescript for *The Last Puritan*. Since the manuscript for Santayana's novel is unlocated and presumed not extant, we originally based our critical edition on the Constable first edition, first impression of the novel and on the typescript for the first part of the novel. This typescript has a perilous history. Scribner's believed that all their Santayana files had been deposited at the Princeton University archives. However, when Scribner's changed the location of its offices, a salesperson in the Scribner's Book Store discovered the first half of the typescript in the trash outside the old Fifth Avenue building. He recovered it, and it was purchased in 1986 by the University of Virginia Library. After contacting Scribner's and the salesperson, the General Editor could not locate the second half of the typescript, and it was presumed to have been destroyed in the trash.

In the summer of 1992, the General Editor discovered that the University of Texas

Humanities Research Center had some prepublication copies of Santayana books in its Christopher Morley Collection. He visited the Center to examine the copies, and discussed the material with Cathy Henderson, Research Librarian at the HRC. In late October 1992 Ms. Henderson was looking through uncatalogued material in the Christopher Morley Collection and discovered the second half of the typescript. Both typescripts are important because they contain Santayana's handwritten alterations to the text, some of which were never published.

The exact history of the typescript and its division can only be conjectured. Beginning with *The Last Puritan*, Santayana generally had an original with a carbon typed from his autograph manuscript. We know that Santayana sent one typescript of the novel to Constable and one to Scribner's. According to the manuscript librarian at Virginia, their part of the typescript came from Scribner's. Since Christopher Morley was director of the Book-of-the-Month Club when the novel was nominated as a monthly selection in 1935, it is probable that Scribner's loaned him the typescript for his initial reading and that, for whatever reason, he returned only the first half to Scribner's. Although Santayana expected Scribner's to use the corrected typescript for their publication, they did not.

When the second part of the typescript was discovered, we were ready to send the critical edition text to the printer. Because of the discovery, we had to establish the text based on the newly found typescript rather than on the first edition, first impression. This process was neither quick nor easy, and it meant delaying the publication of the novel from spring 1993 until fall 1993 or winter 1994. But it also meant that the novel will have a consistent copy-text throughout, making its text more firmly based on Santayana's intentions than it would have been.

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General Editor