

Overheard in Seville

*Bulletin of the  
Santayana  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	i	Table of Contents
<i>Robert C. Whittemore</i>	1	Santayana's Neglect of Hartshorne's Alternative
<i>Richard C. Lyon</i>	7	Santayana: Some Recollections and Asides
<i>Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.</i>	18	Santayana's Autobiography and the Development of his Philosophy ,
<i>Angus Kerr-Lawson</i>	28	Six Aspects of Santayana's Philosophy
	34	Announcement of the 1986 Annual Meeting
<i>Max H. Fisch</i>	35	Reminiscences
<i>Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.</i>	36	The Santayana Edition

The "Bibliographic Update" will resume in the next number

Edited for the Santayana Society by Angus Kerr-Lawson, Department of Pure Mathematics, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1, and by Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., Department of Philosophy, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-4237. All communications should be sent to one of the editors. The bulletin will appear annually. It is formatted and composed for typesetting with Waterloo Script, and printed by Graphic Services, University of Waterloo. It is published and distributed by the Department of Philosophy of Texas A&M University.

## Santayana's Neglect of Hartshorne's Alternative

In his article, "Santayana's Doctrine of Essence," published in the *Library of Living Philosophers* volume on the philosophy of George Santayana,<sup>1</sup> and in a subsequent reappraisal, "Santayana's Defiant Eclecticism,"<sup>2</sup> appearing twenty-four years later, Charles Hartshorne reviews and rejects Santayana's doctrine of Essence. A principal fault in it, he thinks, is its failure to take due account of what Hartshorne calls the "neglected alternative," the alternative, that is, first stated by Whitehead, and subsequently logicized by Hartshorne, which professes to account for the realm of essence (here understood as being synonymous with Whitehead's eternal objects) by locating it in the primordial nature of God. Contrariwise, the present piece argues, first, that Santayana did not, as he himself insists that he did not, neglect this alternative, and second, that his view of essence, considered in the context of his "system,"<sup>3</sup> remains a viable alternative to the doctrine of eternal objects.

In the chorus of misunderstanding and rejection consequent upon Santayana's presentation of his Realms of Being, Hartshorne's critique commands attention, not so much for the logical rigour of his argument (although that is evident) as for the critic's importance in the enterprise of process theology. Hartshorne's first article, "this notable and elaborate essay," as Santayana calls it, is, as our philosopher himself recognizes, "nominally about my essences but really about his system of cosmology... He remembers at the beginning of various paragraphs that he is supposed to be talking about my theory, and quotes something of mine; but immediately he reverts to what he calls the Neglected Alternative." (PGS 588-589)

This Neglected Alternative, as Hartshorne envisages it, arises out of the possible division of Santayana's statement of the doctrine of essence into three propositions, the first of which he assumes is capable of being understood as *not* implying the other two. "If I am wrong in this," he adds, "if the doctrine (of essence) is really all of a piece and must be accepted or rejected as a whole, then my attempt will have failed." (PGS 137)

This paper was read to the Society for Philosophy of Religion on March 7, 1986.

<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, 2nd Edition. Edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1971), 137-182. Hereafter cited as PGS.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, Hartshorne, "Santayana's Defiant Eclecticism," *Journal of Philosophy*, 61(1964), 35-44. Reprinted in John Lachs, *Animal Faith and Spiritual Life* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), 33-43. Hereafter cited as SDE (Lachs).

<sup>3</sup> "My system...is *no system of the universe*. The Realms of Being of which I speak are not parts of a cosmos, nor one great cosmos together; they are only kinds of categories of things which I find conspicuously different and worth distinguishing." Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Dover, 1955)

The propositions are: (1) that there are two modes of being, *existence*, consisting of events and enduring substances, and *essences*, comprising the characters by which these are, or might be, qualified; (2a) that these characters are alike eternal and completely separable, their existential embodiment being wholly accidental; and (2b) that they are, apart from any potential embodiment, absolutely determinate and individual. Hartshorne grants that propositions (2a) and (2b) may be interpreted as implying each other even as he insists that both may be false given that proposition (1) is true. "But," he contends, "assuming that actuality is not everything, assuming that there is a Realm of Essence, it does not seem to follow that the non-actual (essence) is absolutely determinate and individual, nor that it is independent of all existence. In addition to actual existence, there may be potential existence, and potential existence may be the indeterminate but determinable aspect, as actuality is the determined aspect, of *existence*, the two aspects together making up existent substances. Thus substance would be all-inclusive ... and yet it would be true that not all that is determinable is determined." (PGS 141) In other words, "while there is a real duality of "actuality" and something else, it does not follow that there is anything over and above *existence*." For, Harshorne concludes, "possibility is possible-existence if it is anything, and the duality we really need is that between actual and possible existence." (PGS 143)

Having thus converted Santayana's two modes of Being into a distinction between two modes of existence, Hartshorne is in a position to argue that there must be one existent "which has never come into existence and can never cease to exist since "coming into" or "going out of" existence can only be the realization of the anterior determinability of this existent through its posterior determination." (PGS 144) It is this conception of "necessary being," of a literally changing God with an unchanging necessary essence as one side of his character," (PGS 144) that Hartshorne takes Santayana to have neglected. Had this alternative been given its proper consideration, Santayana, Hartshorne thinks, must have seen that "there is no need for a separate realm of essence to house non-actualized possibilities" inasmuch as these eternal essences might be housed, as they are in the cosmology of Whitehead, "in the eternal or necessary aspect of the character of the universe, and so far as emergent can be housed in the *pro tem.* contingent character of the universe and the finite substances which this character includes." (PGS 149)

Given the transposition of essence-existence into possible-actual, Hartshorne's case is made. He can and does argue brilliantly and at considerable length the logic of the Neglected Alternative in the light of the supposed transposition, and his strictures against what he takes Santayana's position to be demand to be met. But of these more later. The immediate charge is one of neglect. Has Santayana failed in his proper duty to the God of process theology?

I find, says Hartshorne, this conception of the necessary being scarcely discussed in Santayana, "although in his essay on Bergson in *Winds of*

*Doctrine* he does parody it, without a very clear statement of what is logically involved." (PGS 144) After rereading the essay in question, I am still unable to pinpoint the passage(s) to determine to which Hartshorne has taken offence, unless it be Santayana's dismissal of the detail of the Bergsonian cosmology as irrelevant to the doctrine of essence *as Santayana himself maintains it*. Our philosopher readily concedes in his *Apologia Pro Mente Sua* (PGS 589) his neglect of the "thousand elaborations, qualifications and transformations" of the process position *per se*. The essay on Bergson is fifty pages closely argued, and in the Postscript to the *Realm of Essence* Santayana pays his proper respects to Whitehead's system in general and to his view of eternal objects and their role in events in particular.<sup>4</sup> If he does not discuss the Neglected Alternative specifically and in detail it is not because of his unfamiliarity with the notion, or with the cosmology it entails, but rather because he sees the notion as "an alternative, perhaps, to my theory of matter and of the psyche, but not to my theory of essence." (PGS 589) Which being so, he concludes, "had not this neglected alternative better remain neglected?". (PGS 535)

But enough. The issue between Santayana and Hartshorne is of an importance transcending the particular question of neglect. His theory of essence is the heart of Santayana's system of philosophy. Conversely, the notion of the "literally changing God with an unchanging necessary essence" is the keystone of Hartshorne's theological edifice. Should his (Hartshorne's) conviction that there neither is nor can be anything determinate and individual over and above existence be shown to be but a piece of literary psychology (in Santayana's sense of the term), the foundations of process theology are called in question.

According to Hartshorne (proposition 2a), Santayana's conception of essence is that of characters eternal and completely separable. Eternal, admittedly, but separable? In his *Apologia* Santayana specifically denies it: "I do not separate the two, I merely distinguish them." (PGS 525) For separation, taken literally, imports a metaphysical status to those which are separated, whereas Santayana denies that the infinitude of essences constitutes a metaphysical realm.<sup>5</sup> Having hypostatized essences and set them in a network of natural relations, as if they were things, one may have achieved as a result a pictorial physics which may have its merits, but this is not, as Santayana conceives it, a realm of essence. (RB-E 166) And if essence is not, as he insists that it is not, hypostatic (PGS

<sup>4</sup> George Santayana, *Realms of Being*, one-volume edition (New York: Cooper Square Publishers Inc., 1972), 169-171. See also pages 3, 23, 25, 30, 36, 54, 121n, 127, 130, 143, and 164-165. Hereafter cited as RB with page number (RB-E for Realm of Essence; RB-M for Realm of Matter etc.). It is perhaps pertinent to note that Whitehead reciprocates the respect. Thus he writes, "If we allow the term 'animal faith' to describe a kind of perception which has been neglected by the philosophic tradition, then practically the whole of Santayana's discussion (in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*) is in accord with the organic philosophy." *Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 142.

<sup>5</sup> George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Scribner's, 1923), 78. Hereafter cited as SAF.

533-534), what is there to separate? "It is by its very ideality, non-existence, and eternity, then, that essence is inwardly linked with existence, not by being an extension or portion of that which exists. This," says Santayana to his critics, "seems to me so simple and clear that I hardly know what to say to those who find it unintelligible. Is it perhaps *too* simple and clear, and are people led astray by expecting something more pretentious and difficult? Remembering and resenting imposture, do they then assume that I am wickedly inventing a metaphysical realm of essence to take the place of the natural world and of real life?" (PGS 526) William James' characterization of the realm of essence as "the perfection of rottenness" suggests that this is precisely their assumption. Hartshorne seems to know better, but his career commitment to the Neglected Alternative, and to the metaphysical presuppositions it involves, (PGS 150) debars any concession to Santayana's point of view.

A similar interest governs Hartshorne's concern to establish the indeterminacy of essence. Here, as in the case of the transposition of the modal types, essence-existence, into the existential distinction, possible-actual, the desired result is achieved by forcing Santayana's terms into meanings he does not intend. Thus, when Santayana takes 'determinate' to mean that any particular essence is simply itself, and 'individual' to signify 'self-referent,' (RB-E 78) Hartshorne would have it that both terms purport approximation to existence (PGS 154f). Perhaps they do, but surely the burden of proof is upon he who postulates such metaphysical status. Whitehead's difficulties with his eternal objects, difficulties which parallel those confronting Santayana's theory of essence, difficulties of which Hartshorne is very well aware, (PGS 140) preclude any resolution of the issue based upon *a priori* definitions of terms.

There remain a number of technical objections having to do with the continuity of essences and with the relations, internal and external, which essences may involve. To state these as Hartshorne deserves to have them stated, let alone to do justice to their subtlety and complexity, would take more time than is here available, and fortunately it is not really necessary that we consider these objections in their first formulation since Hartshorne, in the reappraisal previously alluded to drives directly to the heart of the issue.

How do we know the past? In no way, replies Santayana, except by animal faith in the continuity of the material world of which we are a part. Memory, notoriously full of illusion, cannot create the past, and in the absolute present all is specious. (SAF 36-37) "There is no avenue to the past or future, there is no room or breath for progressive life, except through faith in the intellect and in the reality of things not seen." (SAF 29) Hartshorne will not have it so. If memory cannot create the past, it still remains, he contends, to ask whether the past can create memory, "that is, be present in it as its cause". (SDE 34) If we have regard to Whitehead's theory of the ingression of the immediate past in the absolute present, the answer would seem to be -- yes. Moreover, there

are, in addition to these immediate memories, memories of the remote past. Also we have to reckon on the possibility of confusing memory intuitions with judgments as to what these intuitions mean. "Only by ignoring the two confusions, that between immediate and remote memory, and that between interpreted memory and simple memory can one," according to Hartshorne, "prove the lack of intrinsic connection between present and past experience." (SDE 35) And what is true as respects memory is, he thinks, true also of perception. Santayana holds that present experience is self-contained, that perception is a pointing grounded in animal faith, but, argues Hartshorne, he fails to distinguish between the immediately given and the attendant interpretation. Instead he relies on matter. But our critic asks, how does "matter" explain identity through change and causal connection? And answers, in no way. In sum, Santayana's account is, to Hartshorne's view, "pure verbiage and absolutely nothing more". (SDE 37) "To take memory and perception as illusions plus animal faith is, he thinks, the most suspect epistemology conceivable. To base an ontology upon it is inadmissible, since all that could really follow is that we know nothing." (SDE 37-38)

It is a harsh indictment born of irritation with our philosopher's elegant but admittedly convoluted manner of articulating his ideas. Indeed, our critic is of the opinion that Santayana's "chances might...have been better had he been less easily satisfied with the defiant pose of saying the opposite of his teachers or masters. He defended Hume and Hobbes against Royce, Bradley, Hegel, and Lotze; false or extreme Platonism against genuine Platonism; and all three unpopular extremes against medieval theism and James's pragmatism and Will to Believe. Thus he defied everybody who had irritated him." (SDE 43) Possibly so. Certainly he irritated Hartshorne. But lest we forget, irritation is not synonymous with error. Nor is it a mortal sin to write well. Hartshorne's presumptuous presupposition that Santayana's opposition to his masters in philosophy is founded on pique and posturing simply will not wash. Take the matter of "matter". Hartshorne appears to forget that Santayana professes not to know what matter is, and that he (Santayana) in his learned ignorance willingly waits for the scientists and their philosophical interpreters, including the godfather of the Neglected Alternative, Alfred North Whitehead, to define matter for him. Nor presumably would Hartshorne allow to pass unchallenged Santayana's belief that "memory is a mystery that psychology has done nothing to penetrate". (RB-T 498) Santayana holds that the past, "as far as direct memory and experience can exhibit it, is, like the future, a hypothesis in the air, since there is no evidence of the existence of its object except the hypothesis itself, and no possible test of the truth of this hypothesis, except that the compulsion to make it is irresistible". (RB-T 499) If this belief has been successfully contravened either in James's *Principles of Psychology* or in his Will to Believe, the fact is not immediately apparent.

The realm of essence, as Santayana conceives 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) Unlike the forms of Plato, Santayana's essences hold no privileged rank in reality: "they can lay claim to none of the cosmological, metaphysical, or moral prerogatives attributed to those ideas". (SAF 77-78) Lacking the ontological status of Whitehead's eternal objects, they are, says Santayana, no more than "dream-lights kindled by my fancy". (SAF 86) True Platonism this surely is not, nor yet extreme in any ordinary sense of the word. Santayana prefers to think of it as Platonism without illusions, Platonism cleansed of sentimentality and cleared of superstition. Hartshorne is irritated, which is his privilege, but this does not make Santayana's formulation false.

But Hartshorne is not yet done with objections. How, he wants to know, do we have the idea of events if all that is experienced is essence? The idea of an event, Santayana would reply, is itself an essence. How, then, can we know that an essence is independent of all existence? The question, Santayana would say, begs its answer inasmuch as it presupposes the hypostatization of essence. Well, then, says Hartshorne, suppose that nothing existed save the Realm of Essence, how would the world come to be? The question admits of no answer since it assumes an ontological character to which Santayana's essences do not pretend. Such answers would certainly not satisfy Hartshorne, and they may not satisfy you. But is it really necessary that they do so, unless one is prepared to rule off the philosophic course any prospect of an ultimate scepticism mitigated by animal faith? The way of the literary materialist is not the way of the process philosopher nor yet that of neo-classical theology, but neither is Santayana purporting to foreclose either of these visions of the realm of truth. "Let him clean better, if he can, the windows of his soul, that the variety and beauty of the prospect may spread more brightly before him." (SAF vi-vii) For Santayana, no less than for Whitehead, "the true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation."<sup>6</sup> For Whitehead, no less than for Santayana, "wisdom is a wider thing than logic." (RB-E, 100)

ROBERT C. WHITTEMORE

*Tulane University*

<sup>6</sup> *Process and Reality* (Corrected Edition), 5.

## Santayana: Some Recollections and Asides

On this prospective occasion, anticipating MIT's publication next year of Santayana's autobiography, *Persons and Places*, I have been asked to speak retrospectively, to say something about the man I knew for a few years in his old age and have tried to know better since his death. The attempt to understand Santayana the man must of course be collateral with the attempt to understand the philosopher. To join the two, to see that they were happily one, was his exacting task in all the years following his self-exile from America -- although the candor and self-possession of his student letters to William James make it clear that honest speech came naturally even to the young Santayana. His wish to fuse theory and practice entailed more than a philosopher's carrying up of particulars into the general, more than the joining of speculation in its ultimate reaches with the minimum indispensable postulates of common sense, more even than establishing a perfect mutual responsiveness between his daily encounters with the world and his words about the world. The integrity he sought depended on his joining the past to his own present. Self-definition here sought its terms in the articulate history of the experience of Western man -- as much of it as Santayana could appropriate and make his.

Doubtless the best efforts of critics and biographers to rehearse the life of another must come more or less preposterously short of their aim, even when, as in Santayana's case, coherence need not be invented or imposed but waits for discovery. But the integrity achieved by Santayana was of a kind not easy for us to compass. If we would recover and repeat in ourselves the motions of mind and heart which governed his view of things, we must be at least on speaking terms with the many philosophies, the poetries, the cultures through which this inveterate traveller passed on his long way home. Integrity, unity, coherence: these are, after all, of little worth when they characterize, as they may truly characterize, lives which are vacuous and philosophies which are impoverished. These terms must borrow their glory from the number and nature of the elements which a life or a theory holds in solution -- the views which are made to cohere, the values which are brought into harmony. I think of no philosopher in this century who has sought to assimilate and include in all his reckonings so wide a range as Santayana's of the intuitions and perspectives of poets, dramatists, and philosophers from classical times down to his own. If you would understand my philosophy, he once wrote to me, you must begin not with me but with Thales. Mercifully he did not add that, beyond the Ionians, you had better have some ear for all the voices, some grasp of all the contending emotions and rival

perspectives from the past which have found echo in my pages and my life.

If historical imagination is a necessary quality in Santayana's adequate reader, a quick and moving apperception is another. During my first visits with him in 1948 I learned how mobile and expressive his countenance and conversation could be. Quiet deliberation was punctuated with ironic laughter. His indictment of Socrates for having put the physical world under the thumb of the moral was interrupted by comments on the passing vendors. From disquisitions on history he moved lightly, unpredictably, to an observation on current politics, or from dreamful recollections of his own past to careful explication of the etymology of a term. Now of course Santayana's published writings -- for all the diversity of subject and form among them -- are not miscellaneous in quite this way. The tone and argument of his discourse, in paragraph, chapter, and book, are under the steady governance of a controlling idea. The mobility of his thinking, the many-sidedness apparent in his conversation, appears in his writing in the unexpected analogies, the surprising turns of dialectic, the side glances and excursions. These are characteristics which led him to the observation that he was too self-indulgent a writer. Yet few of us would wish to excise, in the interests of logical economy, all those marks of his abundance. They are not grace notes, not rococo, not whimsy; they register a metaphorical mind's delight in unsuspected relations in unlikely quarters.

The ideal reader, perhaps impossible reader of Santayana whose merits I am trying to suggest must, then, have a mind as *ondoyant* (in Lionel Trilling's sense), as flexible and moving, as the Spaniard's. Such a reader must also have a dramatic imagination. Morris Grossman has led us to understand Santayana as the dramatist of ideas. As we follow the interplay in his pages of rival theories, contending systems, disparate visions drawn from the past, it becomes clear that they are Santayana's *dramatis personae*, characters in a drama played out over the last two-and-a-half millenia. Of course the actors themselves, having been summoned back into life from ages often widely separated in time, could not know the plot of the drama they enacted. They were asked only, in their roles as ambulatory perspectives, to speak their lines in character. It then remained to the philosopher to generate the drama of their discords and agreements, a drama of aspirations and beliefs unfolding in the private theater of one man's consciousness. Santayana doubtless took an artist's impersonal delight in these projections. As free explorations of the possible, they made a fictive music of point-counterpoint, theme-and-variation whose elements yet belonged to man's history. The imagination and reality were joined, and in the midst of the play he stood aloof, paring his fingernails. And yet it is not a contradiction -- although here the ground is treacherous -- to suggest that those spirited collocations of ideas were also and simultaneously figurations of quite personal tensions and ambivalences, of claims on his own mind and heart, demanding objectification as a necessary condition of self-knowledge.

Santayana's power to appropriate the past and give life to diverse points of views marks one of his affinities with Emerson. And, we should add, with William James. It was James who knew and preached that ideas are not bloodless entities, dry abstractions, but register alternative ways of being-in-the-world. Yet it was Santayana, by reason of his genius for inward participation in the views of other thinkers and his sense for their continuity with character and culture -- it was Santayana who vindicated James' contention. His searchlight across history was far more sweeping than James'; it illumined many a way of thinking and feeling to which James was simply blind, or hostile.

So vivid are Santayana's reconstructions that we may sometimes lose sight of the dramatist who has sent these characters onto the stage, or we may mistake the actor for the playwright. I don't mean that Santayana is "elusive" -- in the sense intended by some of his detractors. Their complaint has been that he cannot be, will not be pinned down. A friend of Santayana's once referred to him as "that elegantly swimming fish", suggesting a mischievous or willful determination in him to escape all nets. "Oh, you man without a handle!" said Henry James, Sr. to Emerson -- and that is precisely the sort of distressed puzzlement that I think his son William must sometimes have felt in response to his younger Spanish colleague. Santayana seemed to Robert Frost to take back with his left hand what his right hand gave. He has been called the Mona Lisa of philosophy, whose enigmatic smile conceals more than it tells. Some have complained that in Santayana's recapitulations of the beliefs of others he seems arrogantly to dismiss them all yet fails to establish a *locus standi* of his own.

These charges of evasiveness or elusiveness tell us more about the critics than the criticized. They often seem to me to register an irritable impatience in people who have not read much of him and have not read him closely. Reading the contemporary reviews of his books, I have reflected often on how much courage he must have had to call out in himself in the face of so much misrepresentation and malice. His occasional protest against incomprehension was always, like that of Henry James, a quiet one. In a letter to David Page in 1946 he observed that "Most people cannot read; they pass the words of a book through their minds, but can't afterwards tell what was said ... . Now nobody -- not even good critics -- seem to gather what my books say: even what *The Last Puritan* or *Persons and Places* says. They report what they themselves dreamt while their eyes perused the pages." But Santayana avoided the acrimonious disputationess which he counted among the chief occupational hazards of professionalized philosophy. He went on saying what he had to say, content to be "that queer monster, the artist," as Henry James said of himself -- "an obstinate finality, an inexhaustible sensibility."

Charges of evasiveness or obscurity in Santayana seem to many of us odd, even laughable, because we have come to recognize how scrupulously responsible he was in the use of terms. To be clear and to

be definite were imperatives of his nature. No modern philosopher, I think, has just his sense -- his double sense -- for what constitutes precision in language. I mean precision as a matter of logical entailment, of mutual implication among defined terms, and the more difficult precision in the control of verbal nuance, the poet's sense of the resonances a word will carry in particular contexts, the associations it will have for a well-stocked mind. To those readers who may have found him dazzlingly eclectic but who cannot seem ever to find him at home, we should say that Santayana, by means of his radical sceptical reduction, drove toward bedrock with an energy hardly matched in the century. His was foundationalism with a difference, the quest for certainty yielding at the end neither the facts demanded by the empiricist nor the truths required by the rationalist nor the synthetic *a priori* concepts of the transcendentalist. They said he must be confused. But in fact his was a demonstration of how deep you have to go if it's really bedrock you're after.

Santayana's "evasiveness" may thus signify no more than his successful evasion of his critics' usual categories. Their accustomed terms and home allegiances cannot be made to fit with his. A paradigm case of such puzzlement was suggested one afternoon by Santayana when he recounted a visit he had had with two Catholic priests. They had come to interrogate him about his views and he had tried to explain himself, he said, but found he could make no headway. In a final effort to encapsulate his position he told them that "were I to state my view in a nutshell it would be this: relativity in knowledge, relativity in morals." They seemed uncomprehending and unsettled by this, he said, and soon left. The truth is that Santayana's is a many-sided assault on a hundred philosophic and cultural conventions, exacting a radical re-thinking of the world. His often declared preference for the traditional ought not to blind us to the quiet revolution which in fact he proposes in our conceptions and terminology. If, as Hilary Putnam remarked in his comments to your society last year, Santayana is a difficult writer, the reason lies partly in that quarter: his readers have not been able to shake free from old assumptions. Of course his own philosophic program, he said, was simply to clarify and make consistent the assumptions of common sense, and I think he did. Yet how very different the world looks, and how many old puzzlements and dogmatisms drop away, when seen in the light of his mature philosophy.

In *Scepticism and Animal Faith* Santayana remarks that "I should be ashamed to countenance opinions which, when not arguing, I did not believe. It would seem to me dishonest and cowardly to militate under other colours than those under which I live." These words at the time of their writing in 1922 really bespoke an intention not yet fully realized. His beliefs still awaited their full expression. Still ahead of him lay the writing of *Realms of Being*, that frame of language and habitation of his spirit which would be the adequate account, "a confession and an image," he said, "of the mind that composed it." We now know on the evidence

of his letters that during the eighteen years in which he slowly, patiently brought his *Realms* into being, he was working also, though intermittently, on his autobiography. And in the time that remains, I would like to look in the direction of both his circumstances and his philosophy in asking why it was that the mature Santayana, the philosopher of "essences" and "spirit" who would discount the merely personal, reverted to the accidental Santayana, the personage and creature of history, as a subject for meditation. Why did he choose to write an autobiography?

*Persons and Places* is, among all his books, different in kind. We might call it, to borrow A.O.J. Cockshut's terminological distinction, a book of memoirs rather than autobiography, for it takes form as a picture gallery, a series of carefully delineated sketches of people and places -- as a detached observer might describe them, and not as they affected the narrator or influenced his life. Yet *Persons and Places* is also autobiography, for it responds in many ways and by design to the question, "How did I become what I am now?" Santayana talks of writers and thinkers who shaped his thought and of the friends who mattered, of his false starts and early infatuations with Greece and England, of his black night of the soul and subsequent metanoia. In all these we may trace the genesis of his preferences and allegiances. In both directions, as description or personal history, as sketchbook or *bildungsroman*, the book steadily registers the old philosopher's delight in telling the truth -- a truth-telling achieved, not through introspection or a sentimental caressing of old emotions, but through a quickened retrospection which distanced the familiar, like that of Proust in his own recovery of lost time.

Early and late it was axiomatic with Santayana that experience-as-she-runs is all transition and tumble. Chance, the accidents of circumstance, the vicissitudes of daily living deliver us resistlessly to a motley succession of images and impressions. To see anything as it truly is, it must be lifted out of that stream of sentience and made to stand still. The image or impression arrested, suspended in consciousness, will then declare itself. Its *quidditas* or whatness will be known; it will shine on all its surfaces; it will be an essence. But this disentanglement of things from the mesh of circumstance in which they appear is not easy. If experience as it simply comes or which is merely endured is to gain its rights in the world-as-idea, one must practice a difficult disengagement. We must, in Santayana's language, arrest the normal forward movement, the anxious purposiveness, of animal intent.

He practiced such detachments all his life, converting the small change of present experience -- perception and conception alike -- into the gold of form. But in writing *Persons and Places* he deliberately invited his past, picked up again, turned over in his hand, experiences stored in a long memory unsifted, unsorted. He had occasion to go rummaging in that old attic in the fall of 1920, and I think it may have been then that he began to sense the possibility that all those faded remnants of his past might be called back and made to yield their natures. That minute

fragment of the realm of essence, his own history, if freed from the vanities that attended the living of it, might be seen now as if the first time, justly, truly.

I have in mind a particular morning, May 3rd, 1920. Perhaps by focussing on this moment in Santayana's life I can recover a few of those particulars on which so much of our sense of anyone's character depends.

In 1920 Europe was again "at peace." Of how precarious that peace was Santayana had a premonitory sense: on the morning of May 3rd, in a letter to a friend written from the Hotel Minerva in Rome, he observed that the war "went so badly, it ended so late, so imperfectly, leaving such a confused prospect, that one hardly seems to feel the immensity of the victory which, after all, it brought; ... but it is not for the better, perhaps; we know what we have escaped, but not what we are in for." The future, he thought, belonged to socialism. The liberal, parliamentary, capitalist age was coming to its end.

Santayana's own future was also uncertain. He had come back to Europe ten months before, after five years in England, mainly at Oxford, during the war. But his love affair with Oxford was by no means over. On the contrary, his leaving England for Paris was solely for the purpose of assisting his old friend and classmate Charles Strong, now a widower and lately laid up with paralysis of the legs. And "I am afraid," Santayana told a friend before leaving England, Strong "has been philosophically rather lonely for the last year." Had it not been for his sense of Strong's need of companionship, he would have preferred, he said, to give up all thought of travel and return to Oxford. It is an instance of the kind of steadfast loyalty to old friends so conspicuous throughout Santayana's life.

Now in May of 1920 Santayana had been alone for three months in Rome, walking its streets again, he said, "in solitude and enchantment." He had already settled into that routine which he was to follow for the rest of his life: a morning spent writing, in bathrobe and pyjamas, lunch with wine and a newspaper, coffee at a sidewalk cafe, a long walk back to his hotel, reading, a late dinner, usually at the restaurant of his hotel, then early to bed. But he had now begun to ask himself, in his 56th year, *where* really he meant to spend the rest of his days. He had written earlier from Paris to his friend Robert Bridges in England that "your letters make me a little homesick for Oxford." Thus was his debate begun, as he looked backward and forward in time, needing to choose a physical *locus standi*, a place to call home. Oxford or Paris or Rome? The quiet pastoral landscape, or city streets with their hum of humanity past and present?

The choice could not be easy for a man of Santayana's stamp. For him places were living presences, alive with suggestion. (One of his critics has charged that the title which he chose for his autobiography gives definite proof that persons were for him on one flat plane with places, were for him *mere* places, nothing more than objects. That critic could not conceive the converse possibility: that places, for the man of imagination in whom the past is alive, might speak eloquently with human

voices.) It is not surprising that in time he should choose Rome, choose a place resonant with man's history, classical and Christian. Wallace Stevens liked to imagine him in the midst of all those voices as he thought of Santayana in his last years, solitary in his room at the Hospice of the Blue Nuns:

The bed, the books, the chair, the moving nuns,  
The candle as it evades the sight, these are  
The sources of happiness in the shape of Rome,  
A shape within the ancient circle of shapes...

.....  
The sounds drift in. The buildings are remembered.  
The life of the city never lets go, nor do you  
Ever want it to. It is part of the life in your room.<sup>1</sup>

Rome would not always be enough: after settling there Santayana often went back to Paris, Spain, Venice, or to Strong at Fiesole. And he returned repeatedly in the summers to Cortina d'Ampezzo. In those looming rock masses of the Dolomites he found, I think, the adequate objective correlative of his sense of nature's power and indifference.

But to return to the morning of May 3rd. I have suggested that at this moment in Santayana's life he was dramatically confronted with the post-war political and social forces which gave every promise of disintegrating the traditions which – by their action and his reactions – had formed him. "Never did I expect," he wrote that day, "such a transformation of Central Europe." He was also at this time beginning to feel the pressure of having to make a choice momentous for his future: where to put down his anchor. Now in the midst of these stock-takings Mrs. Winslow had written from Boston, had told him of the death of Mrs. Beal, mother of his Harvard classmate Boylston Beal, and she had suggested maternally that a note of condolence would be in order. Of course he would do it. In the years since their graduation from Harvard Beal had become a sympathetic friend. And years before, in 1904 and '05, Beal's mother had been a member of Santayana's small travelling party in Crete and Egypt. Thus propelled by circumstance toward recollection of his past, Santayana sat down that morning to reflect, in his letter to Beal, on the sadness of all endings. And he said:

When one looks back even on a happy life, what a terrible dissatisfaction and emptiness one feels! It is not that we have a clear notion of any different course that we should have preferred our own life to have taken, or that of any one else we care for; it is rather the essential finitude, and limitations, and subjections to accidents, that are sad.<sup>2</sup>

The sense of what-might-have-been, the note of regret sounded by these

<sup>1</sup> The excerpt is taken from the Stevens' poem: "To an Old Philosopher in Rome," *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (New York), pp. 508-510.

<sup>2</sup> See the unpublished letter from George Santayana to Boylston Adams Beal, dated May 3, 1920, in the collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

words is not characteristic in Santayana. And on this particular morning the feeling was not to last for long. Writing in turn to Mrs. Winslow, he tells her that he has been thinking of the Boston Latin School and of his undergraduate days: "poor, thin, crude, all of it," he writes, "and yet very pleasant and sunny its triviality and vulgarity." As he thinks of the old days, he rises to a note of quiet celebration of all that has been:

My dear Mrs. Winslow, there is a time coming, or a day beyond all time, when everything will return to us without being dug up; or to put my mysticism differently, when we shall cease to be irrationally concentrated and absorbed in the passing moment, and shall spread ourselves out, justly and veraciously, over the whole of our lives. I am old enough to be almost doing that already; and it is wonderful how much I live in things long past. I can't understand now what I remember so well repeating over and over when I was a boy – that line of Shelley's which says "There is regret, almost remorse, for time long past." He must have been very young when he wrote it, as I was when I liked it: because there is (as I now find) *no* remorse for time long past, even for what may have mortified us or made us ashamed of ourselves when it was happening: there is a pleasant panoramic sense of what it all was, and how it all had to be. Why, if we are not vain or snobbish, need we desire that it should have been different? The better things we missed may yet be enjoyed or attained by someone else somewhere; why isn't that just as good? And there is no regret, either, in the sense of wishing the past to return, or missing it: it is quite real enough as it is, there at its own date and place...<sup>3</sup>

These observations, written at a time of some unsettlement in the life of the society around him and in his own life, allow us to catch Santayana in act, proposing the possibility of extricating essence from mere circumstance, but more particularly here the possibility of redeeming his past in and for present consciousness.

I would like to underscore, by repeating, those remarkable words of his letter, "The better things we missed may yet be enjoyed or attained by some one else somewhere: why isn't that just as good?" They are costly, hard-won words. We are able now to understand through the testimony of his autobiography that behind that quiet observation lay a long personal history, stretching back into the 1890's, back to the time of his metanoia. Driven by circumstance to a settlement of his accounts with despair, Santayana had discovered the accession of power – or of peace – which comes through a renunciation of the will: "You give up everything in the form of claims [he writes in *Persons and Places*]; you receive everything back in the form of a divine presence ... . The truth of life could be seen only in the shadow of death; living and dying were simultaneous and inseparable ... . This transit through darkness brought me quickly back into the light, into the pure starlight that transports without dazzling." He found that renunciation, although it meant love sublimated, meant love still, that it carried him to a closer engagement

<sup>3</sup> See the unpublished letter from George Santayana to Mrs. Frederick Winslow, dated May 3, 1920, in the collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

with reality than those who are deflected from it by the concerns of self are apt to have. Detachment once achieved was paradoxically a reattachment, different in kind from the old and passionate in a new way.

It is ... psychologically not only possible but normal for the passion of love to be self-forgetful... The great passion [the *grande passion* of Stendahl's description] becomes worship. And the *amour gout*, which is more playful, and turns the vital element into laughter and delight, also reaches perfection only when all thought of self, all *amour vanité* drops out of it ... . The passion of love, sublimated, does not become bloodless.... On the contrary, the range of its reactions has been enlarged.<sup>4</sup>

In elaborating his philosophy Santayana insisted tirelessly that to regard the world under the aspect of the essences which it embodies is not to escape from the world but marks a return upon it; insisted that pure intuition does not carry the observer into a ghostly region of "idealities" but discloses to our quickened awareness the indelible reality of the given datum; insisted that whatever part of our world thus starts into life will necessarily be the object of a watching that is impassioned, not cold. So far is it from a selfish indulgence, renunciation exacts a living of our lives "as if not ours/ And others' lives with love, as if our own."

A hundred critics have nonetheless been at Santayana's heels, ready to charge him with a treasonable defection from the ranks of the involved, the committed, the hopeful. Surely there must be in this determination to be a spectator of life -- of the lives of others as well as of one's own -- a nerveless impassivity, an acquiescence born of disappointment, a Spaniard's despairing resignation to fate, a willful or protective distancing of himself from his kind. In these familiar canards one may find the tendentious dogmatism of the politically engaged, or the sympathetic knowingness of the psychological reductionist, or perhaps an echo of the furious Nietzsche in his fulminations against the ascetic ideal.

I am reminded, hearing these voices of moral indignation, of Ezra Pound's impassioned defense of the passionate Henry James. James was, of course, another man accustomed to empathetic leaps in and out of the consciousness of men and women here and there and anywhere, and a man also alleged to be a cold onlooker -- not to say a snobbish aspirant to country-house aristocracy. Where, Pound cried in 1918, *where* in any of James's critics is a word about the passion so conspicuous in his work? -- "the continual passion of this man who, fools said, didn't 'feel'. I have never yet found a man of emotion against whom idiots didn't raise this cry."

But Santayana has never lacked readers who have understood him. His philosophy is too eloquent an expression of certain perennial ways of feeling and thinking for us to imagine that it will go the way of merely fashionable philosophies. In discussing his metanoia, his language clearly conveys his recognition that a change of heart akin to his had been

<sup>4</sup> See page 15 of *My Host the World*, Volume III of *Persons and Places* (New York, 1953).

known to Christian ascetics in all ages of the Christian epoch. He recognized his own stance in the philosophy of the East: there, he thought, one finds the greatest masters of the spiritual life. And of course one of his own great masters was Spinoza, and not far behind, Schopenhauer, with his vision of life as a tragi-comic or comi-tragic arena of contending wills, of vanity at war with vanity, of pride against pride.

"I have realized in old age," Santayana said to me one afternoon, "how much I must have been influenced by Schopenhauer." His observation led me to think of Thomas Mann, whose ardent tribute to Schopenhauer I had read not long before. Mann, too, owed a great debt to the German Platonist. And it was Mann who found in Schopenhauer's philosophy the indispensable vision of the artist. He learned that it is possible, miraculously possible, to cut the world free from will. There, at a distance, it spreads before one as an infinity of essences, each available to contemplation, each pledging to yield itself to the quickened imagination. That, Mann thought, was Schopenhauer's message of possibility, of freedom, for the artist. And Mann gave his life to the representation of life: standing above the creation, above the chaos and motley of pell-mell life, he sought its form -- or rather, its multitudinous possible and enacted forms.

And so of course did Santayana. It was, after all, not the monk's path or the mystic's path or the ascetic's path which Santayana chose for himself, but rather the path of the artist -- who would not forfeit irony, who by representing many things without becoming them (as he once said), would give back to mind its rightful prerogative of dominion over experience, and the freedom from dogma and fixity and belief which inherently it must have.

Walking down a graveled path of the Pincio on the afternoon of my first meeting with Santayana, he ended our small-talk by a sudden turn to philosophy. "I must believe in some things," he said, "your coming to Rome, this path before me. But if I could I would believe nothing at all." I marked the comment with heavy underscoring in my notes that night. Here, at the forefront of his consciousness -- and not, I think, on that day only -- was his poet's sense of the tyranny of fact, the constriction of the imagination consequent on belief. Believe we must -- in the external world, for example, or other selves -- but he thought men sadly oversubscribed in the articles of their belief. He felt how unnecessary was the anxious search for the one right pair of shoes which, he said, his philosophic colleagues seemed bent on finding. His own delight in looking at all the shoes in all the windows was sustained to the end. It was his form of Keats' negative capability -- the refusal to reach irritably

for fact, certitude, support. The mind or spirit was in his view indefeasibly a traveller, and there was always for Santayana a new place yet to be visited. Perhaps even more than in his own time, his example is in our time a neglected possibility, a genuinely radical possibility.

RICHARD C. LYON

*Hampshire College*

## **International Bentham Society**

In the light of the expansion of Bentham studies in recent years, the Bentham Society of University College London has decided to form an International Bentham Society

The aims of the Society are wide. Its objects are to study and advance the knowledge of the life and works of Jeremy Bentham including the historical context and the subsequent development of utilitarianism. It is envisaged that the Society will, amongst other activities, arrange meetings, lectures, seminars, and conferences, and publish their proceedings. The Society should form a focus for utilitarian studies in a wide sense.

Upon receipt of the subscription for the current year, members will receive a copy of the *Bentham Newsletter* and full information on current activities and publications in the field of Bentham studies. Members will also be entitled to purchase, at concessionary prices, volumes of the *Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham* and other publications as arranged by the Society. In due course, the Society hopes to establish a journal of utilitarian studies to replace the *Bentham Newsletter*.

### **Subscriptions**

An individual subscription to the Society will be £10 a year, which will include the annual subscription of £5 for the *Bentham Newsletter*. Corporate membership will be £60 a year. The Society reserves the right to alter these rates at any time should this be necessary.

Subscriptions should be sent to The Secretary, International Bentham Society, Bentham House, Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1H 0EG.

# Santayana's Autobiography and the Development of his Philosophy

## *Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography*

The development of Santayana's life and thought are recounted in his three-book autobiography,<sup>1</sup> but the publishing history of this work is tragic.

I regard this edition of *Persons and Places* as a mutilated victim of war, and dream of a standard edition, which probably I shall never see, in which the original words, the omitted passages, and the marginal comments (not headings, as in the Triton Edition) shall be restored, and the portraits and other illustrations shall be well reproduced. (Santayana to Cory, March 14, 1945)<sup>2</sup>

From composition to publication, few modern textual documents have suffered more than Santayana's autobiography. Intended as a one-volume work to be published posthumously, it was published instead as three individual works. Only the third book was published posthumously in 1953<sup>3</sup> the other two were published in 1944 and 1945 respectively.

The circumstances of the early 1940's caused Santayana, for the moment, to set aside his ambitions for his autobiography. After an unsuccessful attempt to leave Italy for Switzerland, Santayana lived in Rome for the duration of World War II trapped by circumstance and by his age. At the same time, Santayana's friend, Daniel Cory, was stranded in New York without any clear means of support. To assist his friend, Santayana arranged for the royalties of his autobiography, whenever it was published, to be paid directly to Cory. In addition, Santayana's publishers, particularly Scribner's, were eager to issue what would become a Book-of-the-Month Club's best seller, and they urged that the autobiography be published piecemeal rather than as a whole. Furthermore, there was an undercurrent of fear that the manuscript might be destroyed or lost during the war. These circumstances convinced Santayana to permit the publication of his autobiography in three parts and to allow the first two parts to be published before his

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Santayana Society on December 28, 1985, in conjunction with the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division.

<sup>1</sup> *Persons and Places* (Scribner's, 1944), *The Middle Span* (Scribner's, 1945), and *My Host the World* (Scribner's, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished letter to Daniel Cory. Santayana's letters to Daniel Cory are in Butler Library, Columbia University.

<sup>3</sup> Santayana died in 1952.

death.

The typescript for book one was spirited out of Rome and delivered to Scribner's *sub rosa*, and likewise the typescript for book two was privately carried from Rome to the U.S. when official mail and official channels would not permit it to be brought to America.<sup>4</sup> Following these adventures, the fate of the first portions of his autobiography was fully in the hands of his publishers and editors since Santayana could not receive galleys or communication from the U.S. or England. These circumstances contributed to what Santayana termed the "mutilation" of his memoirs. Publishing was difficult and corners had to be cut. Some of Santayana's remarks seemed to his editors, and even to Santayana, too hard or too frank for the times. The publishers' feared lawsuits, and Santayana was concerned that his friends and family might be upset. As a result, editors were charged with "softening" the text as well as deleting material difficult to print (for example, marginal notes) in restrictive times.

On Oct. 14, 1941, Santayana, then nearly eighty years old, found refuge in a nursing clinic in Rome. The war cut him off from the U.S., from his financial resources, and from his publishers. Not until the liberation of Rome did Santayana see a copy of the earliest book of his autobiography. Likewise, he saw the second book only after it was published in 1945. Not being able to read the galleys for any of the publications, he could only chide his publishers and editors for the state of his autobiography, and he did so with his usual ironic wit.<sup>5</sup> But in earnest, he repeatedly expressed his hope for a grander, unexpurgated edition.

Such an edition is forthcoming. Over forty years after the first publication and thirty-four years beyond the death of Santayana, a one-volume critical edition of Santayana's autobiography will soon be published. I will not pause to detail the principles and procedures involved in the work, nor to indicate my appreciation of the persons who

<sup>4</sup> The first full accounting of the conveying of these transcripts from Rome to New York is given in the new critical edition of *Persons and Places*, edited by William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., to be published by MIT Press in the fall, 1986. [All page references to *Persons and Places* are to this new edition.]

<sup>5</sup> Santayana to Cory, March 14, 1945, "I see by your letter of Jan. 29th, that you have been officially debasing my pure and legitimate English to conform with the vernacular . . ." April 8, 1945, Santayana says that Wheelock of Scribner's has promised him "English spelling" in volume two and that "ultimately all three volumes will be bound in one." But that, he says, "is not at all my dream of the final illustrated and completed edition!" "You must manage to have, some day, an edition de luxe, to appease my Shade." To Otto Kyllmann on August 23, 1947, Santayana says, "I wrote these memoirs intending them to be posthumous; when circumstances led me to publishing them, I made some excisions. . . ." [unpublished letter to Otto Kyllmann, housed in the Temple University Library]. And throughout it all his ironic sense of humor had its say: ". . . I counted on dying, so that my indiscretions would all have acquired the impersonal authority of historical documents. I rely on Scribner to issue an edition deluxe eventually, if they think they can make money out of it. My idea had been, on the contrary, to help finance an edition that would have been a work of art." [Unpublished letter in the collection of Mr. Robert Shaw Sturgis.]

have helped make it possible. It would take far too long. But needless to say, I am grateful, and, even more so, I am proud of the work, MIT Press, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and especially of the persons that have made it possible. To some extent, I believe we have appeased the shade of Santayana.

The new edition restores significant passages that have been omitted from all prior publications including lengthy sections on Spinoza, John Russell, Lionel Johnson, and members of Santayana's American family, as well as 644 marginal comments (as Santayana calls them). This material was previously purged for a variety of reasons: Santayana's wish that portions be published only after his death, publishers' sensitivity about Santayana's descriptions of his friend's marital and extramarital relations, printing and production convenience, and a general desire to "soften" some of Santayana's remarks. Restoring these passages renders this the first unexpurgated version of Santayana's autobiography and thereby the first chance for Santayana to speak for himself. And what could be more important for an autobiography than that the author speak his own mind!

One extraordinary unpublished passage is particularly haunting. Imagine Santayana in his late seventies and early eighties composing his autobiography. He relies on his remarkably lucid memory, some miscellaneous notes, and four autobiographical notebooks drafted over several years. He is writing about Spinoza who was his master and model concerning the natural basis of morality, but Santayana questions Spinoza's humane sense of the good. He does not think Spinoza "appreciates all the types of excellence toward which life may be directed."<sup>6</sup> Hoping to discard any ambiguity about his estimation of Spinoza, Santayana writes in his fine, clear hand "... I will take this opportunity, *since I may not have any other*, of clearing my conscience of ambiguity in that respect" [emphasis mine]. But even this opportunity has been denied Santayana. This assessment of Spinoza will see its first light of publication with the new critical edition of Santayana's autobiography. The passage ends as follows:

The saint and the poet are hardly sane or authoritative unless they embody a wide tradition. If they are rebels, disinherited and solitary, the world may admire but cannot follow them. They have studied human nature by looking at the stars.<sup>7</sup>

This and many other passages are restored in *Persons and Places*, Volume One of *The Works of George Santayana*, edited by William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., and being published by MIT Press in the fall 1986. Not only does the edition restore substantive content to the autobiography, but the form of Santayana's writing is also preserved, i.e., his spelling, punctuation, and preferred arrangement of his work.

<sup>6</sup> *Persons and Places*, 235.

<sup>7</sup> *Persons and Places*, 235,236.

Throughout the editing of *Persons and Places* I could not help but reflect on the development of Santayana's philosophy and, in particular, on his own account of his philosophical thought. For Santayana, philosophy is not a methodology, nor a metaphysics, nor an ideology; it is an expression of the values and beliefs inherent and discoverable in living and acting. This perspective is derivative of Santayana's place, time, and ancestry, as well as of his creativity. In some marginal comments excluded from previous publications, Santayana describes three important stages in his thought. I shall use these comments as the basis for discussing the mature thought of Santayana and the manner in which his own life history serves as background and foundation for his reflections. The three stages are: first, his materialism; second, his moral relativism; and third, his sense of integrity or self-definition.<sup>8</sup>

## MATERIALISM

In Chapter XI of *Persons and Places*, "The Church of the Immaculate Conception," Santayana describes the development of his own thought. It is a journey from the idealisms of boyhood and from the intellectual materialism of a traveling student to the complete, materialistic outlook of the adult Santayana. Throughout this chapter he emphasizes the continuity of his life and beliefs, contrasting the seeming disparate tones of his developing thought to the overall unity of his outlook. He writes, "The more I change the more I am the same person."<sup>9</sup>

In a marginal heading he records that his boyhood idealisms were never his genuine beliefs.<sup>10</sup> These idealisms were not expressed in philosophical form, but they were "intensely felt by me to determine the only right or beautiful order possible for the universe. Existence could not be right or beautiful under other conditions."<sup>11</sup>

But those ideal universes in my head did not produce any firm convictions or actual duties. They had nothing to do with the wretched poverty-stricken real world in which I was condemned to live. That the real was rotten and only the imaginary at all interesting seemed to me axiomatic. That was too sweeping; yet allowing for the rash generalisations of youth, it is still what I think. My philosophy has never changed.<sup>12</sup>

Hence he notes, that in spite "of my religious and other day-dreams, I was at bottom a young realist; I knew I was dreaming, and so was awake.

<sup>8</sup> These three steps are described in marginal comments (headings) in the holograph of *Persons and Places*, but they have never been published. They are restored in the critical edition to be published by MIT Press in 1986.

<sup>9</sup> *Persons and Places*, 159.

<sup>10</sup> *Persons and Places*, 166mh.

<sup>11</sup> *Persons and Places*, 166.

<sup>12</sup> *Persons and Places*, 167.

A sure proof of this was that I was never anxious about what those dreams would have involved if they had been true. I never had the least touch of superstition.<sup>13</sup> Santayana cites poems,<sup>14</sup> written when he was fifteen or sixteen, as revealing this early realism, and he quotes from memory one stanza of "At the Church Door" where the realistic sentiment is the same.

By the time he was a traveling student seeing the world in Germany, England, and Spain his "intellectual materialism" was firmly established with little change in his religious affections.<sup>15</sup>

From the boy dreaming awake in the church of the Immaculate Conception, to the travelling student seeing the world in Germany, England, and Spain there had been no great change in sentiment. I was still "at the church door". Yet in belief, in the clarification of my philosophy, I had taken an important step. I no longer wavered between alternative views of the world, to be put on or taken off like alternative plays at the theatre. I now saw that there was only one possible play, the actual history of nature and of mankind, although there might well be ghosts among the characters and soliloquies among the speeches. Religions, all religions, and idealistic philosophies, all idealistic philosophies, were the soliloquies and the ghosts. They might be eloquent and profound. Like Hamlet's soliloquy they might be excellent reflective criticisms of the play as a whole. Nevertheless they were only parts of it, and their value as criticisms lay entirely in their fidelity to the facts, and to the sentiments which those facts aroused in the critic.<sup>16</sup>

The full statement and development of his materialism did not occur until later in his life. It was certainly in place by the time of *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923) but not fully so at the time of *The Life of Reason* (1905).

Within Santayana's fully cultivated materialism, the origins of all events in the world are arbitrary, temporal, and contingent. Matter (by whatever name it is called) is the principle of existence. It is "often untoward, and an occasion of imperfection or conflict in things."<sup>17</sup> Hence, a "sour moralist" may consider it evil, but, according to Santayana, if one takes a wider view "matter would seem a good . . . because it is the principle of existence: it is all things in their potentiality and therefore the condition of all their excellence or possible perfection."<sup>18</sup> Matter is the non discursive, natural foundation for all that is. In itself, it is neither good nor evil but may be perceived as such when viewed from the vested interest of animal life. Matter's nondiscernible, neutral face is converted to a smile or frown by latent animal interests. But "moral values cannot preside over nature."<sup>19</sup> Principled values are

<sup>13</sup> *Persons and Places*, 167.

<sup>14</sup> "To the Moon" and "To the Host," *Persons and Places*, 168.

<sup>15</sup> *Persons and Places*, 169.

<sup>16</sup> *Persons and Places*, 169.

<sup>17</sup> *Realm of Matter*, v.

<sup>18</sup> *Realm of Matter*, v.

the products of natural forces: "The germination, definition, and prevalence of any good must be grounded in nature herself, not in human eloquence."<sup>20</sup>

From the point of view of origins, therefore, the realm of matter is the matrix and the source of everything: it is nature, the sphere of genesis, the universal mother. The truth cannot dictate to us the esteem in which we shall hold it: that is not a question of fact but of preference.<sup>21</sup>

Even prior to the idealisms of boyhood and the intellectual materialism of the traveling student, the force of contingent, material events is evident in the background, birth, and early childhood of George Santayana.<sup>22</sup> The lives of both his parents were based on the contingent patterns associated with the lives of diplomats. His father, Agustín Santayana, was born in 1812. He studied law, even practised for a short time, and then entered the colonial service for posting to the Philippines. He was a remarkable man who, while studying law, served an apprenticeship to an professional painter of the school of Goya. To his credit, he translated four Senecan tragedies into Spanish, wrote an unpublished book about the island of Mindanao, had an extensive library, and made three trips around the world. In 1845 he became the governor of Batang, a small island in the Philippines. He took over the governorship from the recently deceased José Borrás y Bofarull, who was the father of Josefina Borrás, later to become Agustín's wife in 1861 and the mother of Jorgé Agustín Nicolás de Santayana y Borrás (George Santayana) on December 16, 1863.

In 1856, he again met Josefina while traveling on board ship from Manila for Spain. Josefina was then married to George Sturgis, a Boston merchant, and their three surviving children were traveling with them. This particular trip took Agustín to Boston, then to Niagara, then to New York City, and by steamer to England. His last diplomatic post was that of Financial Secretary to the Governor-General of the Philippines, General Pavia, Marqués de Novaliches. He retired early due to the ill effects of the tropics on his health. In 1861, he returned to Spain and there, once again, met Josefina Borrás Sturgis, now widowed; and they married.

George Santayana's mother's history is no less filled with contingent forces. Though Spanish, she was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1826 or 1828. She spent her girlhood in Virginia (USA) and Barcelona (Spain), and a portion of her womanhood in the Philippines. Her father left

<sup>19</sup> *Realm of Matter*, 134.

<sup>20</sup> *Realm of Matter*, 131.

<sup>21</sup> *Realm of Matter*, xi.

<sup>22</sup> There is no comprehensive biography of Santayana currently available. However, in the spring of 1987 John McCormick will publish his biography of Santayana, tentatively titled, *At Its Own Date and Place: A Life of George Santayana*, and I am grateful to him for sending me a copy of his manuscript prior to the book publication.

Spain for Scotland because of his political views. When they moved to the U.S., he eventually became the American Consul at Barcelona, Spain. Later, when the fashion of the Spanish government turned more in his direction, he was appointed to a lucrative post in the Philippines. The voyage from Cadiz to Manila around the Cape of Good Hope lasted six months, through one of the worst storms the captain had ever experienced. On arriving in the Philippines, her father discovered there had been a change in the political climate back home and that the high-paying position in the Philippines was no longer available to him; but a smaller post, the Governor of Batang, was his.

When her father died, Josefina remained on the island, establishing a moderately profitable export business, until Agustín Santayana arrived as the new Governor. For whatever reasons, she left for Manila, met George Sturgis, married, conceived five children, two of which died in early childhood, and then her first husband died. He was young when he died, his business was going badly, and his widow was once again stranded and this time with several children. A brother of her husband contributed a sum of money<sup>23</sup> to help her, and she moved to Boston.

In 1861, she made a trip to Madrid, met Agustín again -- he was close to fifty years of age and she was probably thirty-five. George Santayana was born in 1863. The family moved from Madrid to Avila between 1864-66. Josefina seemed determined to raise the Sturgis children in Boston, and, finally, in 1869 she left with her two daughters, the one surviving son from the first marriage having left earlier. From 1869 until 1872 Agustín and George lived together in Avila, and then in 1872 they traveled to Boston where George was left with his mother. The separation of mother and father was permanent. In 1888 Agustín wrote to Josefina:

When we were married I felt as if it were written that I should be reunited with you, yielding to the force of destiny. Strange marriage, this of ours! So you say, and so it is in fact. I love you very much, and you too have cared for me, yet we do not live together.<sup>24</sup>

The contingent factors of his background, birth, and childhood form a backdrop for Santayana's mature materialism. Here are forces beyond one's reach, shaping one's destiny, and at the same time providing a chance for a reasonable and good life.

### *THE FORMS OF THE GOOD ARE DIVERSE*

After materialism, two other important steps remained to be taken before Santayana's philosophy was "wholly clarified and complete."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Ten thousand dollars.

<sup>24</sup> *Persons and Places*, 9.

Santayana describes these steps as the two insights "that the forms of the good are divergent, and that each is definite and final."<sup>26</sup> The first step enabled Santayana to overcome "moral and ideal provinciality, and to see that every form of life had its own perfection, which it was stupid and cruel to condemn for differing from some other form, by chance one's own."<sup>27</sup>

Santayana's moral relativism is consistent with his materialism. It is the neutral perspective of the naturalistic observer who, because he does not have the same commitments, can observe the behavior of others and value it for what it is, not because it coincides with his own interests.<sup>28</sup> No doubt this insight was influenced by the diplomatic careers and lifestyles of his parents, their distant and respectful marriage, the experiences of the young Santayana in Miss Welchman's Kindergarten on Chestnutt Street and in the Boston Latin School, the wanderings and deliberations of the traveling student, the personal and professional experiences of the young Harvard professor, and the success and travels of the mature, distinguished writer. It is clear that being Spanish, having a Catholic background, and perhaps being an "unconscious homosexual"<sup>29</sup> set him apart in Protestant America. He nevertheless participated and valued the American experience<sup>30</sup> though he could never fully identify with it. Later, he chose Hermes the Interpreter as his god,<sup>31</sup> paralleling his mature insight as interpreter of views and values. Hermes the interpreter is at home in the world of discourse -- unraveling, decoding, and interpreting one perspective for another. Likewise, Santayana approaches philosophy as reflective discourse, understanding and interpreting many perspectives in his own dialect.

Materialism provides the naturalistic basis for morality while the chaotic realm of essence provides unlimited forms for imagination and interpretation. Santayana's naturalism projects a neutral, objective, view towards the moralities, the vested interests, of animals. His realm of essence, likewise, is neutral to the realization or status of any possible

<sup>25</sup> *Persons and Places*, 170.

<sup>26</sup> *Persons and Places*, 170.

<sup>27</sup> *Persons and Places*, 170.

<sup>28</sup> This type of perspective is comprehensively discussed in Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), but, unfortunately, there is not a single reference to Santayana.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Cory relates that Santayana, in 1929 after a discussion of A.E. Housman's poetry and homosexuality, remarked that "I think I must have been that way in my Harvard days -- although I was unconscious of it at the time." Daniel Cory, *Santayana: The Later Years: A Portrait with Letters* (New York: Braziller, 1963), 40.

<sup>30</sup> Much has been made of Santayana the outsider, but the early life of Santayana, particularly at Harvard, does not coincide with the portrayal of Santayana as standing apart. His life at Harvard was quite active, his name appears on the roster of at least twenty clubs or associations, and the records of Harvard establish his active participation in the undergraduate life.

<sup>31</sup> "Hermes the Interpreter," *Soliloquies in England* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), 259.

form.

Any special system has alternatives, and must tremble for its frontiers; whereas the realm of essence, in its perfect catholicity, is placid and safe and the same whatever may happen in earth or heaven.<sup>52</sup>

Santayana's insight that the forms of the good are divergent reveals a chaotic realm of possible goods not logically or morally ordered by animal interests or talents. However, an absolutely neutral perspective is not possible. Perspectives derive from some living being in a particular place and time with latent interests originating from their physiology and physical environment. Santayana's naturalism is balanced by a polarity between the neutral, objective understanding of behavior and activity on the one hand and the committed, vested interest of the living being on the other hand. One may recognize that every form of the good has its own perfection, and one may respect that perfection, but "the right of alien natures to pursue their proper aims can never abolish our right to pursue ours."<sup>53</sup> Hence, Santayana's second insight: each form of the good is definite and final.

### *EACH FORM OF THE GOOD IS DEFINITE AND FINAL*

Santayana's philosophy rests on his materialism and on his humane and sympathetic appreciation for the excellence of each life. But from the perspective of autobiography, Santayana's clear notion of self-knowledge, in the sense of the Greeks, is his most distinguishing mark. For Santayana, "integrity or self-definition is and remains first and fundamental in morals . . ."<sup>54</sup> Like his naturalism and his realm of essence, this insight establishes his thought in a wide tradition, and it marks his career and his personal life with distinction. Decided elements of his self-definition are found in his retirement from Harvard and his life as a roving scholar.

Desiring to be a full-time writer, he, like his father, retired early (at age forty-nine), but unlike his father he retired from a most successful career. The year prior to his retirement he had presented at least six lectures at a variety of universities including Berkeley, Wisconsin, Columbia, and Williams. His books were selling well and his publishers were asking for more. Two major universities were courting him. When he first announced his plans for retirement, the new President of Harvard asked that he not resign, and arrangements were made for Santayana to rotate his teaching yearly between Harvard and the Sorbonne. With everything going in his direction for a professional

<sup>52</sup> *Realms of Being* (one volume edition) (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 82.

<sup>53</sup> *Persons and Places*, 170.

<sup>54</sup> *Persons and Places*, 170.

academic career, Santayana knew that his well-being did not lie in the academic theater of America. Against all entreaties, he retired in 1912 having received a sum of money<sup>35</sup> from mother's estate that helped to support his travels and residency in Europe and England. He was later offered two positions at Harvard, one a distinguished chair, and even that he refused. When he became a celebrated figure appearing on the front of *Time* in 1936, his age limited his travels. His final residency in Rome was firmly established when he was not permitted to leave the country at the start of World War II. Though he had been drafting notes for his memoirs for some time, it was only then that he began in earnest the reflections on his life, or rather, on the persons and places significant in his life.

Santayana died of cancer on September 26, 1952, and is buried in the Camp Verano cemetery in Rome. The Spanish Consulate at Rome provided the *Paneon de la Obra Pia española* as a suitable burial ground for the lifelong Spanish subject. Wallace Stevens's "To an Old Philosopher in Rome" contains the following lines:

*Total grandeur of a total edifice,  
Chosen by an inquisitor of structures  
For himself. He stops upon this threshold,  
As if the design of all his words takes form  
And frame from thinking and is realized.*

## *Epilogue*

Santayana's mature reflections and insights regarding the stages of his development are no doubt false in that they emanate from his mature perspective, but they are also decidedly true for the same reason. Perhaps one can characterize the whole of Santayana's life in the manner he depicted his early boyhood.

... a passing music of ideas, a dramatic vision, a theme for dialectical insight and laughter; and to decipher that theme, that vision, and that music was my only possible life.<sup>36</sup>

HERMAN J. SAATKAMP, JR.

*Texas A&M University*

<sup>35</sup> Ten thousand dollars - the sum his mother had received from the brother of her first husband.

<sup>36</sup> *Persons and Places*, 169.

## Six Aspects of Santayana's Philosophy

With the forthcoming publication, at long last, of Santayana's complete works, lovers of his writings are looking for some revival of interest in this American philosopher of Spanish descent. A surge of renewed attention and research has accompanied the Dewey Edition; perhaps there will arise a similar interest in Santayana, who also was very widely appreciated at one time, only to disappear almost completely from the philosophical scene later.

Writing in 1974, Timothy Sprigge argued for the relevance of Santayana's philosophy to contemporary debate, and listed six aspects of his work of special interest: his treatment of scepticism, of essences, of ontology, of materialism and epiphenomenalism, of spirituality, and of ethical relativity.<sup>1</sup> It is revealing to review Sprigge's list in the light of more recent speculations; on some issues, philosophical debate has shifted in the direction of positions earlier embraced by Santayana. His treatment of some issues would surely be attractive to many contemporary philosophers. Nevertheless there remain aspects of his philosophical temper and technique which would be found much less attractive. I shall look at these six issues, beginning with brief remarks about the last two.

Santayana's increasing focus, in his later years, on philosophical detachment and on a spirituality partly derived from Indian writings, has alienated some of his readers, and no doubt will continue to do so. For a spirited attack upon the interpretation put upon his writings by these readers, see the above paper by Richard Lyon. It must be recognized that, in spite of the considerable attention he accorded to spirituality, he insisted that it can only be given a relative importance by a naturalist.

Similarly frustrating can be the tendency, which steadily developed after publication of *The Life of Reason*, to avoid taking any particular moral position in his philosophical writings. He did not hide his own preferences, but came more and more to regard these preferences as biases legitimate for himself, but unsuited perhaps for others and hence for philosophical advocacy. Here again readers may find excessive the detachment of his later writings.

In spite of this reluctance to advocate his own political and moral positions, it seems certain that his reputation as a humanist philosopher will grow. His mastery of this area cannot go unnoticed at a time when the interest of philosophers in literature and the arts is reviving. In a previous number of this *Bulletin*, Irving Singer characterizes humanist philosophy as "philosophy that addresses questions about the nature and

<sup>1</sup> See "Concluding Remarks," Chapter XII of Timothy L. S. Sprigge, *Santayana, An Examination of His Philosophy*, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974). Subsequent page references will be to this book.

quality of human experience, about problems of living a good life, of creating or discovering values and expressing them in action as well as through works of art." Santayana's contribution to humanist philosophy, as Singer notes, is "most outstanding, and, I think, superior to that of any other American philosopher."<sup>2</sup>

Setting aside the humanist side of Santayana's writings, and turning to the first four points raised by Sprigge, we ask whether or not Santayana's contribution to these more technical questions is likely to be recognized. Here there must be more doubts.

In no area has current philosophical doctrine moved in a direction more congenial to Santayana's thought than in the modern-day study of scepticism, the attack upon empiricism and reductionist dogma, and the critique of foundationalism. Sprigge wrote: "Santayana's treatment of scepticism, and of what would now be called reductionism, carries a lesson which philosophers have still not learnt" (218). In the intervening years, the faults of reductionism have been widely argued. Of course, these developments are not traceable to Santayana's influence; 'animal faith' has not become an important catch-phrase. Still, a philosopher who picks up *Scepticism and Animal Faith* will surely be struck by the contemporary appeal of many of its doctrines. There can be, Santayana says, no privileged representations of the world, to which we might look for confirmations of theory and for a neutral setting in which to settle epistemological questions. Our perceptions are given to us through original mental terms which are in no sense copies of external realities. Moreover the given cannot be called knowledge in the absence of a prior faith in objects of which they are signs.

There is found in Santayana an ever present dichotomy - on the one hand, a world perhaps differing from anything we can envision, and on the other hand our various representations of that world, that of theory, of perception, and so on. In such a setting, there is little problem about the fact - a puzzle to many - that no representations are privileged. His strong realism, his acceptance of a cosmos existing independently of any representation or description, eliminates any difficulties related to the absence of a privileged mode of representation. According to his doctrine, our most elaborate physical theories are at bottom little better as literal representations of the material reality than our perception of obviously secondary qualities, however much they may be superior in keeping track of material changes; they too are metaphorical and poetic. Founded on his basic realism, this doctrine offers an explanation of the instability of physical theory, the most fundamental of whose concepts are likely to be overthrown at some later time because they are symbolic and non-literal rather than precisely representational. Thus there lies here the beginnings of an answer to serious puzzles in the philosophy of science.

There are obstacles to the acceptance of this viewpoint. The strong

<sup>2</sup> See "Second Toast," on page 28 of *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*, Number 2, Fall 1984.

realism he embraces cannot be justified by reason, he says, something which would be repugnant to many philosophers. Moreover the entire discussion is not in terms of language and what can be said, but rather in terms of what is, and this again runs against current practices. A more serious obstacle, however, would be his introduction into philosophical discourse of such a vaguely defined term as 'independently existing world.' A philosopher of science wishing to pursue the answers begun by Santayana to the puzzles would characteristically begin with an attempt to make more precise the notion of the independently existing world. Unfortunately this move quickly destroys the plausibility of the putative answer; the philosophical elaboration of the vague notion generates a theory, a piece of science or of philosophy, and passes to the other side of Santayana's dichotomy. For the answer to be at all plausible, the notion must be retained in its vague form of a latent world, determinate but unknown, and kept in opposition to all descriptive accounts of it. He is explicit about the need for our terms to refer in this vague fashion, and aware that his approach is anathema to the empiricist, who prefers to consider only that which is well defined by its immediacy. To a large extent, the imprecision annoying to some of his readers is consciously adopted and required by his theory. Hence what was above described as the beginnings of an answer must be taken to be the complete answer, for it does not permit much elaboration.

This is a powerful naturalistic vision, and one embraced by many scientists: a refractory world whose changes we can record with much precision, but without ever being sure that our theories posit its real constituents, so that a keen awareness is required of the perils of confusing the reality with any one of the descriptions. There is no reason in principle why this vision cannot become a part of philosophy, even though at present it is likely to be regarded as too hazy to meet the usual standards of philosophical rigour. Many philosophers are willing to consider a reality quite different from any concept we have of it, but they are apt to be uncomfortable about such a vaguely defined entity, and to call for more precise definition. Some philosophers - Kripke is one - believe that certain situations admit no wholly correct theoretical discussion. Even these are likely to prefer, however, to assess in turn the good and bad points of several precise theories, without perhaps taking any one of them very seriously, as a fruitful approach to a problem. Santayana also questions the usefulness of precise theories in some circumstances, but adopts the more radical response of conceding that much discourse is imprecise without being incorrect.

Santayana's account of knowledge is thoroughly sceptical in the sense that he renounces altogether the literal accuracy of our articulated knowledge of the world. Nonetheless he considers the symbolic knowledge we do have to be reliable, and to have a satisfactory naturalistic foundation in animal faith. In developing a brand of scepticism which is compatible with strong naturalism, Santayana appeals to a doctrine of essences, the second feature noted by Sprigge. With so

much discussion of essence in today's journals, one finds a second aspect of contemporary speculation which draws a little closer to his views. The mere employment of the term 'essence' has marked a considerable shift in emphasis. However his concept differs in important respects from the notion of essence which has recently emerged in the philosophy of language. To see this, it is enough to note that Santayana concludes from his essences that no truths are necessary.

Essences serve for Santayana some of the same purposes served for Frege by sense, except that essences are tied, not to linguistic terms, but to being and to intuition. Frege wanted the sense of linguistic terms to be divorced from subjective mental events, and Santayana similarly sees essence as entirely mind independent. In both instances ontological problems arise as to what these are, if they are not mental terms. In Santayana's case, essences are assigned to one of his four realms of being. Difficulties with essence, then, will reflect more sweeping questions about Santayana's radical treatment of ontology.

About Santayana's treatment of ontology, Sprigge comments:

Santayana's attempt to chart the relations between his four realms of being, and his characterization of each realm, is a major contribution to the seemingly abstruse, but in truth widely relevant, discipline of ontology. The relations of particular to universal, the contrast between internal and external relations, the status of past and future, the relation of things in themselves to phenomena, and the 'inner' nature of the former, are matters of abiding interest arising in ever fresh connections as human knowledge advances. Taken all in all, Santayana's attack upon these problems (though he would hardly have expressed it thus) is one of the most sustained and serious undertaken in this century, and, in English, Whitehead's is the only comparable contribution (219).

Discussion of these issues, usually classified as 'metaphysical,' has increased dramatically in the years since Sprigge's comments. Ontology is much discussed too, but here the enrichment of subject matter has been rather less; to a large extent ontological questions are thought to lead merely to yes-or-no answers about whether or not some object exists, where 'exists' is taken to be univocal. Santayana's treatment of ontology is set at both a broader and a more fundamental level; as Sprigge suggests in the above passage, it leads to a more unified and balanced approach to the metaphysical questions. His stated intention is to choose for his ontological realms categories of common sense which are deeply imbedded in human thought. Whether or not they do conform to common sense,<sup>3</sup> the four realms of being can be tied closely to his analysis of the ills he finds in Western philosophy; each of the four contributes to his proposed solution. Not much concerned with the academic disputes of his day, he concentrated rather on the excesses

<sup>3</sup> Santayana somewhat qualifies his own success in demarcating common sense categories, especially with the realm of spirit. See page 832 of George Santayana, *Realms of Being*. One-volume edition, (Scribner's, New York, 1942).

which he found within the entire Western tradition, in comparison with ancient or Oriental philosophy. In his eyes, the abuses of the West stem from an overemphasis on psychology and a subjectivist bias; and I think one can profitably look at each of the four realms as a putative category of thought which serves to curtail this bias.

The introduction of substance, and the assertion that it is to be found in a realm of matter, are obviously meant to nullify the habit of idealism and empiricism to question or to replace the common sense realm of material existences. Another good example of the abuses which distressed him about modern philosophy was the pragmatist treatment of truth: his realm of truth is totally non-psychological, so that truth is independent of usefulness, and as well is not tied to anything linguistic. As we noted above, essences are neutral entities: they are meant to permit a Platonistic treatment of knowledge with neither the metaphysical abuse of Platonic forms, nor the psychological abuse of Lockean ideas. In like fashion, the realm of spirit can be seen in terms of his effort to avoid a split in the animal psyche which would permit action to have two distinct sources. In this realm is placed all consciousness, but none of the mental machinery usually associated with 'mental events.' Since the dynamics of all events must fall into the realm of matter, the moments of spirit, as felt experiences, must be incidental effects of changes in the material psyche. The epiphenomenalism which results will no doubt continue to be a serious obstacle to the general acceptance of his philosophy.

Santayana was somewhat puzzled by the hostility elicited by his doctrine of essences; to him, it was merely a theory stating the obvious. He could see that nominalist thinkers must be doubtful about anything so cut off in its being from experience; nevertheless he thought that such a step might readily be taken. Abstract sense data were accepted in his day by empiricists, as were propositions. On the subject of materialism as he defined it, however, he was much less sanguine. Only a few people in each generation, he concluded, are likely to embrace such a philosophy:

Systematic materialism is one of the philosophies of old age. It is a conviction that may overtake a few shrewd and speculative cynics, who have long observed their own irrationality and that of the world, and have divined its cause; by such men materialism may be embraced without reserve, in all its rigour and pungency.<sup>4</sup>

Systematic materialism stands in contrast to a much more popular "materialism of youth," which represents a faith in science and perhaps material progress, which is impatient of the mental and feels free to deny it, and which through its impatience is apt to admit forces other than the material. "But the materialism of youth is part of a simple faith in sense and in science; it is not exclusive; it admits the co-operation of many other forces - divine, magical, formal, or vital - if appearances anywhere

<sup>4</sup> See page 162 of George Santayana, *Character and Opinion in the United States*, (Scribner's, New York, 1920, reprinted by Norton, New York, 1967).

seem to manifest them."<sup>5</sup> The more severe materialist must deny these influences, and must in particular reject the influence on human action of concepts and ideas, insofar as they are not material. From this follows a type of epiphenomenalism.

Even though his realms are defined so as to make a form of epiphenomenalism viable or even inevitable, this doctrine remains a major obstacle to any general acceptance of Santayana's account of mind. In his eyes, the obstacle is traceable to the psychological abuses of Western philosophy, which magnifies into a dogma the natural tendency of humans to hypostasize their ideas. This point can be brought out by noting the close rapport between his treatments of knowledge and of mind. In fact, I believe that the account of mind follows from a careful application of the epistemological principles.

Our talk of space, time, matter, and so on, is talk of something real and external, according to his epistemology. However, our representation and understanding of these, the essences and theories we appeal to in considering them, are human constructions on an entirely different plane. The ever present danger is that we hypostasize our own ideas, and ignore this difference. Philosophy requires of us that we make the distinction between the actual things in flux, and our static representations of them.

So it must remain when the actual facts are mental, events. Today's materialist asks us to identify the mental event with something physical, and Santayana would agree that, since it is an event, it must be physical. That something purely physical can display rationality and intentionality is less astonishing to one who does not take the world to be entirely characterized by accepted physical theories. Our felt experience of the event, however, is not the event itself, but is a manifestation of that event in an entirely different plane. The danger, even more acute in regard to mind, is that we hypostasize our felt experience, and think that our plans and initiatives spring from some non-material source. He thus admits that the psyche carries out processes of ratiocination which have considerable effects; however we must make a distinction between these processes and the thoughts which arise during the process. According to Santayana this position will only be attractive to a few introspective and sceptical souls.

ANGUS KERR-LAWSON

*University of Waterloo*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* page 162.

## ***ANNOUNCEMENT***

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

### ***SANTAYANA SOCIETY***

1986  
ANNUAL MEETING

Speaker: ***Irving Singer***  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Santayana's Philosophy of Love

6:00 p.m. 29 December  
Jefferson Room  
Sheraton-Boston Hotel

## Reminiscences

I spent my sabbatical year in 1950-51 in Italy, chiefly at Naples, doing the research for an article on the Neapolitan "Academy of the Investigators."

During the fall and early winter *Classic American Philosophers* was going through the press. I received a few copies in January, and on the 20th I inscribed a copy to Santayana and mailed it to him. By that time he was living in the convent of the Blue Nuns in Rome. Along with my wife Ruth, I visited him there in April. His assistant Daniel Cory was there. I fell into conversation with Cory, and Ruth with Santayana. After we had left, she reported that Santayana seemed puzzled that we should be spending so much of our Italian year in Naples. He asked her if we had heard the story about Naples and the Neapolitans. She replied that we had not, and he told her it was to the effect that the creation of the world reached such a climax in Vesuvius, the bay of Naples, the isle of Capri, and the site of Naples itself, that the apostle Peter said: "Now, Lord, I think you are making a great mistake. Nobody who grows up in this area is going to have any interest in going to heaven." After a moment's hesitation, God replied: "I think I can take care of that." And he created the Neapolitans.

I was appointed George Santayana Fellow at Harvard University in 1960, for the purpose of assisting my researches toward a biography of Charles S. Peirce.

It is a matter of some interest that Santayana had been invited to undertake the Peirce edition that later appeared under the title *Collected Papers*.

The copy of *Classic American Philosophers* that I gave Santayana is now in the rare book room of the library of the University of Waterloo. It is inscribed on the flyleaf:

To George Santayana  
from a quarter-century admirer  
and enjoyer of his work

Max H. Fisch  
January 20, 1951.

MAX H. FISCH

*Indiana University*  
*Purdue University at Indianapolis*

The editors are eager to publish the personal reminiscences of those who were acquainted with George Santayana.

# The Santayana Edition

*Persons and Places*, volume one of *The Works of George Santayana*, will be published by the end of 1986. Already several leading periodicals have asked for page proofs in order to review the book, and there is serious consideration of the volume becoming an option on one of the national subscription lists. The Committee on Scholarly Editions (Modern Language Association of America) has awarded its seal of "An Approved Edition" for the volume. This seal highlights the editorial rigor associated with the volume, indicating that the editorial principles and practices correspond with the high standards of modern textual scholarship. As the first volume of our edition, *Persons and Places* not only manifests the need for editing the full literary corpus of Santayana, but it also presents a text that distinctly required critical editorial work. I estimate there are approximately seventy to eighty typed pages of text that has not seen the light of publication until now, and this material represents substantive information for Santayana scholarship.

William G. Holzberger and I express our gratitude to all persons who helped in editing *Persons and Places*. No individual labor would have sufficed to produce this work, and the consideration and assistance provided us has been gracious and remarkable.

The achievement of volume one is the result of an uncommon effort over a long period of time, and it is an accomplishment against extraordinary odds. No other volume of the edition is likely to pose as many editorial and publication difficulties. The next two volumes are fully underway and on schedule for publication. *The Sense of Beauty* should be published in late 1987 with its introduction by Arthur Danto (Columbia University), and *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* is scheduled for publication in 1988 with an introduction by Joel Porte (Harvard University).

Because of the pressing need for a critical edition of *The Last Puritan*, volume four will be Santayana's novel. The General Editor is working with a producer in New York on the prospects of a PBS production of the novel that could coincide with the publication of the critical edition. In addition, we expect to publish the letters of Santayana. Only a few hundred have ever been published, and William G. Holzberger has now collected over 2400. The volume of letters will provide significant material for Santayana scholarship and, because of its size, will be published in three or four books. (Interestingly, the James edition is now projecting eight books for their edition of William James' letters.)

One additional note. Jaakko Hintikka and I are proposing a conference on "Editing Philosophers" to be held in the spring or fall of 1987. Sessions on the following topics will be a part of the conference: (1) critical discussions of current and recent editing projects involving philosophical texts; (2) identification of major problems in editing

philosophical texts, including legal and ethical problems; (3) relevance of standards in other disciplines to editing in philosophy, particularly the MLA standards for critical editions; (4) proposals for standards for editing philosophical texts; (5) relationships between philosophical archives and editorial activities. Individuals from the following editions have been invited to attend: Bentham, Brentano, Descartes, Dewey, Godel, Heidegger, Hume, Husserl, Peirce, Reid, Russell, Santayana, Spinoza, Wittgenstein. For further information on this conference contact me at the Department of Philosophy, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843-4237.

HERMAN J. SAATKAMP, JR.



Courtesy of the Harvard University Archives

*The Definitive  
Santayana*

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and Places**

*George Santayana*

*edited by William G. Holzberger  
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*Introduction by Richard C. Lyon*

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