

OVERHEARD IN SEVILLE

BULLETIN
OF THE
SANTAYANA
SOCIETY



NUMBER 38
2020

Cover design by Jonathan Wotka. The original cover of *Overheard in Seville*, used in its first thirty-seven issues, showed an enlargement of the figure taken from the emblem on the cover the Triton Edition of Santayana's works. The Triton Edition was named after the Triton Fountain (Fontana del Tritone) by Bernini, which is in the piazza outside the Bristol Hotel, Santayana's residence for many years in Rome. The current design restores the emblem to its approximate original size in relation to the cover, embedding it in a yellow background that recalls the gold of the emblem on Constable version of the Triton Edition. The dark blue color, the color that Santayana preferred, also comes close to the blue background of Constable version.



BULLETIN OF THE GEORGE SANTAYANA SOCIETY

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(page numbers link to articles)



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The George Santayana Society

2021

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Society takes place in an online session hosted by IUPUI in Indianapolis.

Chair

Richard M Rubin

George Santayana Society

Speaker

Nayeli Riano

Georgetown University

Winner of the 2020 Angus Kerr-Lawson Prize

The Psyche as Aesthetic Arbiter of Politics

Commentator

Jessica Wahman

Emory University

Speaker

David Dilworth

SUNY—Stony Brook

The Epicurean Roots of Santayana's Philosophy

13:00-15:00 US EST, Friday, 29 January 2021

The George Santayana Society

2021

ONLINE MEETING

The Society holds a session on the topic

Santayana and Emerson

This special seminar takes place in an online session hosted
by IUPUI in Indianapolis.

Chair

Richard M Rubin

George Santayana Society

Speaker

Ricardo Miguel-Alfonso

Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha

Emerson, Santayana, and the Natural History of Intellect

Commentator

Phillip L. Beard

Auburn University

Commentator

David Dilworth

SUNY—Stony Brook

13:00-15:00 US EDT, Sunday, 19 September 2021

Two Online Reading Groups

The Life of Reason and Wallace Stevens

In the fall of 2020, two discussion groups began holding regular meetings on Zoom. The first group (the LR Group) proposed by Eric Sapp, an attorney, plans to read all five volumes of *The Life of Reason* over the course of two years. The second group (the Stevens Group) proposed by Jerry Griswold, an emeritus professor in literature at San Diego State University, is dedicated to pursuing the possibility that Wallace Stevens used *Scepticism and Animal Faith* while writing his last book of poems *The Rock*. Both groups meet monthly in two sessions: Friday at 11 am US Eastern Time and Sunday at 1 pm US Eastern Time.

Schedule for the Stevens Group,
first half of 2021

Friday 11:00 ET	Month	Sunday 13:00 ET
8	January	10
5	February	7
5	March	7
9	April	11
7	May	9
4	June	6
9	July	11

Schedule for the LR Group,
first half of 2021

Friday 11:00 ET	Month	Sunday 13:00 ET
22	January	24
19	February	21
19	March	21
16	April	18
21	May	23
18	June	20

Announcements about the meetings are sent out approximately one week before with the connection information.

Each LR Group session (or pair of sessions) is introduced by a different group participant who typically prepares a set of questions or selected quotations to start the discussion. The Friday and Sunday sessions are separate. There is no presumed continuity from the Friday to the Sunday session.

The Stevens Group is moderated by Jerry Griswold, who usually prepares an essay posted online beforehand that points out the connections he has found between chapters in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and poems in *The Rock*. Sunday sessions typically continue from where Friday sessions leave off. The link to Griswold's posts and other records of and for the meetings are at

<https://j-griswold.medium.com/stevens-santayana-aaldef54325d>.

Editor's Notes

This thirty-eighth issue of *Overheard in Seville* has a new cover. This is the first time the cover has changed since the original issue in 1983. We have preserved the emblem from the original cover, but restored it to the size and approximate color it had when it appeared on the cover of the Triton Edition of Santayana's works.

The year 2020 began normally. The Annual Meeting of the George Santayana Society took place in Philadelphia in January. Katarzyna Krempleska flew in from Poland to her give talk. She was followed by Lydia Amir, who had recently returned from Israel. The two articles derived from their presentations appear in this issue. Krempleska probes the interplay among culture, humanism, and individuals in Santayana's political thought. Amir focuses her overriding interest in the relationship between humor and philosophy on four figures: Democritus, Montaigne, Nietzsche, and Santayana.

Laughter comes to fore in Matthew Flamm's refreshing account of Santayana's appreciation of the oeuvre of Anita Loos. Charles Padrón gives us his thoughts about Santayana's early play *Philosophers at Court*. David Dilworth concludes his three-part essay on Santayana and modernism with a defense of Goethe against Santayana's criticism. John Lachs is the subject of Chris Skowroński's article on Lachs's reading of Santayana as a Stoic pragmatist.

John Lachs has a contribution of his own. We had planned another Santayana session at the Pacific APA meeting in San Francisco, but the COVID-19 virus made that impossible. Other possibilities opened up, however, and in May we offered a well-attended Zoom session in conjunction with the Berlin Practical Philosophy International Forum e.V., on the topic "Harmony and Well-Being: Reflections about the Pandemic in Light of George Santayana's Philosophy." That session can be viewed at <http://berlinphilosophyforum.org/santayana-video-session-harmony/>. Near the end of the session, Professor Lachs offered some concluding remarks. A transcript of those remarks is included in this issue.

Angus Kerr-Lawson, one of the founding editors of this Bulletin, left an incomplete manuscript of a book on Santayana when he died in 2011. In this issue, we present the first selection from this book to be published.

For the fourth year now, we have biographical sketches of Santayana 75, 100, and 125 years ago. The story of 1895 makes much use of the recently discovered letters to Charles A. Loeser, one of Santayana's first college friends. Daniel Pinkas, who located them at Harvard, introduces photos and texts of two of these letters. In his account of 1920, Charles Padrón reflects on some of the nuances of Santayana's politics that came into view that year. The chronicle of 1945 covers four aspects of Santayana's life: finances, gifts, visitors, and his great-nephew Bob Sturgis. The viewpoint of the visiting soldiers comes to life in a poem by Edith Henrich.

This issue also includes the regular Bibliographic Checklist Update compiled by Daniel Moreno with additional contributions from Guido Tamponi.

The volunteer efforts of many people go into making an issue of the *Bulletin*. At the end of 2020, Hector Galván became Associate Editor. His help in the preparation of this issue has been immense. Thanks go to the authors for their painstaking labors in producing their contributions and their patience throughout the revision process and to the editorial board for their many hours of editing and proofreading.

RICHARD MARC RUBIN

Editor and President, George Santayana Society

The New Cover

The new design began as a project for a design student, Jonathan Wotka. He spent some time talking to Herman Saatkamp, who helped select the original cover of *Overheard in Seville*. From these discussions, it became apparent that preserving an image of Triton, the son of the Greek sea god Poseidon, would be important.

Santayana lived for many years in the Hotel Bristol in Rome on the Piazza Barberini. In the Piazza is the Bernini fountain the Fontana del Tritone. From 1936 to 1940, Santayana's publishers, Scribner's in New York and Constable in London, issued a deluxe multivolume edition of his works called the Triton Edition. The Constable version volumes had dark blue covers with a gold-embossed emblem in the center containing a Triton figure. Because Santayana preferred the Constable version, this Triton figure became the basis for the original cover of *Overheard in Seville*.

The first design Wotka offered was attractive enough to take the prospect of changing the cover seriously,¹ but several members of the Editorial Board raised objections: the initial effort strayed too far from what Santayana might have appreciated and it was not entirely suitable for a philosophy journal. Editorial Board member Daniel Pinkas raised some more. Pinkas began his career as an artist and spent a good part of his academic career teaching at the Haute École d'Art et de Design (HEAD-University of Art and Design) in Geneva. Pinkas commented that the Triton image in the early proposal had been taken from a Greek vase in the archaic style, and that it diverged from the Renaissance design of the original Triton emblem without adding anything.

A series of meetings with Wotka and Pinkas followed. From these discussions, Wotka produced several alternative designs, which we distributed to the Editorial Board.² The responses were divided between those who favored a design based on a new large drawing of the Triton Fountain and those who preferred the more conservative designs that used the emblem from the Triton Edition. The latter group predominated. Several suggestions came from Board, and we had four variations on the proposed designs printed. The Executive Committee (the Society officers) in conjunction with Pinkas and Wotka approved the final design that makes its appearance on the cover of this issue.

RMR

¹ Wotka sent his first design proposals in April 2020 and then several revised versions through July. To see samples of these early proposed cover designs, go to http://georgesantayanasociety.org/CoverRedesign/OiS_Proposed_Covers_2020-07-30.pdf.

² The samples sent to the board are at http://georgesantayanasociety.org/CoverRedesign/OiS_Proposed_Covers_2020-09-30.pdf.

Santayana 75, 100, and 125 Years Ago

Santayana in 1895: A Philosopher in the Making

Santayana's seventh year of teaching at Harvard began in the fall of 1895. Nevertheless, his career as a professor was not firmly established. His rank was that of an instructor. That fall he wrote to his friend Charles Augustus Strong in Chicago:

There seems to be a crisis coming on in my relations with Harvard, and I hardly expect to remain here after this year. I shall not unless they make me an assistant professor. (LGS 10 November 1895).

The year before, Santayana had published his first book, *Sonnets and Other Verses*. Some friends advised him that if he wanted to continue teaching in the philosophy department, he needed to publish something philosophical. For a couple of years Santayana had been teaching a course in aesthetics. He wrote up his lecture notes (some of which he reconstructed from notes taken by a student³) and by 1895 had prepared the manuscript of *The Sense of Beauty*. In May, he wrote a letter of inquiry to Macmillan and in June sent the publisher the manuscript just as he was preparing to leave for what had become his customary summer trip to Europe.

His summer trip that year to Europe proved to be an eye-opener. It was then that Santayana visited Rome, where he would end up living for twenty-five years, for the first time. Two years earlier, in July 1893, he had written to his college friend Charles Loeser from Ávila, where he had gone to see his ailing father. Santayana and Loeser had exchanged long letters several years before this and he hoped they might get together in August. He had hoped to go to Italy where Loeser lived, but the need to visit his father made his time for other traveling short. In August he would go to the Pyrenees and then on to Paris. He would sail to New York from England in early September. He urged Loeser: "Write me if it is possible for you to come to the Pyrenees or to Paris when I am there" (Loeser letters 9 July 1893). Loeser wrote with various proposals, but they did not get together that summer. On 12 August, Santayana wrote to Loeser, "My father died yesterday." "Such an event," he explained, "produced a vacuum and breathlessness which it takes time to get over."

Two years later, in June of 1895 Santayana was eagerly anticipating his return to Europe. He wrote to a friend: "For the present my cry is Avila, Avila!" (LGS to William Cameron Forbes, 18 June 1895). He reached Ávila by July, this time staying with his sister Susana, who had married a Spanish widower with six children the year before their father died. He wrote to Loeser: "This year, however, I feel free to go a little more afield from my usual path. I can leave Avila when I choose, as I am here only as my sister's guest." He hoped to meet Loeser in France, Switzerland, or even Northern Italy.

Perhaps you would teach me to see some of the things you have been studying all these years. I myself have seen and learned nothing. The moral solitude of the American Cambridge is something well-nigh absolute. Berenson and

³ See LGS to Horatius Bonar Hastings, 14 April 1893.

Fullerton, to be sure, have honoured me this year with visits —and Russell, too, last summer —but this has only made me feel the need of a little society all the more. Conviviality I get plenty of, but I mean intellectual sympathy. You see I am in a bad way, as they say. The truth is, I really want very much to see you. (Loeser letters 13 July 1895)

Within a week Loeser wrote back to say he was in Stuttgart and proposed that they meet in Maloja, Switzerland, for a tour of the Swiss Alps and the Upper Engadine Valley, and afterwards go down to Lombardy in Northern Italy, where Milan is located. Santayana wrote back with a proposed itinerary: “slowly by Pau, Marseilles, and Genoa.” He thought he could get to Maloja, but could not tell from his map how to get further than Como, north of Milan. He suggested they might meet in Milan and spend a day or two before going on to Switzerland. “That would please me very much,” he wrote, “for you must remember I have never been in Italy, and this is all virgin ground to me.” Yet Santayana’s time and money were limited and he would forego the Italian visit if necessary: “But what I most wish is to see you; I can travel in Italy some other year” (Loeser letters 20 July 1895)

Loeser sent him a telegram a few days later saying they could meet in Milan.⁴ There they met and Italy became the focus of the trip. From Santayana’s first year as an undergraduate, Loeser had been his guide to the arts—“my first Maecenas,” he called him. (Gaius Maecenas was an advisor to Augustus Caesar who became known for his support of young poets and whose name has come to stand for a patron of the arts.) Loeser showed Santayana beautiful books and pictures, which provided “fresh subject-matter and fresh information for my starved aestheticism—starved sensuously and not supported by much reading” (PP 216). Loeser took him to the theatre, French operetta, and grand opera, performances Santayana could not have afforded on his own. Loeser thus became a true Maecenas. Santayana trusted Loeser’s judgment more than that of his other early friend, Bernard Berenson, who later became famous as an art historian and critic.

I felt more secure under the sign of Loeser. He had perhaps more illusions, but also a more German simplicity and devotion to his subject. I felt that he loved the Italian renaissance and was not, as it were, merely displaying it. (PP 216)

Their trip in August 1895 became the occasion for Santayana’s first visit to Rome and Venice. Santayana wrote that his preference for those cities over Florence “may be partly due to a first impression gained under his auspices. His taste was selective. He dwelt on a few things, with much knowledge, and did not confuse or fatigue the mind” (PP 219). Santayana remembered his first arrival into the city that would one day become his home:

We reached Rome rather late at night. It had been raining, and the wet streets and puddles reflected the lights fantastically. Loeser had a hobby that architecture is best seen and admired at night. He proposed that we should walk to our hotel. He had chosen the *Russie*, where as he said only Russian Grand Dukes stayed, so that it was just the place for him and for me. We walked by the *Quattro Fontane* and the *Piazza di Spagna*—a long walk: but I doubt that

⁴ See p. 38.

the first loud accents that I heard on arriving at the hotel were those of a Russian Grand Duchess. She said simply: "Oh, my!" (PP 219)

Santayana attended carefully to what amounted to lessons from Loeser. He may not have been forthcoming at the time, but in January of the next year he wrote:

All you said to me about the things we saw last summer has made a more lasting mark in my brain than my way of listening may have led you to expect. (Loeser letters 25 January 1896)

Later, when Santayana stayed regularly at Strong's villa in Fiesole, near Florence where Loeser lived, he wondered why Loeser never bothered to visit and only once took Santayana to his house.

This made me doubt whether Loeser had ever had any affection for me, such as I had for him, and whether it was only *faute de mieux*, as a last resort in too much solitude, that in earlier years he had been so friendly. (PP 218)

Nevertheless, Santayana's lasting feeling toward Loeser was one of gratitude:

Loeser in any case had shown me Italy, initiated me into Italian ways, present and past, and made my life there in later years much richer than it would have been otherwise. Let him be thanked without any qualifications. (PP 218)

It is worth remarking that the revelatory advance in artistic sensibility that arose during his trip to Italy with Loeser came after Santayana had already submitted his book on aesthetics for publication.

It is not clear whether Santayana and Loeser made it to the Swiss Alps that summer, but Santayana did make it to the French Alps. At the end of August, he wrote Loeser from the Hotel Beau-Rivage In Geneva: "I have been tramping and climbing so much since I left you that I have hardly had the right moment for a letter" (Loeser letters 31 August 1895). The tramping and climbing were with a younger friend, Guy Murchie, who graduated from Harvard that year. During the summer Murchie was studying French in a villa at La Terrace par le Touvet near Grenoble, where Santayana came to visit him after he left Loeser. Murchie reported, with noticeable understatement, that they "started from La Terrace on a short walking trip (150 miles)" (LGS to Guy Murchie, 3 September 1895, footnote). First, they visited the Monastery of the Grande Chartreuse. A Catholic English friend of Loeser's, Algar Thorold, who had once studied to be a Carthusian monk (the same order as the monastery), wrote an introduction to the monks at the Grande Chartreuse, but it arrived after Santayana and Murchie had departed. Santayana reflected on this missed chance in his letter from Geneva to Loeser:

I was very sorry, but nevertheless got some impression of the convent beside that of the mere tourist, and felt that perhaps, if I had talked to the monks I might have come upon some conflict of ideas which would have marred the aesthetic impressiveness of the devotion. (Loeser letters 31 August 1895).

After the Grande Chartreuse, they hiked north to Chamonix, spending a night on Le Brévent, a mountain that provided a view of Mont Blanc. Santayana is not known as a nature writer. In *The Sense of Beauty*, most of his examples are from literature. He did write about the beauty of the stars at some length, but mentions only one heavenly body (Sirius) and no constellations, planets, or other regularly

identifiable structures of the night sky. In *Soliloquies in England*, when he wrote about skylarks,⁵ his concern was to distinguish the lark taken as a symbol for high aspiration in literature from the actual lives led by the “poor larks” (SE 107) who, even if they rise to sing at heaven’s gate, “must hurry home again to earth if they would live” (SE 115). Santayana did not report the details of larks’ natural lives, as a nature writer would have. Instead, he fluently mimicked the literary manner of taking them to suggest transcendent thoughts:

Their song is like the gurgling of little rills of water, perpetual through its delicate variations, and throbbing with a changed volume at every change in the breeze. Their rapture seems to us seraphic . . . (SE 109)

An early version of this elevating sentiment is found in a sonnet Santayana wrote shortly after the night on Le Brévent (see page 13). He mailed it to Guy Murchie from London on 3 September (in a letter that also said he would be spending some time with Frank Russell near Oxford before embarking from London to New York). There is an obvious romanticism in the poet’s urging the “dweller in the valley” to “Look up and teach thy noble heart to cease/ From endless labour” by imagining a place “far from all that dies,/ . . . Where larger spirits swim the liquid zone/ And other spaces stretch to other skies.”

Santayana did not wholly identify with the emotions of his own poem. What probably happened is that, having taken in the breathtaking sight from the mountain, he acknowledged the uplifting thoughts such vistas could give rise to and penned them into verse. His letter to Murchie concludes: “The end of this sounds as if it had been inspired by Mrs Louise Chandler Moulton. But it is written. Let it go.” (Moulton was a popular Boston writer of the day who wrote inspirational poems that often found redemption in painful experiences.⁶) A somewhat wittier version of the ideas in his sonnet can be found in Santayana’s letter to Loeser from Geneva, written a few days earlier:

The scene at dusk was truly impressive in its desolation.⁷ There is something about the landscape of the upper summits, when it can be detached from its vulgar pedestal, that seems unearthly, and rather what one might expect to see in some other planet, or in that other life of which you possess, like the Harvard Laboratory, the scientific disproof. (Loeser letters 31 August 1895)

Santayana’s irony is evident because he shared Loeser’s disbelief in an afterlife but did not think it possible to show scientifically that there is none.

In contrast to the aspirational sonnet and the ironic letter, Santayana wrote a letter to Guy Murchie at the end of the year that exhibits genuine and sensitive appreciation of the intricacies and contrasts found in nature as it is. He had gone with three friends to Naushon Island (near Martha’s Vineyard) and sent this description:

The weather is crisp clear and bracing, the water in all directions sparkling and blue, the woods ankle-deep in dead leaves, the crows caw away, the deer peep now and then from behind the bushes, and the sheep nibble what green

⁵ In two essays: “Skylarks” and “At Heaven’s Gate.”

⁶ Some examples might be found at <https://www.poetrynook.com/poet/louise-chandler-moulton>.

⁷ In the holograph: “delosation.” Other misspellings in letters have not been changed.

grass they can still find among the moss and stubble. Just now a number of very philosophical kine are gazing at me through the windows. It is a lovely island; the harbour, beyond which one sees Wood's Hole, is like those landscapes, all little hills and sheets of water, that the old masters like to put behind their Madonnas. I was here once before in winter and discovered how much more beautiful nature is then than in summer, at least to me. There is more variety of colour; all these browns, russets, yellows, and purples are blended in the subtlest and most interesting ways; there is an expression of sincerity, as it were, about the naked landscape that appeals to me immensely. There is more truth in this than in the season when every thing is mascarading in green. The articulation of the branches is also plainer now, and they are seldom really bare. At the entrance of the avenue to this house there are two elms which may someday grow to be like those we admired, as you may remember, in front of the Lawrence's house at Groton. They are as yet not very big; but I wish I could paint them as they looked yesterday. (LGS 1 December 1895).

One thing ties together Santayana's summer adventures with the manuscript he was circulating among publishers: the connection between sex and beauty. The summer had been filled with new excursions into art and nature in the company of companions he was happy to see. In 1929 when he was sixty-five, Santayana told Daniel Cory that he "must have been" a homosexual "in my Harvard days—although I was unconscious of it at the time" (Cory 40). We have no direct evidence that he ever consummated the physical side of that disposition with anyone. Yet, in 1924, he wrote reflectively to his old college friend Henry Ward Abbot that the sexual drive had afforded him "great fun":

Love has never made me long unhappy, nor sexual impulse uncomfortable: on the contrary in the comparatively manageable form in which they have visited me, they have been great fun, because they have given me an interest in people and (by a natural extension of emotion) in things, places, and stories, such as religion, which otherwise would have failed me altogether; because in itself, apart from the golden light of diffused erotic feeling falling upon it, the world I have been condemned to live in most of my life would have been simply deadly. (LGS 16 January 1924)

Moreover, it is clear from the text of *The Sense of Beauty* that he was alive to sexual passion at the time he wrote the book. Put that together with his writing to Loeser "You see I am in a bad way . . . I really want very much to see you," with his excitement to go hiking with Murchie, with his rapid sending of the sonnet that emerged from their stay on the mountain, and with his many thoughtful letters to his young male friends—just thinking of items from 1895 alone. One gets the impression of a thirty-one-year-old poet on his way to becoming a philosopher whose passions were in high gear and, although their derivation from a desire for physical intimacy with other men may have been "unconscious," he gave us explicit cause to speculate along those lines in his then unpublished manuscript. Some excerpts from *The Sense of Beauty*:

If any one were desirous to produce a being with a great susceptibility to beauty, he could not invent an instrument better designed for that object than

sex. . . . Sex endows the individual with a dumb and powerful instinct, which carries his body and soul continually towards another (SB 41)

What more could be needed to suffuse the world with the deepest meaning and beauty? The attention is fixed upon a well-defined object, and all the effects it produces in the mind are easily regarded as powers or qualities of that object. But these effects are here powerful and profound. The soul is stirred to its depths. Its hidden treasures are brought to the surface of consciousness. The imagination and the heart awake for the first time. All these new values crystallise about the objects then offered to the mind. If the fancy is occupied by the image of a single person, whose qualities have had the power of precipitating this revolution, all the values gather about that one image. The object becomes perfect, and we are said to be in love. If the stimulus does not appear as a definite image, the values evoked are dispersed over the world, and we are said to have become lovers of nature, and to have discovered the beauty and meaning of things. (SB 41)

Sex is not the only object of sexual passion. When love lacks its specific object, when it does not yet understand itself, or has been sacrificed to some other interest, we see the stifled fire bursting out in various directions. One is religious devotion, another is zealous philanthropy, a third is the fondling of pet animals, but not the least fortunate is the love of nature, and of art; for nature also is often a second mistress that consoles us for the loss of a first. Passion then overflows and visibly floods those neighbouring regions which it had always secretly watered. For the same nervous organisation which sex involves, with its necessarily wide branchings and associations in the brain, must be partially stimulated by other objects than its specific or ultimate one; especially in man, who, unlike some of the lower animals, has not his instincts clearly distinct and intermittent, but always partially active, and never active in isolation. We may say, then, that for man all nature is a secondary object of sexual passion, and that to this fact the beauty of nature is largely due. (SB 42)

These lines could not have been written by someone indifferent to sexual attraction. The idea that sexual passion underlies intellectual sympathy, love of nature, and love of art has not won universal acceptance, yet it is clear that Santayana believed it to be true. His attractions in the summer of 1895 very well may not have been explicitly physical,⁸ but rather the “diffused erotic feeling” he wrote about to Abbot. No matter what outer form they took, the thoughts expressed in those lines from *The Sense of Beauty* were surely swirling somewhere in his psyche as he tramped through the French countryside with Guy Murchie, or when with Charles

⁸ His description of Loeser in *Persons and Places* is ambiguous as to whether Santayana found him physically attractive:

He was not good-looking, although he had a neat figure, of middle height, and nice hands: but his eyes were dead, his complexion muddy, and his features pinched, though not especially Jewish. On the other hand, he was extremely well-spoken, and there was nothing about him in bad taste. To me he was always an agreeable companion, and if our friendship never became intimate, this was due rather to a certain defensive reserve in him than to any withdrawal on my part. (PP 217)

Loeser—for the first time, at night, and with lights reflecting off the wet pavement—he crossed the Via del Tritone in Rome.

Long-lasting as the events of the summer would eventually prove to be, in the fall when Santayana returned to Harvard, their charm momentarily faded. Macmillan rejected *The Sense of Beauty* in late September.⁹ After that, he sent the book to Houghton Mifflin with no better luck.¹⁰ As 1895 ended, Santayana had no hope of getting his book published. In November when he wrote to Strong about the impending “crisis” in his relations with Harvard, he said of the summer: “It was interesting, but not all I should have wished in the way of a change of life.” For that change he would look elsewhere:

My plan is to go to London for a year, and see what will turn up after that. The change of intellectual surroundings would do me a lot of good. (LGS 10 November 1895)

At the start of the summer of 1895 Santayana’s cry was “Avila, Avila!” As the year approached its end, the thought that carried him into 1896 was “England, England!”

RICHARD MARC RUBIN

Le Brévent

O dweller in the valley, lift thine eyes
To where, above the drift of cloud, the stone
Endures in silence, and to God alone
Upturns its furrowed visage, and is wise.
There yet is being, far from all that dies,
And beauty, where no mortal maketh moan,
Where larger spirits swim the liquid zone,
And other spaces stretch to other skies.
Only a little way above the plain
Is snow eternal; round the mountains’ knees
Hovers the fury of the wind and rain.
Look up, and teach thy noble heart to cease
From endless labour. There is perfect peace
Only a little way above thy pain.

GEORGE SANTAYANA 1895

This is the version of the poem in Santayana’s letter to Guy Murchie (LGS 3 September 1895). He later published it under the title “Mont Brévent” with the phrase “other skies” changed to “calmer skies.”

⁹ See LGS to Macmillan and Co., 3 October 1895.

¹⁰ See Loeser letters 26 January 1896: “My book has been refused by Macmillan and Houghton Mifflin (to whom I was persuaded to send it next) and they both give me little hope of its publication by anyone, except at my own expense. This I can’t undertake at present, as my future is uncertain” See also PP 393.

Santayana in 1920—Places and Books

Just as 1919 ended with Santayana comfortably nestled in Fiesole at Charles Strong's villa Le Balze (the Cliffs), in the Arno Valley twelve kilometers northeast from the historical center of Florence, with views of the Cathedral of Florence (Il Duomo—the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore, Brunelleschi's crowning achievement) at hand all along the southern flank of the villa, so did 1920 begin.¹¹

Reflecting in the warmth of the sun that bathed Florence and its environs one January day (the 10th), he wrote to his long-standing friend and ex-classmate Benjamin Fuller:

I am writing in an open loggia, quite warm, and squinting at the paper on which Apollo is pouring all his days and dazzling me even in reflexion—and at the moment when I was planning to start for Rome, and spend three months there in solitude and enchantment When Rome becomes too hot, I expect to return to Paris, and to leave Spain for next winter. I miss England, but don't mean to go back there until I go for good, taking my goods and chattels from Paris, and settling down, probably in Oxford, for the rest of my days. (LGS 10 January 1920)

How so removed from what eventually came to be, in terms of where he would spend the rest of his life! Santayana then goes on to write that he should see the publication of three new books before the end of the year.¹²

By 21 January Santayana was in Rome, just as he had written to Fuller. He wrote to Strong, back in Fiesole at Le Balze:

I went yesterday to get my *permesso di soggiorno*,¹³ about which there was no difficulty; and then walked about the Capitoline, visited the cafés, dined at the San Carlo, and lunched at a little Neapolitan restaurant that I remembered near the Fontana di Trevi. Today, in bright sunshine I have been to St. Peter's and to the Pincio, where I found people sitting in chairs as in Summer; but there was no music and I was without a coat, so that I didn't stop. . . . The attitude of people in Rome seems cheerful enough; apparently they do not apprehend serious consequences. The papers I read are also optimistic, but I am not sure how much they are to be trusted.¹⁴ (LGS 21 January 1920)

¹¹ Should one want to read a short, informative, well-written history of this villa that played a large part in Santayana's own life, and the point-of-encounter it held in his relationship with Charles Augustus Strong, please see Sandra Reeve's piece "Georgetown's Villa," *Georgetown Magazine* (May-June), 1980.

¹² These are: *Little Essays, Character and Opinion in the United States*, and *Soliloquies in England*. The first two were indeed published in 1920. The latter was first published in 1922.

¹³ The *permesso di soggiorno*, a residency permit, or visa.

¹⁴ The "serious consequences" had to refer to social disruption and unrest. 1919 and 1920 came to be known as the "Red Years" ("*Bienno Rosso*"), during which industrial strikes and armed seizures of factories by communists, socialist, and anarcho-syndicalists were the norm. In 1919 there were 1663 industrial strikes, and in 1920, 1881. These primarily were in the industrial north, in Turin and Milan. Yet there were also rural strikes in the countryside, carried out by peasants and farm laborers.

By 2 February he could write that “I am happy here, and all goes well, including work” (LGS to Charles A Strong)¹⁵

Two critical facets of Santayana’s existence, his everyday life with its rhythms and preferences, and also his general frame of mind, his intellectual and psychic orientation towards the world, were solidified, had become ingrained as it were, by the beginning of 1920: the geographical center of gravity of Rome as his primary residence, and an aloof, almost impenetrable insularity of mind. The former is evident in that looking back historically, there was not one single year in which Santayana was not, at least for a spell, in Rome (from 1920 to 1952, for a total of the thirty-three years, and only in 1923 was he away from Rome more than he was present in Rome, and this being in France, in Nice and Paris), and the latter being a personal proclivity towards a Pyrrhonian *ataraxia*, an enveloping presence of comprehensive equanimity, that could not be undermined, that colored his everyday approach to the world.

This equanimity is captured in a letter of 8 February to Mary Potter Bush (wife of Wendell T. Bush, co-founder at Columbia University in 1904 of *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* (which became the *Journal of Philosophy* in 1923). The following words, out of the entire *œuvre* of Santayana, reveal the post-1920 Santayana, and probably could, in equal measure, be applied to Santayana since his undergraduate student days, even though he was socially involved in university activities. I have not come across statements from Santayana so *un-democratic*, not *anti-democratic*, and so aloof from real-world, practical affairs. Even anything smacking of international cooperation between independent nation-states was, for Santayana, superfluous and misguided, or as he describes it “nugatory” (LGS to Mary Potter Bush, 8 February 1920). One can relate to the personal *ataraxia*, but the somewhat haughty indifference to a world that had just emerged from a drawn-out episode of collective, senseless savagery—an “orgy of carnage,” as the American diplomat and historian George F. Kennan has called it (Kennan 17)—can seem somewhat callous and indurate. Not even a month into its formal creation, Santayana had labeled the League of Nations a “failure”:

As to the state of the world, moral and political, I live so much out of it that perhaps I don’t feel, as much as you and Kallen do, the tragedy of the times. The war *did* distress me, especially for two reasons: that I thought the Germans would win, and that I suffered at the thought of so much suffering, waste, insecurity, and perversity let loose again among peoples whom we had grown to think of as friendly, and harmless. The fiasco of the peace, the revolution in Russia, the failure of the league of nations, communism, pacifism, etc. most know how to enlist and create private, natural interests on their side (as Christianity or Protestantism did, for instance) of they cannot subsist for one moment (LGS to Mary Potter Bush, 8 February 1920).

What “fiasco” and what “failure” is Santayana referring to? Failure in its attempt to secure some kind of peace—but it was not as yet in place for over a month? And

¹⁵ Apart from “here” meaning Rome in general, specifically it meant the Grand Hôtel de la Minerve, a former aristocratic palace dating back to 1620, and 200 meters from the Pantheon.

one could also easily add fascism and anarchism to Santayana's isms, but what would that serve?

I am not sure, but maybe just a general unease and frustration with the active state of Europe and the civilized world as he saw it, emerging from roughly sixty months of isolated existence, for the most part in the verdant hills of Oxfordshire, rambling on long walks, and meditating in his watery world of clouds and precipitation, in his "cloud castles" and "cross-lights"¹⁶

On 23 April he wrote to Strong, after having sent off the corrections for *Character and Opinion in the United States* that "the book has not made that much progress. However, that he had "been working a good deal lately, but in somewhat scattered directions" (LGS). That the "book" was *Scepticism and Animal Faith* is confirmed in a letter of 3 May to Boylston Adams Beal.¹⁷ And it is at this moment, in May 1920 that Santayana betrays his uncertainty as to where he would like to pass the remainder of his life, in what surroundings in order to think and write. Let us take stock here for a moment: Santayana was fifty-six years old, an age at which most people have settled into working habits and a geographical setting in which to those habits are played out. It is easy to think that after fifty-nine months (July 1914-June 1919) in a country under war-time conditions and personal liberties restricted, that Santayana, though not with negative feelings, left England to return to the Continent, where he was born, was a citizen of one of its countries (Spain) and probably would never return to England to live. But no! England still held its lure and charms for him. He loved the university life there and retained splendid memories (Oxford and Cambridge), had many good friends there, and could easily have found a home as a distinguished don to spend the rest of a life writing and teaching. In the same letter to Beal he writes: "I shall probably be in Paris all summer, and next winter in Spain. After that, my expectation is to return to England and settle down, doubtless at Oxford, for the rest of my days" (LGS 3 May 1920). For the rest of his days! Imagine his biography had that occurred!

June, July, August, and September were months spent in Paris at Strong's Avenue de l'Observatoire apartment. Paris had become his "head-quarters," as he called it in September in a letter to the Yale professor of English, William Lyon Phelps (LGS 8 September 1920). And though I mentioned previously that Rome and Italy became post-1920 his *geographical* center of gravity, mentally he was not yet committed to that, and we know this from historical hindsight. What I think we can claim, though, with a relative sense of certainty, is that he was looking for that anchor, both physical and psychological, of some setting to finally come to arrest at and think of as his terminus—this would happen with Rome in time. As he wrote to Phelps,

But I doubt now, whether I shall ever cross the Atlantic again. I have my head-quarters here and go away at intervals. Last winter I was in Italy, now I go to

¹⁶ Chapter titles in *Soliloquies in England* (1922).

¹⁷ The confirming passage in the letter is:

Before very long, too, I hope to make a book out of the Soliloquies in England. This, with the more substantial work I have in the background (The Realms of Being) is, as you may imagine, quite enough to keep my mind employed" (LGS to Boylston Adams Beal, 3 May 1920).

Spain, and I was in England throughout the war. All places, where there is an arm-chair within and something human to see without, are much the same, and I lead the same life everywhere. (LGS 8 September 1920)

And off to Spain he was, arriving in Ávila in the first week in October. He even considered on arrival that he could stay in Spain until the summer of 1921 (which he almost did, staying in Spain until early March 1921), so at-home did he feel. Curiously, despite the warm and rejuvenating familial atmosphere in Ávila, he was soon in Toledo, that city “ancient, most picturesque, with a river like the Thames at Oxford, except that in places it runs through a wild gorge overlooked by ruinous castles and spanned by beautiful, romantic bridges” (LGS To Charles A Strong, 10 December 1920). In this letter to Strong from which this description is taken, he shares year-end reflections and gives us an insightful sketch of what was on his mind. First of all, though his initial contentment in being back in Spain was apparently authentic, he shares with Strong two points about his country of birth and nationality: he obviously found the familial atmosphere somewhat stifling for his creativity, and that he found the actual task of getting around Spain (traveling, trains) too taxing and inconvenient. He writes: “I am glad I came to Spain, I want to stay on now that I am here, but secretly—though of course I don’t say this to my family—hardly expect to come back. . . . Travelling, at least in Spain and to Spain, is a great nuisance, and I want to do as little of it as possible” (Ibid.). But most importantly, in this same letter, Santayana betrays what he as a thinker is looking for as a place in which to write his *mature* philosophy:

I have *something* on Realms of Being: but until the Soliloquies are in shape I can’t actually lay out that other book, begin at the beginning, and revise and arrange the whole for publication. That work requires a different atmosphere from that of travel; I must feel that I need *never move*; and I am hoping that in Paris, in April, I may have that feeling” (Ibid.).

Paris would not provide him that grace. That would come about only with his embracing Rome as his intellectual and spiritual *fulcrum* that did not sway—the “Eternal City.” We can picture Santayana walking around the city of Toledo, both along the outer steep cobbled streets that allowed vistas of the Tagus river, and the internal winding ones, packed deep and dense in the center of city, and ending the year here, at his “good modern hotel, expensive but comfortable, in which I am the only permanent guest” (Ibid.). This is where he was when 1920 ended. By 3 January 1921 he had taken the train back to Madrid.

CHARLES PADRÓN

Santayana in 1945—Year of Recovery

In 1945, Santayana continued to live in the hospital of the Blue Nuns. It was a year that saw the publication of *The Middle Span*, the second volume of his autobiography *Persons and Places*, and the completion of the manuscript of *The Idea of the Christ in the Gospels*, the book he had written while the war had shut off communication with the United States and England.¹⁸ It was a year of post-war readjustment as normal life gradually resumed. It was a year of continuing visitors, renewed correspondence, and packages received from abroad. Four things give us a glimpse of the life he then lived: his financial concerns; the food, tea, and other gifts he received from American benefactors; the visits from young Americans; and his quest for news about one of those young men, his great-nephew Bob Sturgis. Another visit from an American soldier is imagined, described in a poem by an American woman that arrived in Santayana's mail in the middle of the year.

For the most part, I leave it to the reader to discover how these four things reveal the various ways his philosophy and character shaped his approach to life. But, let me suggest some at the outset. The financial matters show the frustration of a philosophic mind with the artificial intricacies of legal minutiae. The pleasure he took in having tea with Sister Angela (and sometimes the Mother Superior) indicates both his delight in sensory indulgence and his determination to find something agreeable in a difficult situation—to let the world be his host even under sparse conditions. His sympathetic reaction to the poem about the soldier discloses his appreciation for independence of thought and for how people of different temperament and background might find moments of harmony and congruence. His urge for news about Bob Sturgis and his joy in finally hearing from him reveal the depth of Santayana's feelings and, even though he liked to say he dwelt in the past, his enthusiastic interest in his young relative's future.

Money trouble—the mysteries of capitalism

Nineteen forty-four ended with the sudden death of Santayana's nephew and financial manager, George Sturgis. During that year when letters took two months to be delivered and were often lost, Santayana struggled to convince Sturgis that he really did mean for all the royalties from the American sales of his autobiography to go to his assistant Daniel Cory. Santayana thought that the trouble with persuading Sturgis was that he was one of Santayana's two heirs (the other being Sturgis's sister Josephine Bidwell). With Sturgis out of the picture, Santayana hoped that his new financial managers, whoever they might be, would at least not be relatives who

¹⁸ The high success of the first volume of *Person and Places* and the more modest success of *The Middle Span* encouraged his publisher Scribner's to seek more material. He suggested two early plays, *Philosophers at Court* and *The Marriage of Venus*. John Wheelock of Scribner's was eager to get them, but *The Marriage of Venus* needed revision, and, as they had an "ultra-pagan and somewhat licentious" air (LGS to Wheelock, 22 March 1946, and to Cory, 9 December 1945), Santayana was chary about publishing them too soon after *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*. The project he was most eager to work on was *Dominations and Powers*, the work on political philosophy he had begun twenty-five years earlier, but it still had years to go.

would see Santayana's gift to a non-family member as diminishing their inheritance. Nevertheless, the resolution did not come quickly, nor even by the end of 1945.

Sturgis had named, with Santayana's approval, Francis H Appleton, Jr to succeed him as the attorney to manage Santayana's property. By March, Appleton had written recommending that Santayana turn over all record keeping and the handling of his financial affairs to the Trust Department of Appleton's firm, the Old Colony Trust Company, so as to take advantage of "their investment knowledge" (LGS to Raymond Bidwell, 10 March 1945). In April Appleton mailed him a power of attorney form to be returned to "Mr. T. P. Salmon, Trust Officer, account #4.4450". Santayana recounted this in a letter to Raymond Bidwell, the husband of his niece Josephine, and added:

It sounds very systematic, regimented, and official to a person like me who never has had anything to do with business, lawyers, or government. But the organisation of liberty is a grand thing, a little like a steam-roller. I am willing to be rolled, if enough to live on is squeezed into me in the process. I am content that it should be only in philosophy that, as the Upanishads put it, I wander alone like the rhinoceros. (LGS 9 May 1945)

Santayana's financial concerns were three: paying back the Little Company of Mary (the Blue Nuns) for feeding and sheltering him while Italy was at war with the United States, continuing an allowance that his half-brother Robert Sturgis (George Sturgis's father) had set up for an old family friend Mercedes Ruiz de la Escalera in Madrid, and letting Cory get the royalties for *Persons and Places*.¹⁹ Santayana learned that Robert Sturgis's trust for Mercedes had dried up and Mercedes wrote in April that she had received nothing since the previous October. He expected that, if his financial stewards could manage it, he would take over and provide the \$2000 a year for Mercedes, who was then 89. At the end of April, Appleton wrote (in a letter that Santayana must have received several weeks later) that Mercedes already had been sent \$1000 that year (LGS to Raymond Brewer Bidwell, 7 June 1945). Santayana regarded this payment as a rescue, but by the end of the year, her pension had not yet been established. By July, Appleton had written he (Appleton) needed to employ Frederick H Nash, George Sturgis's executor, and Nash needed to know "the taxes, if any" on Santayana's royalties (LGS to John Hall Wheelock, 24 July 1945).

In Santayana's eyes, Nash proved to be as pigheaded as Sturgis. He soon realized that Nash had been the one who had been advising Sturgis to withhold some of the royalties from *Persons and Places* because Santayana, who was incommunicado in Rome, could not have meant Cory to receive the entire huge bonus

¹⁹ Before the war, Santayana's had been sending Cory a regular allowance. He had hoped that, as America's entry into the war seemed likely, the royalties from his book would take the place of the money he would no longer be able to send. In a letter to Raymond Bidwell (see LGS 30 October 1945), Santayana explained how Cory became involved with both Santayana himself and his late friend Charles Augustus Strong. This letter gives a short but detailed biography of Cory (see p. 30). It is not exactly flattering, but nevertheless is sympathetic. He wrote, for example, that he and Strong "both felt the responsibility of having encouraged him . . . and made him hopelessly ineffectual."

yielded by what had become a best seller and Book-of-the-Month Club selection. Santayana explained it to Cory:

George was trespassing beyond his own domain. He was acting as my executor. Perhaps I was dead: and even if I bothered him by turning up alive again, I would wish to take back my promise to you because I had never meant to give you so much. (LGS 21 October 1945)

This passage is from a letter in which Santayana alerted Cory that “Nash is again on the rampage,” having written him “a long and furious letter” telling Santayana that he put himself in a “most dangerous position” by sending money to Cory and signing over the rights to his book, because Santayana had done these things “in complete ignorance of the federal tax laws” (LGS 21 October 1945).

Nash’s concern had been to protect the money that Sturgis expected to inherit from Santayana and, now that Sturgis was dead, to protect the inheritance of his children. In writing to Santayana, he referred to Cory as “the adverse interest.” Santayana told Cory that he did not mention that phrase in a brief reply to Nash, as he did not “wish to embitter the quarrel,” but he added:

If I have to write to him again, I will tell him that this is a mistake; that your interest and mine in this matter are identical; that I wish you to benefit as much as possible, and when you require it, by this lucky accident of getting a prize in the literary lottery; and that if we have to argue the case of how large my taxes ought to be, or yours, we shall appear before the commissioners on the same side and unanimous. (LGS 21 October 1945).

Early in December Santayana wrote to Cory that he had received a “curt reply” from Nash “in which he gives up the fight.” He confided that if his current representatives did not co-operate, he was thinking of finding another business manager. Appleton and Nash had thwarted his hopes that disinterested non-relatives would serve his interests better than his nephew, so Santayana’s thoughts turned back to his family. He thought perhaps Raymond Bidwell, with whom Santayana had exchanged sympathetic letters about these affairs, would manage his finances better. His representative should, he told Cory,

back up your case that you are the absolute owner of *Persons and Places*, as much as if you were the author, which would ward off all taxes and supertaxes from me for that book; and when that case is lost (as it doubtless will be) to pay up cheerfully whatever dues may be imposed. (LGS 9 December 1945)

His concluding remark shows how exasperated he had become:

This capitalistic economy is a sort of algebraic manipulation of unknown forces, or miser’s kaleidoscope, where anything may turn up.

The exasperation continued soon after that. Appleton wrote to Santayana asking him or his publisher to place a value on the manuscript of *Persons and Places* as a gift tax would have to be assessed because he gave the book and its royalties to Cory. In his impatient reply Santayana wrote:

That the gift of this book, written by a foreigner in a foreign country upon foreign paper, and sent to an American friend for the above purpose, should involve the payment on the foreigner’s part of a gift tax to the U.S.

government, seems to me a strange paradox. . . . There seems to be a metaphysical impossibility of fixing the value of an unpublished manuscript and if we waited until the actual sales and royalties on them were exhausted, we might all be dead before the total could be given. (LGS to Francis Henry Appleton Jr, 27 December 1945)

Santayana wondered why there were no taxes on his gifts to the family friend Mercedes in Spain or on his charitable donations in Italy. He concluded with a justification for giving away what might be construed as family money to Cory, who was not a relative, as that money had come from his own earnings, not from his inheritance and he had been diligently saving half the income that the inheritance had yielded:

I do not grudge the U.S. Treasury any sums that they may extort from my nominal property, which, with the single exception of these very royalties which are earned by my real labours, has come to me undeserved by virtue of good management by my brother Robert Sturgis, his son George, and now you and Mr. Salmon. It is others, my heirs, whom the matter chiefly touches; and I should think their interest lay, like mine, in avoiding incalculable and uncertain taxes and letting me dispose of my earnings, in contrast to my family Trust money, in my own way. I had of late years saved half my income, which had gone to swell the capital in trust. Is not that enough benevolence for a sort of half-uncle? (*ibid.*)

The problem continued into 1946. By end of the year, none of the three financial matters were resolved: neither the royalties for Cory, the pension for Mercedes, nor the payment to the Blue Sisters.

American gifts — “tea is my favourite meal” and the dialectic of love and marmalade

The notion that people in Italy were deprived of many ordinary things, led Santayana’s American correspondents to send him many gifts, mostly food, clothing, and toiletries. In February, he wrote to Andrew Onderdonk, who had studied with him at Harvard toward the end of his teaching career, that he had carried from the post office a package Onderdonk had sent:

On opening it, and rolling up the long soft string with which it was tied, I was delighted to find wholesale provision of nice soap for the rest of my life. It was very kind of you to think of the little difficulties we are having about procuring the customary luxuries—customary for us, clean plutocrats—such as tea, coffee, marmalade, and above all, soap. Heat and hot water are also suspended: but I have hot water brought me in a jug in the morning; yet the absence of it in the pipes makes me wash my hands less often than I used to during the rest of the day. Your good soap will last all the longer for that. It is much appreciated by the Mother General and some of the other Sisters to whom I have given a sample. We have never absolutely lacked soap, but it was sometimes not of a superfine quality. (LGS 25 February 1945).

A week later he wrote to Rosamund Sturgis²⁰ to say that after a “short and pleasant walk” to retrieve something she had sent he had “all the excitement of a Christmas tree or child’s birthday in opening the package, which had not been examined, and guessing what each thing would be.” He reported how welcome the gifts were, “even if (as in the case of sugar) I don’t take it myself: but it is scarce, and it is a treat for the good Sisters.” He went on to explain his relationship to sweets and, especially to tea:

Don’t think that I haven’t a sweet tooth: I like marmalade, for instance, very much; but in liquids sugar seems to me to take away from the thirst-quenching freshness of the drink, and I like the accompanying solids sweet, to make me more thirsty. If I went on in this way, I might be taken for a glutton and epicure, and not a philosopher: I will be silent, and not spoil the reputation for austerity that I hope to acquire now that I have grown thin. Tea I am now getting from everybody, because it was the thing I most missed: now I have it every afternoon without fail, and this without feeling that I am depriving the Sisters of theirs. They are most of them of Irish or British extraction, and dote on tea: so that I am glad to get all that comes. The raisin biscuits I have gobbled up already and found excellent. Tea is my favourite meal, and always happier than the others, because it seems more casual: you can be reading at the same time; and the fact that liquids prevail in it over solids makes it seem less gross. (LGS 3 March 1945)

Later in March, Santayana offered a rationale stemming from practical considerations to elevate tea above other meals. This rationale, which invokes the two forms of existence distinguished in his philosophy: matter and spirit, appears in a letter to Daniel Cory, who had sent him “good things to eat and two welcome packages of tea.” He wrote:

They now give me tea every afternoon without fail: it is the greatest fleshly comfort of my life; the body alone may take more pleasure in finding a hot-water-bottle in bed, when the feet are cold; but the soul does not participate in that pleasure with the same perspectives with which it surrounds afternoon tea. As the other meals are not very substantial, tea becomes relatively more important than ever. If you mean to send me more parcels . . . please always include tea or coffee. (LGS 21 March 1945)

The correspondents who sent him packages, in addition to Onderdonk, Rosamund Sturgis, and Cory, included his niece Josephine and her husband Raymond. In his March letter to Cory, Santayana began to make specific requests of his benefactors. He asked for “lined invalid’s slippers” as he had trouble keeping his feet warm during the winter. Although he had solved the problem for that winter “by staying in bed,” he thought that for the coming year it would be “convenient to sit up at least until after dinner.”

On 9 May, soon after he had heard the “sirens and churchbells” announcing the end of the war in Europe, he wrote to Rosamund:

²⁰ George Sturgis divorced Rosamund early in 1944. He then married Carol Avery a few months later and died shortly thereafter.

Sister Angela, the housekeeper . . . says that I have now tea enough for all summer and all next winter: but that may be a pious prophecy. Anyhow, I am now assured of always having my afternoon tea, which as I have written to you is my greatest fleshly comfort. And now it is turned also into a luxury by your rich and solid Festive Fruit Cake, which I keep among the bookshelves in my room, and cut slices off horizontally, with a sharp knife . . . The big cake is lasting splendidly, and I still have enough left for the rest of this festive week, since it is the week of the peace in Europe after our five or six years of war. (LGS)

Also, in June he wrote to Rosamund, from whom he had just received a package containing “tea, marmalade, and fruit biscuits” to describe his afternoon tea ritual and note the cultural differences between the Irish nuns and the Spanish Santayana:

Afternoon tea is my daily feast, which I can more or less control, while in a big religious establishment regular meals have to be taken as they come. On the whole this system has proved excellent for my health, in spite of the limitations imposed by scarcity of almost everything in the markets; still, things are not always as appetising or as varied as I could wish. But afternoon tea comes from the housekeeper’s private kitchen in this same passage, and she, Sister Angela, usually brings it to me herself, instead of the housemaid Maria who serves my other meals: and we have a friendly talk about things in general, and of course about food in particular. She is Irish and motherly: sometimes she wants to give me brandy or whiskey, (as the Mother General, also Irish, does too) but I draw the line at that, being a Dago. At meals I drink the local white wine, or Marsala, a kind of port. (LGS 21 June 1945)

Perhaps the most philosophic of his observations—naturally a jesting one—came in a letter written in earlier in June to Raymond Bidwell. Readers of Santayana who find his work laced with contradictions, might take note of what he wrote after Raymond and Josephine had sent him another package:

I am now in the age of plenty; so much so that I begin to choose, and to look the gift-horses in the mouth. Having plenty of marmalade, I have given your honey to the housekeeper, for sweetening pastry, etc. which nuns are good at making, only that now they have no sugar. If you send me more jams, this is the order in which I prefer them: 1st= orange marmalade, 2nd = apricot jam, 3rd =strawberry jam. . . . In general I prefer sweet things to have something bitter or sour or ginger-like in them. This applies to love also, and currant jam (if there is such a thing) ought to have this contrast in it, which is what philosophers call dialectic. That is why I don’t relish honey so much. It has no dialectic in it. It is too dogmatically sweet. This postscript threatens to become a treatise on the contradictions of the human palate: I was once a professor, and the habit is hard to throw off. (LGS 12 June 1945)

Visitors, especially soldiers, in person and in poetry— the joy and mystery of thoughts converging

The multitude of visitors that began with Rome's liberation by the Allied troops in June of 1944 continued into 1945. Herbert L Matthews, the *New York Times* correspondent who interviewed Santayana shortly after the Allied troops arrived, visited him again in the summer of 1945 bringing with him the welcome news that the civil war in Spain would not start up again.²¹ Also in the summer, another correspondent, Christopher G Janus wrote to the *Times* that he too had visited Santayana:

He was much thinner than when I last saw him [1936] and somehow he seemed short. He is a bit deaf now, but looked exceedingly well. He was wearing a woolen dressing gown, slippers, and a shirt with a trim but casual collar.²² I remembered how particular he was with his clothes. He seemed more meticulous and well-groomed now.

He rests in the afternoon and he usually reads in the evenings. At present he is reading Aristophanes (in English) again and he recently finished rereading Shakespeare. . . . He doubted he would ever see America again and he spoke of Lord Russell and Whitehead. He spoke affectionately of Harvard Yard and the Charles. (Finish 1945; the ellipsis is in the *Times* article)

Most welcome were the numerous soldiers. In March Santayana wrote: "I have had the curious and agreeable experience of seeing young America pouring into Rome. A lot of army men have come to see me, as the oldest inhabitant of the village" (LGS to Mary Potter Bush 21 March 1945). Santayana had already used the phrase "the oldest inhabitant of the village" to convey his amusement with his situation twice toward the end of 1944 and he repeated it to four different correspondents in 1945. By November, however, he wrote to Rosamund Sturgis that "soldiers have almost stopped coming to see me and getting me to autograph their books. The American troops are evidently going north or leaving Italy altogether" (LGS 18 November 1945).

The story of the visiting soldiers had drifted back to America. In July 1945, Carl Byron Dickson, a correspondent from Virginia, sent Santayana two poems about Santayana by Edith Dodd Henrich.²³ The second and longer one is called "The Inmost Reason." Its subtitle is "Tom Ward interviews George Santayana in the Home of the Blue Nuns in Rome." This poem is worth a careful look as it illustrates the sense one American was able to make of Santayana's life as the war was ending

²¹ That the news was a relief was unintentional. Santayana reported:

He was there, with the republican forces, during the civil war, and naturally takes a view of things entirely different from mine: and he reassured me about the prospect for the immediate future, saying that nobody wanted to renew the civil war. That is just what I feared his friends wanted to renew. (LGS to Rosamund Sturgis 17 August 1945)

²² In his letters, Santayana reported that he wore pajamas all day. That may explain the "casual collar."

²³ The poems were collected the next year in a book, *The Quiet Center* (Henrich 1946).

and the thoughts of the soldiers who visited him. The poem's speaker introduces himself:

You look as though you were remembering
that we have met before. The name is Ward
and I was one—you're right—of those young boys
who sat in Harvard classes long ago
to hear you lecture on Plato and Spinoza.²⁴

Long ago is no exaggeration. As the last year a college student could have sat in one of Santayana's classes was 1911, the "young boy" would be in his fifties by 1944 or 1945. The poem may be mingling the young men who studied with Santayana and then fought in World War I with the soldiers who came to visit him as World War II in Italy ended. Ward tells Santayana (and us) that soldiers have been eager to see him:

Our soldiers marching into Rome reminded America
that you were living here
and many men who liked your recent book²⁵
would like to have a scholar's view on war.

He gives a glimpse of Santayana's living situation:

Your dressing gown and slippers make it seem
I have not put you out too much by coming

The speaker recalls his student days when he was "astonished" to hear a foreigner "using the English language with more grace /than any of us who had inherited it."

He then tells how Santayana would entertain his students:

seven of us went often to your rooms
and after supper listened to you talk—
I guess we might have thought ourselves somewhat
like those Greek boys who met with Socrates

One of these students, named Woodley, was one of Santayana's most astute admirers. Ward says Woodley planned to write a book,

But he was too impatient to get on;
what more there was to say you said yourself . . .

After paraphrasing Santayana himself, Ward recalls how Woodley made a sonnet out of a selection from *The Realm of Matter*. It reads in part:

Here is the dog; there is the setting sun;
the past is nowhere, and the long night coming;
we say our eager images over, summing
their names like beads, but telling them one by one.
Yet under the ding-an-sich and its equal word
sleeps the voluminous vegetative soul

²⁴ All quotations from "The Inmost Reason" are from Henrich 1946.

²⁵ *Persons and Places*, Volume 1, was published in January 1944.

which does not see, but waits for and is whole,
 which does not hear, but is profoundly heard.²⁶

Ward wonders if Santayana's wisdom can "console us" in the wake of losses suffered:

So many we knew who did not want to die
 have died, McCarthy went insane in action.
 Woodley was killed, with half his book unwritten—

. . .

Dawson and Waite have been reported missing.

The result is that Santayana's model of a philosophic life is not one that Ward and his remaining companions can live:

not one of us can live as you advised us,
 according to his nature, filling out
 the personal perfection in the seed;

Earlier in the poem Ward tells how he and Santayana quarreled over Emerson and Whitman, saying Santayana could never "get them straight" because he wasn't "quite American enough." Now he wonders if Santayana could begin to appreciate the young poets emerging in America:

I asked myself if you would recognize
 the poet who works the graveyard shift and scribbles
 his lyric on a bag as he drinks his coffee
 and then forgets it when he leaves the counter.
 I wondered if you could understand at all
 our fractured hours, our dislocated days,
 the sense of work undone that crowds our nights.

Henrich then has Ward tell Santayana:

²⁶ Woodley's sonnet continues:

Not questioning the sources whence it came,
 the soul sustains that tentative hope on earth
 of something we may call the putting forth
 of leaves, for which our language has no name;
 through it we posit summertime and snow
 and wider air than we can touch or know.

Santayana's text, which the poem paraphrases, is:

In mature human perception the essences given are doubtless distinct and the objects which they suggest are clearly discriminated: here is the dog, there the sun, the past nowhere, and the night coming. But beneath all this definition of images and attitudes of expectancy, there is always a voluminous feeble sensibility in the vegetative soul. Even this sensibility posits existence; the contemplation of pure Being might supervene only after all alarms, gropings, and beliefs had been suspended—something it takes all the discipline of Indian sages to begin to do. The vegetative soul enjoys an easier and more Christian blessedness: it sees not, yet it believes. But believes in what? In whatever it may be that envelopes it; in what we, in our human language, call space, earth, sunlight, and motion; in the throbbing possibility of putting forth something which we call leaves, for which that patient soul has no name and no image. (RM 24-25)

it is a time for poets
to ask the questions our fathers did not ask,
to redefine our meanings, to imagine
the human good again.

Ward reports that Woodley had taken the title of his unfinished book from lines in one of Santayana's early poems, which he quotes imperfectly from memory:

Know ye the inmost reason for your singing?
Know ye the ancient burden of your song?²⁷

Henrich concludes her poem by having Ward ask Santayana for his "blessing on the poets of my land."

Henrich's poem is remarkable because it shows that she was able to draw a sympathetic portrait of the soldiers who visited post-war Santayana and, in doing so, to convey an impression of Santayana that was probably more accurate than the ones that came in reports from journalists.²⁸ More than that, she was able to take Santayana's notion that desires, sympathies, beliefs, and philosophic perspectives arise from native instincts and in social circumstances and show how young men influenced by that notion come to realize that they cannot adopt Santayana's ways of living or even his ways of thinking. Many of us who study Santayana may recognize the sentiment of being deeply appreciative of Santayana for his insight while not being able to view the world as he did. Santayana never expected to establish a philosophic school or to have a large array of followers. His letter to Carl Dickson, who sent him Edith Henrich's poems, shows his gratitude for those who read him from their own standpoint.

Your letter of July 27 and Mrs. Hendrick's²⁹ poetic epistle are among the most satisfying comments or reactions that have ever come to me from my work . . . because essential sympathy and understanding are joined here with vital freshness and independence of judgment. Even when you and Mrs. Hendricks say you are repeating my words, I feel that you are not repeating them but are seeing for yourselves the very thing I saw, and seeing it, as is inevitable, in a somewhat different light: Now that is precisely what I like in my friends, and should like to imagine in my readers: not verbal or doctrinal agreement, but confirmation of the same truth by a different perspective, by an independent observation taken from a different point of view and bathed in a different personal sentiment. Mrs. Hendrick's Woodley is like what I wished my Last Puritan to be: Someone entirely distinct from me in his psychic nature coming to the same rational conclusions that I had reached. Such coincidence is at once a joy and a mystery. (LGS 26 August 1945).

²⁷ In Santayana's poem "King's College Chapel," the first line of the two quoted is "Feel ye the inmost reason of your singing?" (POEMS)

²⁸ See "Santayana in 1944," *Overheard in Seville* 37 (2019): 9-10.

²⁹ The spelling 'Hendricks' is Santayana's.

Bob Sturgis—the hope for a word

To Santayana's great pleasure, one of the young soldiers who visited him—one with whom he felt an "essential sympathy and understanding"—was George and Rosamund Sturgis's son Bob (Robert Shaw Sturgis). Bob had visited him in twice in 1944 and in 1945 Santayana wrote to their other relatives for news about him. Letters from Bob's uncle Raymond Bidwell written in January but received in March gave Santayana some news about his great-nephew. He wrote back to Bidwell:

Bob and I also have cottoned at once. To me it was a great pleasure to see him, in spite of the nuisance of not always catching what he said, as I am hard of hearing, and feeling that I often didn't reply intelligently to what he may have said. But I see that he speaks kindly of me, and that reassures me. (LGS 10 March 1945)

Earlier in the month he had written to Rosamund:

I am sorry not to be able to write to Bob. Tell him that I have wished very much to do so, both on account of his loss and for the pleasure of being in communication with him. I count, if I live long enough, on seeing him again in Rome after the war. There is now a very spacious automobile more or less attached to this establishment, an old but low and long taxi, that takes me to town when I have anything to go for; if Bob were here we could go in it on architectural tours of inspection to the spots and vistas about Rome that I like best. . . .

PS The thought suddenly comes to me: Why shouldn't you be of the party? (LGS 3 March 1945)

In June, he wrote to Rosamund again of his regret at "not to be able to communicate directly with Bob. Please give him my love . . ." (LGS 21 June 1945). In August he informed her that Bob had turned up "one evening unexpectedly" on his way to Naples. Santayana continued, "Please ask him to write to me, if he hasn't done so already." He wanted to know if the army might send him to Japan "in spite of the peace." (Although the atomic bombs had been dropped, Japan had not yet officially surrendered.) Santayana wondered if Bob had his passion for "travel and architectural exploration." He put it this way:

When I was a young man I should have seized any opportunity to see remote countries and peoples; but it ought to have been by wandering about alone, or with casual acquaintances, not under military discipline. (LGS 17 August 1945)

When Santayana wrote this, Rosamund had already written a letter he had not yet received telling him that Bob would be soon returning to the United States. After the letter arrived, Santayana wrote back in early September:

I wish he would write to me and tell me, not only what he thinks of doing in the immediate future, but something about what he was interested in before, besides architecture, or what he likes (or doesn't like, which you don't tell me) in my books. (LGS 6 September 1945).

By October, Santayana was thrilled to learn that Bob was studying at Harvard, and, at last, a letter arrived from Bob himself. Santayana's eager reply was filled with questions:

Are you at one of the Houses, and eat in Hall? Have you any old friends there? Or have you new friends studying the same subjects, and going to be philosophers and architects? And what do you do for exercise, and where? As for studies, I don't know what you had been doing before: you mention philosophy. I should like to know what you read, and what impression the professors and instructor left on your mind. (LGS 27 October 1945).

Their correspondence continued in the coming years. Bob became an architect, but never returned to Rome for Santayana's hoped for architectural tour.

Coda—books and politics

Visitors, letters, and packages of food and clothing arrived throughout the year, but books were not yet permitted. Toward the end of the year Santayana wrote to Rosamund:

I wish I had the stimulus of more new books: as yet nothing reaches me except now and then by special favour through some army man. Politics, however, is in a most interesting phase; and that is just what I need for my present work, which is on an old project of a book on politics to be called Dominations & Powers.

Best wishes for Christmas from your affectionate uncle.

G.Santayana

(LGS 26 November 1945)

RICHARD MARC RUBIN

Author's note: Several people contributed invaluable advice and suggestions, about organization, phrasing and historical accuracy, to the two biographical sketches that were my assignments: 1895 and 1945. These include Henry Shapiro, Linda Eastman, Daniel Pinkas, Herman Saatkamp, and Martin Coleman. These brief sketches owe much to their consultation, but the end results and any errors they contain are my responsibility.

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Santayana's letter about Daniel Cory

To Raymond Brewer Bidwell
 30 October 1945. Rome, Italy

Via Santo Stefano Rotondo, 6,
 Rome, Oct. 30, 1945

Dear Raymond: For the moment I am afraid it is useless to talk of jam, soap, or marmalade, because no more parcels are arriving from America, I don't know whether on account of some dock strike or because the whole business is suspended. To me it is not a serious matter; the Sisters always have something to serve up, and goodies on feast days, and the fundamentals are better and more regular than they were; light, water, bread, potatoes, rice vegetables, and an occasional old fowl or pork chop. I continue in good health and am reading the proofs of my next book—which I have ordered Scribner to send you—on The Idea of Christ in the Gospels.

But books suggest another subject on which perhaps I ought to write to you and Josephine, namely my quarrel with Mr. Nash—and possibly also with Mr. Appleton, although I hope not—in regard to my royalties. It appears that because I gave beforehand my autobiography called Persons & Places and the royalties that might come from it to my old secretary Cory, I am in danger of having to pay all the rest of my fortune in taxes. To me it would make no difference, if enough were left to pay my pension here during the rest of my life. I have 700,000 Italian lire now in the Roman branch of the Banco di Napoli, which if the lira doesn't collapse, will suffice for more than three years: and I may not live as long as that. But as Josephine, together with George's sons, are my chief heirs, and I promised her to leave her her share in my sister Josephine's legacy to me, I ought to explain to her and to you how such a danger has arisen.

It all comes from the existence of a good-for-nothing fellow, like an unsuccessful poet or actor, named Daniel Cory. His father—still living at 26 First Street, Riverhead, Long Island, N.Y.—seems to be a cantankerous old provincial American with a small competence: but he was married to a lovely Irish girl, who had two boys by him, one now a Congregational minister in Brooklyn, and the other the hero of this romance. After a few years the lady eloped with a friend, leaving her two little boys, married her lover, and never saw the children except by chance when they were grown up: for she too lives in Brooklyn. This Irish blood and this wayward temper seem to have been inherited by Daniel. He was irregular at school, clever but never learning anything thoroughly, didn't go to College, but was

attracted by out-of-course classes at Columbia in poetry and philosophy. At twenty he married a woman older than himself, inordinately fond of lovemaking at all hours; until his family—he has a handsome aunt, his father's sister, married to a British Colonel—packed him away to England to be reformed by his fashionable aunt.

At Columbia Cory had read my very technical book, Scepticism & Animal Faith, and now, in the quiet of English gardens, he wrote an extraordinarily sensitive and appreciative article about it, which he sent me, together with his photograph—being his mother's son and his aunt's pupil. I was delighted with the article, from a young man of 22, and pleased with the photo, representing a refined-looking youth, stooping a little, and beginning to be bald. I wrote to him suggesting that he should come to Rome, and sent him money for the journey, there and return. But he spent it all in coming by sea to Naples—for he had and has no interest in seeing new places. I found that he spoke or read no foreign language, but his English was very good, and his poetry not very bad; even in languages, though he would never open a grammar, he soon got on with the common people better than I. Above all, he understood my philosophy, in those days, twenty years ago, when nobody paid any attention to it. So I asked him to stay in Rome for a winter and help me with The Realm of Matter in which I was finding myself in difficulties and losing heart. Together we managed to finish the book; but it is not well composed, although on the whole I think it is good enough to fill its place in my system.

Now another personage enters into the drama, my old friend Charles A. Strong of Rochester, N.Y. We constantly saw each other in Italy, and in summer I lived at his house in Paris. When he saw Cory, he said: I envy you your Secretary., and I replied, Take him, then, because he is not really very useful, although he is great fun as a companion. Strong did take him, but being a very severe regular person and didactic, he bored Cory, and only gradually drove his "correct" views into him. At times, Cory would return to me; and I would always ask him to revise my manuscripts, point out the repetitions, etc. In this way Strong and I kept Cory dangling and almost idle in our circle. He never saved money or finished any book of his own: he never learned any foreign language well. It was so much the fault of us, his elders, that we both felt the responsibility of having encouraged him in these courses and made him hopelessly ineffectual: and yet, on occasion, he would show extraordinary interest, and understanding of the most difficult problems.

It was under these circumstances that Strong died, having established some life-fellowships, one of which was explicitly intended for Cory; and then the war broke out, and Cory had to find his way back to America, while the Fellowship, established in England, was held up by the authorities, as was my own bank account there, out of which Cory was habitually fed. I couldn't let him starve; and I saw no means out of the difficulty except to ask Scribner's to let him have my general royalties, so long as the war barriers held up communications and financial exchange. And as I was then writing Persons & Places I promised Cory to let him have that book, and all the profits of it, as a sort of inheritance, as I was leaving him only \$2500 in my will, to defray the expenses of his journey back to Rome to get my manuscripts: for I am making him my literary executor.

That is the whole story. I neglected the technicalities requisite to make it clear that I gave that one book to Cory outright: and now I am keeping the third volume

in MS to go to him, and be published by him, after my death. But the status of vols. I and II (the latter called The Middle Span) seems to be legally doubtful. If Mr. Nash had been concerned with my personal interests, instead of interfering with Scribner and Cory, he would have joined the latter and his lawyer in trying to establish that Persons & Places was as much Cory's book as if Cory had written it: and then no complications or super-taxes on my other income would have ensued. But George who prompted the first intervention had another interest in mind. He thought that if I were still living when communications with Italy were restored, I should agree to take back my promise to Cory, because the royalties on that book had been larger than was expected. That idea has now been given up: but the threat of huge taxes, which may swallow up half my other money, or the whole of it, looms up instead.

As I said in the beginning, I don't care about that threat on my own account; and I resent extremely the spirit and tone of Mr. Nash's communications and above all the arrogance of his actions and proposed actions. Scribner and Cory are not the adverse interest. to me. Our interests are identical: but I agree that Cory will not have saved up enough to pay the super-taxes on my combined income; and I also agree that the assessors will probable insist, as Mr. Nash does, that I am the owner of The book in question, and of the royalties for it, and shall have to pay a gift tax in addition to losing all I thought so safe in Mr. Appleton's care. If I am to be represented in the courts in this affair, I would rather be represented by Cory's lawyer than by Mr. Nash. Meantime I have asked Scribner's to use their own judgment about withholding funds with Cory's consent in view of future exactions. It must not be Mr. Nash's veto that does it.

Let us hope we may survive.

Yours sincerely
GSantayana

Letters to Charles A Loeser

In 2018, I located twenty-seven letters to Santayana's college friend Charles Loeser. These letters, together with those, also recently discovered and equally interesting, that Santayana sent to Baron Albert von Westenholz, will be published by Publicacions de la Universitat de València (PUV) as a bilingual volume with Spanish translations by Daniel Moreno, an essay by José Beltran, and my introduction. Both the Loeser and Westenholz letters are available on the Santayana Edition website.¹ In this year's Bulletin, the editors are publishing two of the letters to Loeser and have asked me to introduce them.

*Like the discovery of penicillin, X-rays or rubber, though admittedly not quite as consequential, locating Santayana's letter to Charles Loeser was a matter of serendipity. Following Irving Singer's suggestion, who had written that the Santayana-Cory-Strong triangle was "almost worthy of Proust or Henry James in its subtlety,"² I began searching for Charles A. Strong's letters to Santayana, so as to gain a fairer appreciation of the (at times acrimonious) philosophical discussions that took place, for decades, between the two old friends. Strong kept Santayana's letters, which are included in *The Letters of George Santayana*, Volume V of the critical edition of *The Works of George Santayana*, but Santayana hardly ever kept any letters addressed to him. Strong, however, took with utmost seriousness his debates with Santayana, so he made copies of some of his letters to his friend.*

*In the midst of my online research, I came across the Archives Directory for the History of Collecting in America, hosted on the Frick Collection website. One of the entries indicated that, in 2012, Houghton Library at Harvard had received a box of documents labelled "Letters from William James and George Santayana to Charles Alexander Loeser, 1886-1912 and undated." The entry also mentioned that it was a donation in memory of Charles A. Loeser made by his granddaughter, Philippa Calnan. Given the importance Santayana granted to his friendship with Loeser in his autobiography and the absence of any letters to this recipient in *The Letters of George Santayana*, I knew right away that I had chanced upon something interesting.*

The librarian I contacted at Houghton Library informed me that the documents had not yet been scanned, but that they could do so quickly. In September 2018, by an amusing coincidence, I was at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence where I had just visited the rooms dedicated to the Loeser bequest, when I received the compressed files containing the letters sent by Santayana to Loeser, one of his closest friends from his youth, who later became an important art collector (he bequeathed his Renaissance drawings to Harvard's Fogg Museum and eight beautiful Cézannes to the White House). The letters turned out to be just as fascinating as I had surmised.³

¹ Links to both sets of letters can be found at <https://santayana.iupui.edu/text/>.

² Irving Singer, "Marble Faun," *New York Review of Books*, Sept. 26, 1963.

³ I did locate some of the letters from Strong to Santayana that prompted my initial search.

They were at the Rockefeller Archive Center. These letters were not nearly as interesting as

Santayana's first letter to Loeser is a fine example. Written from Dresden on 22 September 1886, when he was twenty-two years old, it reveals Santayana's first impressions of Germany, has remarks on Wagner's operas and on music and aesthetics in general, and ends with a horribly misogynist postscript. The other letter published in this issue is from 1895 and is referred to in the biographical sketch of Santayana in 1895 (see page 7).

DANIEL PINKAS

Two Letters from Santayana to Loeser

*Dresden, Germany
22 September 1886*

Dresden, Sept 22nd 1886

Dear Loeser—

I have often felt like writing to you this summer, but I was not sure of your address—having mislaid the paper on which I had it in the course of my wanderings—and besides I was willing to wait till I had been some time in Germany before venturing to hold forth to you on that subject. Well, to begin with, I had a nasty passage, not rough, but eminently nasty. By some dishonesty or other they put me in a room with five (!) other wretches, when I had bargained only for three companions. Nevertheless I arrived at Cherbourg alive and in sufficiently good spirits to wander slowly down France and Spain to my paternal establishment at Avila. I stopped at Caen Le Mans (charming place, by the way, as Fullerton would say) Tours, Bordeaux, and Valladolid.

At Avila I was welcomed by various members of my family, and immediately began a defensive campaign against dyspepsia, in which I was not completely victorious. Meantime I took riding lessons, thereby furnishing the world (if the world had only been there to appreciate it) one of the most pitifully by ridiculous spectacles imaginable. I appreciated it, however; only in this case, contrary to my custom, I treated myself, and saw the performance at my own expense. After four weeks I left Avila, and went through Paris straight to Cologne. I stopped there a couple of days, and then settled down in Göttingen at a pension Houghton found for me. The place, however, proved somewhat slow, and I thought it better to come to Dresden for a month, before going to Berlin; especially as Herbert Lyman was here and I had a chance of being in the same house with him.

I am not going to say anything about having enjoyed the Madonna di San Sisto etc, etc - nor about the spiritualizing influence of Tintoretto's assumption, since this is sufficiently done already by the travelling American female college and by Prof. Norton. But I will say that the opera here has quite surpassed my notions of the possibilities of music. I have heard the whole Ring of the Nibelungen, Lohengrin, and The Flying Dutchman, besides The Prophet, The Magic Flute, and some light operas. I think Wagner is the greatest of opera composers but it seems to me that

the Loeser letters, though it remains to be seen whether Strong's letters, when paired with Santayana's replies, shed any light on their decades-long relationship.

he has aimed rather at grandeur and philosophical suggestiveness, than at real dramatic effect. Meyerbeer, for instance, seems to me more dramatic than Wagner. Wagner gives you so many tendencies and interests at once, that you cannot be wholly wrapped up in any. This is the true way, the real way things are in the world, where there is no beginning and no end, and where the jumble of conflicting interests and emotions would leave a man who attended to everything that is going on without any sense of dramatic action or passion whatever. Now it seems to me that the most perfect form of art is that which is able to fix your attention more exclusively on one tendency or human interest, than we usually do in ordinary thinking. This is classical art, pure art. It makes the aspect of things and the causes of things simpler than they are in the world. But Wagner, like Shakespeare and Tolstoi, gives you a more complex, more extensive and varied world than the world each individual lives in. I do not say more complex and shapeless than the real world is taken as a whole, but more complex and shapeless than the daily interests and emotions of the individual are. Thus the classical drama selects to intensify and purify the elements of life which it brings before you; while the Gothic drama (as I call it) selects also, for that it must necessarily do: but so selects as to bring before you the conflict, the sense of multiplicity and shapelessness, which the world produces. That is why the classical art is called ideal, because it gives you a simplified world, where tendencies have a comparatively free field to work themselves out on; and the Gothic art is called realistic because it gives you the result of the conflict instead of the forces in abstraction. But in fact both kinds are idealistic, because a real photograph of things would be absolutely blurred and chaotic. Every man's mental picture of the world is extremely idealized, because most of those elements are omitted in it which do not concern two or three leading interests of the man's life.

On the first of October I am going to Berlin, where I shall be in the same house with Strong, Schiffbauerdamm 3.¹¹ (where please address). I hope you will write soon, and tell me what news there is of the fellows. I have got letters from Mason and Abbot, and have seen Beal and Henderson (Felton & Baldwin's friend) besides, of course, Lyman and Houghton. Ward Thoron, the rascal, has not written. If you see him, pray tell him I am expecting to hear from him. Lyman has an absurdly wordy letter from Fullerton, which I parodied in a letter I recently sent that literary humbug. If you see him, tell him not to be mad. but to write me an answer parodying my own style, and telling me how the world hails him, the literary and artistic rising sun polish of the New World. In reality I like Fullerton very much, but he must drop some adjectives or he'll sink. You must also tell me your plans for this winter, and whether you are coming abroad in the spring. Sincerely yours

George Santayana

P.S. The German officers are stunning and the country attractive. But the women———! (gestures of mingled disgust & indifference)

Dresden, Sept 22nd 1886.

Dear Looser -

I have often felt like writing to you this summer, but I was not sure of your address - having mislaid the paper on which I had it in the course of my wanderings - and besides I was willing to wait till I had been some time in Germany before venturing to hold forth to you on that subject. Well, to begin with, I had a nasty passage, not rough, but eminently nasty. By some dishonesty or other they put me in a room with five (!) other wretches, when I had bargained only for three companions - Nevertheless I arrived at Clumberg alive and in sufficiently good spirits to wander slowly down France and Spain to my paternal establishment at Avila - I stopped at Caen, Le Mans (charming place, by the way, as Fullerton would say) Tours, Bordeaux, and Valladolid.

I hope you will write soon, and tell
 me what news there is of the fellows.
 I have got letters from Mason and
 Abbot, and have seen Deal and Hen-
 derson (Feltor & Baldwin's friend) besides,
 of course, Lyman and Houghton. Ward
 Chiron, the rascal, has not written.
 If you see him, pray tell him I am
 expecting to hear from him. Lyman
 has an absurdly wordy letter from
 Fullerton, which I parodied in a letter
 I recently sent that literary lumber-
 g. If you see him, tell him not to be
 made, but to write me an answer,
 parodying my own style, and telling
 me how the world trails him, the
 literary and artistic rising sun police
 of the New World. In reality I like
 Fullerton very much, but he must drop
 some adjectives or he'll sink. You
 must also tell me your plans for this
 winter, and whether you are coming
 abroad in the Spring. Sincerely yours
 George Santayana

P.S. The German officials are stunning, and the country attractive. But the
 women
 (features of mingled disgust & indifference)

Ávila, Spain
24 July 1895

Ávila July 24.

Dear Loeser,

Many thanks for your telegram, and your willingness to meet me at Milan. You might have written, as the letter would have got here in time. I shall turn up, then, at the Hotel Manin on August 3rd when I expect to have the real pleasure of seeing you.

GS

Ávila, July 24.

Dear Loeser

Many thanks for
your telegram, and your
willingness to meet me
at Milan. You might
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GS

Santayana Prefers Blondes

Anita Loos relates: “When asked what was the best book of philosophy written by an American, George Santayana replied ‘*Gentleman Prefer Blondes*.’” (Loos xli) ¹ More known from its 1953 film adaptation starring Marilyn Monroe, ² Loos’s *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* was published in 1925. In July of 1926, struggling to focus on writing *The Realm of Matter*, Santayana wrote from Cortina, Italy to his friend Charles Augustus Strong: “My time here passes pleasantly enough, but I seem incapable of finishing anything. I read all sorts of things,— I have just finished “Gentleman Prefer Blondes...””(LGS 25 July 1926). ³

The picture of a world-famous American philosopher cooling himself in the Dolomites⁴ with the adventures of diarist Lorelei Lee is one that is (to borrow one of Lee’s memorable characterizations), simply *devine*. The book seems to have hit a sweet spot for world-important men of letters in need of a break from writing masterworks. *Blondes* was the evening reading of the sight-challenged James Joyce as he composed the first draft of *Finnegans Wake*.

Loos’s book was written as a lark, a bit of creative inspiration in a moment of reactionary jealousy. The sight of friend H.L. Mencken fawning over a blonde actress on a coast-to-coast train ride prompted Loos “to write down my thoughts; not bitterly, as I might have done had I been a real novelist, but with an amusement which was, on the whole, rather childish.” (Loos xxxvii)⁵ Childishly inspired, the result is a genuinely insightful send up of adult behaviors. *Blondes* is wickedly funny and close enough to the bone of human truth to have inspired Mencken to praise Loos as “the first American writer to poke fun at sex.”⁶ High praise given that Loos was mocking Mencken himself in all of his blonde-flirting glory.

One of the book’s more memorable sequences finds Lorelei meeting Dr. Sigmund “Froyd” in Vienna. Her description of the encounter provides an excellent sample of the style and manner of Loos’s protagonist:

¹ Loos quoting Carmel Snow, the editor of *Harper’s Bazaar*, in “The Biography of a Book,” introduction to *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* and *But Gentleman Marry Brunettes*. Penguin Books in Loos 1998.

² Itself an adaptation of the 1949 Broadway musical of the same name.

³ Apart from this letter I could find no further reference to *Blondes* by Santayana nor any source that authenticates the “best book in philosophy” line. The line is repeated in various sources (books and reviews) in a manner that looks like it can perhaps be traced back to Snow and Loos.

⁴ Where he “habitually” traveled “to escape the hot Roman summers.” (McCormick 413)

⁵ Having garnered approval of the first few “sketches” from Mencken himself, Loos followed his advice to begin releasing them serially in *Harper’s Bazaar*. The popularity of the little episodes among male readers transformed the magazine’s advertising priorities, and when once they’d accumulated to a suitable degree for a stand-alone novel, it was a matter of course for Loos to supplement the bestselling book with the 1927 sequel: *But Gentleman Marry Brunettes*.

⁶ Quoted in the introduction to the Penguin edition of the book.

So Dr. Froyd asked me, what I seem to dream about. So I told him I never really dream about anything. I mean I use my brains so much during the day time that at night they do not seem to do anything but rest. So Dr. Froyd was very very surprised at a girl who did not dream about anything. So then he asked me all about my life. I mean he is very very sympathetic, and he seems to know how to draw a girl out a lot. I mean I told things I really would not put in my diary. So then he seemed very very intreegued at a girl who always seemed to do everything she wanted to.

The first-person, diary-style narrative is one of the book's central charms. Lorelei is encouraged to write down her thoughts by an unnamed "gentleman friend," one of many. He is a Senator from Washington who identifies her as a "girl with brains" and assures her "that if I took a pencil and paper and put down all of my thoughts it would make a book."⁷

As reflected in the "Froyd" passage, Lorelei's style, what it lacks in refinement, grammatical accuracy (and other marks of sophistication), is redeemed by its unselfconscious effervescence. Her optimistic naïveté and ambiguous irony fool stereotypically sexist readers into believing enough of their assumptions about blonde women as is useful, but draws them into a kind of trap—Lorelei is never put in peril by the depraved men with whom she plays and indeed owns them thoroughly.

Loos would undoubtedly have been as bewildering a patient for "Dr. Froyd" as her blonde creation. Like Lorelei, she always seemed to do everything she wanted to do in life yet to do so both because, and in spite of, the grossly unequal position she occupied in relation to her male counterparts.

Loos began her writing career in obscurity, submitting odd society pieces through a friend under an assumed name. Honing her writing by composing scripts, hundreds of them, she achieved notice as a scriptwriter for D.W. Griffith⁸. Around the time Loos was developing as a writer, the "silent-era" of early filmmaking (circa 1915, the year Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* appeared), it was commonplace for women to be scriptwriters. One biographer characterizes the back-room climate of D.W. Griffith's time as a "manless Eden of script girls." (Hutchinson)

Hollywood writers of all times can be said to have been given short shrift when it comes to film credits. Writers dream up all the dialogue and plot, while directors and actors get all the credit for their presentations. During the silent-film era such inequity surely had many layers, undoubtedly including when it came to women writers, a level of institutional sexism it is hard today to fathom, even when compared to the recent revelations of extensive sexual exploitation.⁹

⁷ The morning after this dinner conversation this gentleman-Senator-friend sends Lorelai a gift; this one perhaps disappointing in comparison to the diamonds and Tiara she will receive from others: a blank book!

⁹ Thinking specifically of Loos's time in the silent-film-era trenches, the very idea of crediting writers of movies was brand new. American Copyright Law had only just been amended to acknowledge motion pictures as pieces of work created by authors as opposed to being improvised by the actors on screen (1912).

None of this makes Loos an easy to categorize feminist. She claimed to be no fan of the women's lib movement. Speaking about that movement in her glib manner: "They keep getting up on soapboxes and proclaiming that women are brighter than men. That's true, but it should be kept very quiet or it ruins the whole racket."

Blondes is addressing something more interesting than traditional sexism. For example, in one memorable episode, the book sends up neo-Protestant reformism and its farcical intersection with the pretensions of high culture. As Lorelei travels through Europe at the behest of her most devoted benefactor, button magnate Mr. Eisman, she and her wickedly-droll (brunette) sidekick Dorothy hop on the Orient Express to expand their ongoing "education." Lorelei attaches herself to a Presbyterian zealot, the perfectly named "Mr. Spoffard" who spends his time opposing liquor and other things that "spoil people's morals." Spoffard, like the other gentlemen with whom the girls interact, attempts to steer Lee with his money, in this case on an "educational" path:

So then he said he thought that we ought to get off the train at a place called Munich because it was very full of art, which they call "kunst" in Munich, which is very, very educational...[the next diary entry, dated "May 19th"] Well yesterday Mr. Spoffard and I and Dorothy got off the train at Munich to see all of the kunst in Munich, but you only call it Munich when you are on the train because as soon as you get off of the train they seem to call it Munchen. So you really would know that Munchen was full of kunst because in case you would not know it, they have painted the word "kunst" in large size black letters on everything in Munchen, and you can not even see a boot black's stand in Munchen that is not full of kunst. (Loos 83-84)

Thus unimpressed with the *Kultur* of Munich Lorelei and Dorothy continue on their way to Vienna to rendezvous with Mr. Eisman. Worried as to how she will negotiate the attentions of Spoffard and Eisman, Lee finds a welcome diversion in the aforementioned encounter with Mr. Froyd, who ultimately refuses to psychoanalyze her on the grounds that Lee has "never repressed a desire." Mr. Froyd recommends that Lee "cultivate some inhibitions."

This example illustrates how Loos's narrative surpasses bland satire and aspires to serious criticism; juxtaposing Lorelei's circumnavigation of the contrasting attentions of Spoffard and Freud which suggests a connection between base male desires and the psychoanalytic attempt to interpretively justify them in relation to a woman's *lack* of inhibitions.

It may be any of these things that attracted Santayana's eye (he certainly would have loved Loos's wry humor and mockery of vulgar American culture), but I want to suggest—*just that*—a connection with something of deeper philosophic interest to him.

Appreciators of Santayana's philosophy might agree that Loos's farce demonstrates insight into his doctrine of essence, and that Lorelei and Dorothy are expert tourists in that Santayanan realm. In a striking passage from his *Realm of Essence* Santayana describes (in nineteenth century terms) a trip to the market:

As I was jogging to market in my village cart, beauty has burst upon me and the reins have dropped from my hands, I am transported, in a certain measure, into a state of trance. I see with extraordinary clearness, yet what I see seems strange and wonderful, because I no longer look in order to understand, but only in order to see. I have lost my preoccupation with fact, and am contemplating an essence. (RB 7)

Santayana goes on to clarify that this experience is insufficiently understood (at least in modern understanding) as “aesthetic” because it “has no exclusive connection with the arts or the beautiful.” (RB 7). The described sudden trance into which humans sometimes fall might be most arresting and absorbing when it happens to involve the perception of beauty, but the *intuition of essence* (as Santayana calls it) involved in the experience can take myriad forms, can just as easily produce a perception of ugliness, and need not even induce a trance. What then is this elusive “essence?” Loos’s narrative offers a clue.

Capable of appreciating the “only things people ever see and the last they notice” (PP 20) the actions of Loos’s protagonist are only “trickery” to those fooled by appearances; most especially, to be sure, the unfortunate appearance-obsessed men upon whom her actions prey. “The nature of essence...is eternal, compacted of internal relations, indifferently simple or complex, and at every level individual” (RB, 171). Those endowed such as Lorelei with an awareness of essence possess what to Santayana is a “really intellectual” capacity, one that follows “the high Platonic road” (RB, 7).

And perhaps it is Loos’s childlike amusement that attracted Santayana. Delightful word plays, puns, repeated and seemingly calculated use of misspelling, misattribution, and malapropism operate to subversively crack the foundations of the book’s historical context. Lorelei’s weaponized tongue is a kind of feral poetry, a form of daring diabolical *chutzpah*. Beyond that, Santayana surely must have admired Lorelei’s ability to render all things, including not only people and objects in her experiential path, but also her own reflections, as tragi-comic appearances of themselves. Once Loos has Lorelei say: “The most delightful thing about traveling is to always be running into Americans and to always feel at home.” (Loos 46). Although Santayana would surely not have shared that precise sentiment, Lorelei’s provincialism is intermingled with something he definitely would have appreciated: the propensity to always feel at home under any sky.

No matter the accuracy of the opening anecdote—who cares whether Santayana said it or not?—from his philosophic point of view it makes sense he might think *Blondes* the best book of philosophy written by an American. And if, as Loos quips, gentleman prefer blondes only to marry brunettes,¹⁰ this suggests a possible explanation, other than his sexuality, for Santayana’s stubborn bachelorhood: he loved essence!

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¹⁰ *But Gentleman Marry Brunettes* is the title of the sequel to *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*.

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RB 1942. *Realms of Being*. One-volume edition, with a new introduction by the author. New York, NY: Scribner's.

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Tragic Tension and Ancient Quarrels: Reflections on *Philosophers at Court*

It is said that in his youth he wrote tragedies and other poems, a pursuit from which he was weaned by the sobering influence of Socrates. The story may be apocryphal, but it well expresses, in an apologue, the inner history, as we may fancy it, of the man's whole soul; the artistic impulse bubbling up, and the dialectic conscience supervening; the pride, the eloquence, the love of beauty, and the sensuous fancies of the Athenian dilettante, all hushed and overawed by the sense of impending social disaster, by logic, by conscience, and by the memory of ancient gods. Such a contrast and conflict is visible, as we have seen, in Plato's writings; but there is every reason to believe that could we see the man as he actually was and compare his discourses and aspect in the Academy with the works we now possess, the conflict and contrast would be striking.

—George Santayana, "The Search for the True Plato," (1902)

The story of how Santayana's writing evolved is not apocryphal. His mature thought assumed a recognizable figuration during the five years from 1901 to 1905, years in which the somewhat younger, more poetic and man-of-letters Santayana gave way to a serious, more circumspect, philosopher of marked renown, becoming more and more known internationally, and aspiring to that stature. These years witnessed the publication of his first major,¹ five-volume philosophical effort in *The Life of Reason* (1905-06). Nevertheless, all the writing he produced during these five years could be viewed as the intellectual outgrowth of earlier years.² Much of the work he completed had either received its inspiration before the turn of the century or was a more extensive elaboration of prior written work. However in this paper, I would like to address merely one theatrical piece, a verse play that Santayana wrote between 1897 to 1901.

¹ I say 'major,' for in Santayana's own mind, *The Sense of Beauty*, though influential in some philosophical circles and critically recognized in the years following its publication in 1896, was written for professional expediency. His own account reads: I was a kind of poet, I was alive to architecture and the other arts, I was home in several languages: "aesthetics" might be regarded as my specialty. Very well: although I didn't have and haven't now, a clear notion of what aesthetics may be, I undertook to give a course in that subject. I gave it for one or two years and then I wrote out the substance of it in a little book: *The Sense of Beauty*" (PP 393).

² In many instances throughout his life, when asked to account for his thoughts, views, or development, Santayana would refer back to an earlier stage of his philosophical evolution. This is captured, for example, in one sentence from the piece "The Idler and His Works": "My philosophical system, being thus discovered within me, was latent in all the earlier phases of my opinions; and I think there is very little in my first writings that cannot be inserted into my mature system" (IW 11).

Having accomplished the difficult effort of an intellectual synthesis, by collapsing the traditional divisions wedged between cultural phenomena as distinct as poetry and religion, Santayana continued on in this synthesizing vein by exploring the viability of similar syntheses with the irrational and rational in *The Life of Reason*. In the early years of the 1900s, it became clear that his preference for synthesis and unity picked up in intensity and ambition; intensity in the sense that this preference initiated and sustained the works as a whole, and ambition in that he spelled it out clearly when, for example, he writes in the “Introduction” to *Reason in Common Sense*, the first volume of *The Life of Reason*, that

reason accordingly requires the fusion of two types of life, commonly led in the world in well-nigh total separation, one of a life of impulse expressed in affairs and social passions, the other of a life of reflection expressed in religion, science, and the imitative arts The Life of Reason is the happy marriage of two elements—impulse and ideation—which if wholly divorced would reduce man to a brute or to a maniac. The rational animal is generated by the union of these two monsters (LR1 3-4)

With an awareness of this inveterate, innate as it were, ability to synthesize, to unify, and blend apparently dissimilar elements, or at least an ability to address them not as radical disparities, I turn now to an early dramatic piece in which Santayana sets in relief the philosophical and the political.

Philosophers at Court

The late Allen Bloom once claimed, referring to Plato’s *Republic*, that it stood out as his authentic “*Apology*.”³ The reason, he asserted, was that it embodied the all-important tension inherent in the relationship between the philosopher and the political sphere. Similarly, that which concerned Santayana in writing this play in verse was “the place of philosophers and philosophy in human society” (PT 89) not, however, in a specifically political sense. *Philosophers at Court* (1901) is one of the overlooked orphans in Santayana’s *œuvre*,⁴ and along with *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* (1922), and *Dialogues in Limbo* (1926) it is a work, taken as a whole, which warrants consideration as one of his most suggestive creations. As reflective of Santayana’s increasing interest in Greek thought and cultural history, he betrays a more active, critical concern with the dramatization of the intellectual dynamics that he *imagines* taking place in the ancient Greek context.

My interest in this dramatic piece centers on Santayana’s depiction of Plato in his later years. Though it is a work of literature, it addresses a philosophical theme

³ The exact quote reads: “The *Republic* is the true *Apology* of Socrates, for only in the *Republic* does he give an adequate treatment of the theme which was forced on him by Athens’ accusation of him. That theme is the relationship of the philosopher to the political community” (Bloom 307).

⁴ The one exception to this is Cayetano Estébanez Estébanez. In his excellent study on Santayana’s literary creation, *La Obra Literaria de George Santayana*, he spends five pages discussing the play (Estébanez 2000, 176-181).

and an historical figure who was in the latter stages of his philosophical prime, and, still in many ways preoccupied with issues and problems that had concerned him earlier in his intellectual life. Santayana, after a lapse of some forty-plus years in 1941, wrote:

When this play was written, in the years 1897-1901, the principal critics regarded Plato's *Letters* as apocryphal. This circumstance perhaps encouraged me to go too far in fusing the various visits of Plato to Sicily and in modifying the incidents to suit my attention. That the *Letters*, or most of them, should be genuine would not touch my guiding interests in this composition. I am concerned less with Plato's history than with the place of philosophers and philosophy in human society. I think that place important not in directing governments but, like poetry and the fine arts, in bringing inspiration to a head and giving it concrete expression. (PT 89)

This quote reveals, quite incontrovertibly I would maintain, Santayana's conception of the fundamental concentrated activity of a philosophically inclined mind: it is not to assist any institutional, governmental, social, or explicit pedagogical purpose, but rather to function very much as an artist who bestows form to thought, to inspire, share, and communicate with other individuals who are in the process of fashioning and refashioning themselves as the corporealization of philosophical art, i.e., as self-reliant, self-composed, self-disciplined beings who through synthesizing, then living by, the rational and the sentient, achieve some semblance of *harmony* in their lives. *Harmony* in this instance meaning what Santayana would define in *A General Confession* as "an aesthetic principle," but "also the principle of health, of justice, and of happiness" (PGS 20)

We have Plato's own words to balance the license Santayana has taken in his rendition. And license it was.⁵ Plato's involvement in the affairs of Syracuse, with Dionysius the Younger (tyrant of Syracuse) and Dion (his uncle and brother-in-law), whatever they actually were, is a matter of historical conjecture. For his part though, in the seventh of the thirteen letters (which many classical scholars are convinced is authentic)⁶ Plato writes of his early disillusion with politics, and what brought him in the first place to consider at all involving himself in practical, social affairs:

⁵ Santayana considered Plato's thirteen reputed letters, which survive and are now accepted as part of the legitimate Platonic corpus, to be bogus at the time he wrote *Philosophers at Court*. Nevertheless he admits that he was not after historical accuracy. He writes: "I therefore intentionally transpose the dismissal of Plato from Syracuse under Dionysius the Elder to the time of Dion's supremacy, when in fact Plato was no longer in Sicily. By this device the Philosopher's discomfiture thereby becomes dramatically truer and deeper. The intervention of Plato would have proved no less useless and embarrassing under a superior hero than under a vulgar tyrant" (PT 89).

⁶ For a thorough discussion of this letter, see Guthrie 399-417.

I did not cease to consider how an improvement might be effected in this particular situation and in politics in general, and I remained on the watch for the right moment of action, but finally I came to the conclusion that the condition of all existing states is bad—nothing can cure their constitutions but a miraculous reform assisted by good luck—and I was driven to assert, in praise of true philosophy, that nothing else can enable one to see what is right for states and for individuals, and that the troubles of mankind will never cease until either true and genuine philosophers attain political power or the rulers of states by some dispensation of providence become genuine philosophers. (Seventh letter, Plato 114)

The focal point in *Philosophers at Court* lies in the tension between the philosophical and the political. Plato shares the philosophical stage with the materialist sophist Aristippus (who later would be one of the principal voices in *Dialogues in Limbo* [1926]), Antisthenes (considered by some subsequent philosophers and scholars to be the earliest manifestation of the *cynical* practice of philosophy) and one Antichthonicus, an obscure and marginal figure who seemingly was caught up in speculation framed in a geometrical mysticism. It is through their words that Santayana, very much like a tragedian, channels his thoughts as to why the political and the philosophical cannot meld into one, accommodating and mutually reinforcing outlook.⁷ In an early exchange between Plato and Dionysius, the latter entreats him to stay in the presence of his home and hospitality:

Dwelt you with Dion, coming here to me
 The steep ascent would tax your diligence
 And make your visits few; but dwelling here
 In your own house, surrounded by what friends
 You choose to bid, and screened from turbulence,
 You will have freedom and society,
 The world and silence, dear to laboring thoughts. (PT 127)⁸

And Plato responds:

Let me choose friendship and avoid the Court.
 Since I am neither king nor flatterer. (PT 127)

To which Dionysius laments:

Friendship! Alas, how far from kings it lies!
 Yet at court you were first were bound to Dion,
 Then my age. How much less fortunate
 Am I, who wear the crown, and need the friend
 More than young Dion did, or ever can! (PT 128)

The political conscience (Dionysius) recognizes its own isolation, its self-enclosed sphere of repetitive activity and function within the circumspection of any given society overall. Though its primary role is one of governing and exerting

⁷ Curiously enough, Dionysius the Younger, the realist, political perspective personified, would also appear in *Dialogues in Limbo*.

⁸ All quotations from *Philosophers at Court* (1901) are found in *The Poets Testament* (PT).

influence it is a disembodied and mediating one. As Santayana is portraying it (the role) lacks the cementing bond of understanding found in the phenomenon of sincere, active friendship (*philia*). In stark contrast, the philosophical conscience (Plato) seems resigned to going through the motions. Plato states that “it is duty that keeps me here” (PT 128). He nowhere mentions that he actually thinks that he can sway an individual caught up in the grind of political activity and concerns. Santayana intimates, that it is the duty springing from cherished friendship, not anything else, which keeps Plato from turning his back on such a situation.

The tension becomes clearly evident in the conversational exchanges that Santayana creates for Aristippus, Antisthenes, Antichthonicus, Dionysius’ page, his secretary, and a priest. The claims, counterclaims, and name-calling all intertwine to form a cacophony of voices all speaking with innumerable and shifting intentions and motivations. Add to this the appearance and active conversational participation of three witty courtesans, one “lifting her skirts” (PT 136), and one senses a farcical ambience overweighing the serious and the high-minded.

Plato reacts in a somewhat prudishly defensive way towards the courtesans’ further come-ons and offers to dance and play the flute. Refusing any further involvement, he leaves their presence. This incenses one of them, and she lashes out in a way that exacerbates the tension and ridicules all philosophical pretensions:

‘Tis clear these sophists
Are all stark mad. They strut about like peacocks,
Bursting with pride and shouting at the void
An unintelligible gibberish. (PT 149).

Dion greets Plato the next day after a night’s rest, and Plato, refreshed and trenchant in his observations, tells his friend:

. . . For if our dreams should die with us
They were not worth the dreaming, the rare joy
Of contemplation then were bought too dear
With anguish and estrangement from the world
And joys foregone in vain. But dreams are good,
If that same world from which the vision sprang—
For from the heart of things we cull their hopes
To make a heaven with—would yet be changed
To something like the ineffable accord
Which, murmured by Apollo to the gods,
Makes all their rapture! Ah, if you were king— (PT 145).

To which now Dion turns the tables on Plato and insinuates that he too, willingly or not, is a sycophant. Plato, a flatterer? This is a disturbing thought. Furthermore, could not the case be made that any individual, acting in a private capacity, in attempting to influence another autonomous agent or group as to who or what one is, from necessity must appeal to some sense of vanity or self-importance? Few are the individuals who can be won over by sheer argument and reason. Santayana gives Dion the voice to say

I am not king, but he who fills the throne
Is haply more obedient to your voice

Than I might be. Go to him; flatter him
 Not with low words, but with severe demands,
 Dare trust his honour, strengthen his resolves,
 Curtail his follies, curb his minister,
 Smooth out with ampler truths his prying mind
 And swell his mocking heart to nobleness. (PT 145-56).

There is a tragic tension here in what *education* implies. Writing in *Persons and Places*, Santayana tells us that that he had great difficulty in the early years of his teaching (1890-94) with understanding the educational goals and mission of the professoriate, of which he had just become a formal member.⁹ Mirroring Plato's claim that comes at the end of the seventh letter that philosophy along with the self-discipline to live it out, in order to make it a part of one's everyday existence, *cannot be taught*,¹⁰ Santayana sensed himself out of sorts, pedagogically speaking, in an activity that, truth be told, was a functional contradiction:

I think, however, that lectures, like sermons, are usually unprofitable. Philosophy can be communicated only by being evoked; the pupil's mind must be engaged dialectically in the discussion. Otherwise, all that is, the *phrases*, that various philosophers have rendered famous. To conceive what those phrases meant or could mean would require a philosophical imagination in a public which cannot be demanded (PP 391).

This is a stinging criticism of what we could consider today as introductory courses in philosophy. At least it is an effort to be honest and realistic. And though there were other factors, some quite personal, which contributed to Santayana's eventual departure from the university and academic life in general in 1912, it is hard to imagine that this was not at the top of the list. The educational arena gives rise also to tentional contexts and situations where one's inherent values on education were subject to strain, and Santayana being aware of them and suffering through them, was always ill-at-ease with them.

Notwithstanding the good fortune of having been influenced by the excellence of a gifted educator, an individual must in the course of one's development frame

⁹ For a discussion of his days as a professor at Harvard see PP 389-414.

¹⁰ Plato's own claim reads: "But those who are not genuinely lovers of wisdom, in whom philosophy is no more than a superficial veneer like the tan men get by exposing themselves to the sun, once they see how much there is to learn and the labour involved and the disciplined way of life that the subject requires, decide that the task is too hard for them and beyond their scope....I know some others have also written on the same topics, but such men are ignorant even of themselves. But this much at any rate I can affirm about any present or future writers who pretend to knowledge of the matters with which I concern myself, whether they claim to have been taught by me or by a third party or to have discovered the truth for themselves; in my judgement it is impossible that they should have any understanding of the subject. No treatise by me concerning it exists or ever will exist. It is not something that can put into words like other branches of learning" (Seventh letter, Plato 135-36).

it in a proper perspective. The independence and isolated separateness of the individual is again emphasized in the following lines of Dion:

And Plato's crown
Is even richer; for instead of sons
He has all noble souls for progeny;
In lieu of victories won on battlefields
For one small city, he has won for mind
A triumph over sense and folly.
Now the high pleasures of his fruitful age
Merge with the gift of immortality.
Yet, when the promise of his life was young
He had a larger heart. Accomplish
Has withered up fertility. He's old
Alas! Methought there lived one mortal yet
For Dion to take counsel with, one spirit
Untainted by the world. 'Twas not to be.
I stand alone: alone I may stand,
For still the stars shine over me, the gods
Approve, and the unnumbered galaxy
Of Lacedaemon's dead heroic sons. (PT 164-65).

Caught in the machinations of court intrigue and political maneuvering against the threat of philosophy and thought, Dion is banished from Syracuse. The tragic foible that Santayana attributes to the political can just as easily to the educational. Both can, to varying degrees and in conjunction with other factors, vitiate the autonomy and authenticity of a philosophical life:¹¹

Courts were never fit
For absolute intellects; who dwells at Court
Sooner or later catches from the world
The prevalent infection—lust of honour—
And, false to science, itches to be known
Rather than know. Fame spoils philosophy. (PT 165-66).

Does this not, in a literary work, not from his personal letters or simply knowing how he lived his own life, give us an insight into Santayana's own living-in-exile evasiveness, his worldly vagabondage wrapped with an exclusive reclusion his stoic cosmopolitanism, and his disdain for the spotlight? I think it does.

¹¹ Pierre Hadot, in the last chapter of his *Philosophy as a Way of Life* describes the philosophical enterprise as a self-renewing and self-transforming activity that is isolatable from the expression or the teaching of that activity. This very much corresponds to the philosophical life that Santayana effected from the time of his graduate student days. Two short quotes indicate this. The first: "Thus, philosophy was a way of life, both in its exercise and effort to achieve wisdom, and in its goal, wisdom itself. For real wisdom does not merely cause us to know; it makes us 'be' in a different way" (Hadot 265); and the second: "Wisdom, then, was a way of life which brought peace of mind (*ataraxia*), inner freedom (*autarkia*), and a cosmic consciousness" (Hadot 265-55).

The tragic denouement of the drama transpires in the final exchange between Plato and Dion. Dion, after having been exiled by the tyrant-king Dionysius the Younger (his uncle and brother-in-law), has returned with a force of men under arms, triumphantly to Syracuse. Plato, having been kept against his will in Syracuse, embraces Dion's return as heralding the possibility of something unprecedented. Plato insists that philosophy can wed the political in the figure of Dion:

What strength is mine,
Dion, is at your service. Counsel, laws,
And maxims for the new born commonwealth
I will prepare with utmost diligence,
Inspired by reason and unflinching love
Of righteousness. The world will never mend
Till, by the grace of heaven, power and philosophy
Be married in one mind. (PT 202).

Then Dion, in a moment of brutal realism, declaims:

You have thrice proved your zeal to give good laws
To thankless men. Let that suffice. Return
To your Academy. The land of letters
Is Athens: Pallas there will weave your words.
Here we are Spartans now, and our ways Spartan
Hasten to Athens. Write, write, there's nothing better
Now left for you to do: nothing better
For musing spirits in many a future age
Than to read and re-read you. (PT 203).

Philosophers at Court is formally a tragi-comedy. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that Santayana relies much more heavily on the tragic. One could speculate as to why he even chose to include comic strains within the play. It could very well have been the case that he employed the comic in order to throw into relief, in a more satirical and even burlesque way, the *pretensions* of philosophers. Furthermore, if we consider for a moment here the idea put forth by Walter Kerr in the first chapter, "The Tragic Source of Comedy," of his book *Tragedy and Comedy* that the comic is "simply the underside of things, after the rock of our hearts has been lifted, with effort and only temporarily. It appears in the absence of something and as the absence of something" (Kerr 19). we glimpse the contrast he does see as a bona fide tragic tension (the political and philosophical, and the philosophical and educational) represented by Plato and Dion, and the philosophical and sophistical embodied in such figures as Aristippus, Antisthenes, Antichthonicus, and the three courtesans (who hint at their own version of life as the expression of free, unbridled erotic love). Unquestionably, the tragic permeates the comic scenes. The comic is efficacious as the comic only when it fulfills its potential as relief vis-à-vis the tragic. And the ending of the play evokes nothing but the tragic recognition of the incompatibility of the political and the philosophical. Within the play, there is the dynamic interplay between authentic philosophy and the educational methods by which it is taught and through which it is passed on.

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Santayana's Repression of Goethe¹

This is the third of David Dilworth's articles on Santayana and Modernism. We published the first, "Santayana's Anti-Romanticism versus Stevens's New Romanticism," in 2017. That article served as an introduction to Dilworth's three-part analysis of Santayana's criticism of literary and philosophic trends that emerged following the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Last year (2019) we published the first two parts: Dilworth's general analysis of Santayana on modernity and his assessment of what he sees as a repression of Ralph Waldo Emerson. This third focuses on Johann Goethe and ends with Dilworth's overall conclusion.

A decade after *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900), Santayana lectured at Columbia University on topics he then published under the title of *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910) which featured Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe. In a powerful conclusion he argued for the non-reducible insights of these historically iconic figures, together with the need for the arrival of a new poet who could synthesize the essential thoughts of all three. Dante's supernaturalism, he critically concluded, proves to have been chimerical; Lucretius's worldview yields too few naturalistic palms other than a conservative hygiene of body and mind and freedom from supernatural anxieties. For its part, Goethe's *Faust*, he charged, represents a self-absorbed transcendental subjectivity associated with the errors of German idealistic philosophy and of romanticism generally—an argument further developed in his chapter on Goethe in *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916), and repeated somewhat mechanically thereafter in later writings. Among other things, Santayana here deliberately collided with Emerson's encomium of Goethe in "Goethe or, The Writer," one of the six chapters of his *Representative Men* (1850). As Emerson's biographer has indicated, Goethe's influential presence in Emerson's writings, mediated by Margaret Fuller, was in fact pervasive and deep-seated.²

Here again it can be noted that Santayana's anti-modern temperament already expressed itself in his *presumptively negative* reaction against Goethe. As Gustav Van Kromphout has cogently spelled out, Goethe was the first progenitor and the greatest embodiment of *modernity* itself, and it was his "example" that Emerson

¹ The present paper, like the preceding two, augments and recomposes the author's paper "Interpretaciones de poesía y religión: Santayana sobre Goethe y Emerson con la guía del romanticismo tardío postmoderno de Stevens," pp. 245-260, in *Santayana: Un Pensador Universal*, ed. José Beltrán and Manuel Garrido, Sergio Sevilla 2011.

² Emerson's biographer Robert Richardson notes that "the effect of Goethe on Emerson is nearly impossible to overestimate" and that "Goethe laid down fundamental lessons that over the years became parts of Emerson's own bedrock" (Wayne 2010, 341-342).

Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), co-founder and co-editor with Emerson of the transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*, published several books and translations of the works of Goethe as well as translating Johann Peter Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*. Margaret Fuller gave Emerson German lessons—and they probably read Goethe together. See "Margaret Fuller" (1810-1850) in Wayne 2010. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) wrote on Goethe in the 1820s; James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888), close friend of Margaret Fuller and fluent in German, also contributed translations of Goethe in Emerson's day.

perceptively absorbed. Further to the same point, Goethe powerfully influenced the philosophy of the young Schelling when they were together at Jena, and this was to become another provenance for Emerson in the generation before Santayana's appearance on the Harvard scene (Van Kromphout 1990).³

Except for his chapter on Faust in *Three Philosophical Poets*, Santayana never expended any scholarly effort in accounting for Goethe's career accomplishments or intellectual leadership role in Weimar and Jena. Nor, from his undergraduate days on, did he ever comment on Emerson's astute estimations of Goethe. In his *Some Representative Men* (1850), Emerson featured "Goethe: or, the Writer" as one of seven exemplary wise men of the "ascendant spiraling of nature" (together with Plato the philosopher, Shakespeare the poet, Swedenborg the mystic, Montaigne the skeptic, and Napoleon the man of the world.) In so estimating Goethe's iconic place in higher civilization, Emerson particularly keyed Goethe's modernity. He called Goethe "the soul of his century," possessed of a mind that had "ample chambers for the distribution of all the accumulating glut of facts of his time," so as to have "clothed our modern existence with poetry. Amid littleness and detail, he detected the Genius of life, the old cunning Proteus, nestling close beside us, and showed that the dullness and prose we ascribe to our age was only another of his masks" (Emerson 1983, 713). Again, Goethe showed

the lurking daemonic power; that in action of routine, a thread of mythology and fable spins itself: and this, by tracing the pedigree of every usage and practice, every institution, utensil, and means, home to its origin in the structure of man." (Emerson 1983, 753)

With Goethe's unique genius of "putting ever a thing for a word"—Emerson further opined—he "has explained the distinction between the antique and the modern spirit and art" (Emerson 1983, 753). Not only did Goethe suggest the leading ideas of modern botany, osteology, and optics, in his lifework Faust, he notoriously "flew at the throat of this imp"—namely, the very devil of traditional theology!—making

³ See also Richard (2005), which details how Goethe interacted with the young Schelling (as previously with Friedrich von Schiller) during formative philosophic years of the *Jena-zeit*. Goethe criticized his neighbor Hegel's "dialectical disease" of abstract logical involutions, and he reacted both positively and negatively to Kant. Several of his influential poems and prose pieces expressed a vitalized Spinozism which rejected Kant's mechanistic view of nature (as in Kant's first *Critique*) and worried over Kant's "regulative only" restriction of aesthetic and teleological intuitions of nature to the transcendental form of the reflecting judgment (as in Kant's third *Critique*). Goethe collaborated with the young Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. Goethe's (or the young Schelling's!) poetico-ontological sense of the interpermeating continuum of nature and mind appears in such poems as *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen* (The Metamorphosis of Plants, 1798), *Weltseele* (World Soul, 1801) *Metamorphose der Tiere* (Metamorphosis of Animals, 1806), *Epirrhema* (c. 1818), *Antepirrhema* (c. 1819), *Natur und Kunst* (Nature and Art, 1800), *In tausend Formen* (A Thousand Forms, 1815): See *Goethe: The Collected Works; Volume One: Selected Poems*, ed. Christopher Middleton (1994). Besides his *Faust, Parts One and Two*, Goethe's poetry greatly impacted Emerson and his colleagues in the next generation on the American side of the Atlantic. Schopenhauer knew and idolized Goethe. In his *Aesthetic Letters* Friedrich von Schiller extolled him as a paradigm of the poetic genius.

him “real,” “modern,” “European,” “dressed like a gentleman,” and having the manners, and walking the streets, and be well initiated “in the life of Vienna, and of Heidelberg, in 1820.” And he thus “flung into literature, in his Mephistopheles, the first organic figure that had been added for some ages, and which will remain as long as the Prometheus” (Emerson 1983, 754). In Goethe’s “numerous works of translations, criticisms, dramas, lyric and every other description of poems, literary journals, and portraits of distinguished men” —Emerson continued—what distinguished him for French, English, and American readers, was Goethe’s “habitual reference to interior truth” (Emerson 1983, 756). “Talent alone can not make a writer. There must be a man behind the book; a personality which, by birth and quality, is pledged to the doctrines there set forth.” “Goethe, the head and body of the German nation, does not speak from talent, but the truth shines through: he is very wise, though his talent often veils his wisdom. However excellent his sentence is, he has somewhat better in view. It awakens my curiosity” (Emerson 1983, 757). Emerson thus regarded Goethe as the exemplary modern writer

not because of his devotion to pure truth, but to truth for the sake of culture. He has no aims less large than the conquest of universal nature, of universal truth, to be his portion. He is the type of culture, the amateur of all arts, and sciences, and events; artistic, but not artist; spiritual, but not spiritualist.” (Emerson 1983, 758)

Accordingly, in the final estimation of Goethe in *Some Representative Men*, Emerson conjoined him with Napoleon, both being “representatives of the impatience and reaktion of nature against the morgue of conventions,—two stern realists who . . . have severally set the axe at the root of the tree of cant and seeming, for this time, and for all time” (Emerson 1983, 761). “The secret of genius,” Emerson concluded,

is to suffer no fiction to exist for use; to realize all that we know; in the high refinement of modern life, in arts, in sciences, in books, in men, to exact good faith, reality, and a purpose; and first, last, midst, and without end, to honor every truth by use. (Emerson 1983, 761)

In addition to a plethora of references to Goethe’s writing before and after “Goethe: or, the Writer” (1850), Emerson, towards the twilight of his career, recognized Goethe as one of his most important muses. In his 1867 poem “Solution,” published in *May-Day and Other Pieces* (reprinted in *Poems*, 1884), he featured Goethe as one of the five thinkers from whom he drew his closest inspiration. The poem’s title was an “answer poem” to an earlier poem, “The Test,” which had been published in the *Atlantic Monthly* of 1861, but the complete draft of which was not finished until 1862 after he recomposed four separate drafts, all with significant variations. In “The Test” Emerson’s Muse (“Musa loquitur”) averred that in a lifetime of hanging verses on the wind, only “Five lines lasted sound and true,—only five / Which five hundred did survive.” In “Solution” his Muse reveals these five most intimate “lines” of inspiration in his soul—Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, and Goethe. Set in an evolutionary perspective beginning with the dawning of the first day of creation and progressing through the ages until “Earth smiled with flowers, and man was born,” the poem alludes to earlier historical stages of civilization until

“Forward stepped the perfect Greek” (HOMER), followed by DANTE, who “searched the triple spheres” of medieval worldview, followed by “the orbit and sum of SHAKESPEARE’S wit,” followed by the mystical earth-and-sky symbolism of “the Swede EMANUEL,” and finally by GOETHE. In another appreciation of Goethe’s modernity, Emerson’s Muse avers that Goethe:

In newer days of war and trade,
Romance forgot and faith decayed,
Drew the firm lines of Fate and Life
And brought Olympian wisdom down
To court and mart, to gown and town;
Stooping, his finger wrote in clay
The open secret of to-day.

Emerson’s Muse ends this personal avowal of his nearest poetic inspirations with the lines: “So bloom the unfading petals five, / And verses that all verse outlive.” (Emerson 1994, 173-75)

Here I will concentrate on Santayana’s deconstructive mis-reading of Goethe’s masterpiece, *Faust, Parts One and Two*, which focuses exclusively on this work and does not extend to the wealth of Goethe’s other poetic, dramatic, and novelistic writings. Santayana’s reading of *Faust* took the form of his own fusion of the personality of Goethe with the hero of his “tragic-comedy.” Santayana does not give much play to Mephistopheles, who presumably represented another aspect of Goethe’s creative imagination. (It might be said that Santayana, in fact, plays the Mephistophelean role of destructive ironist in his study.) In reality, of course, the polymathic and multi-tasking genius of Goethe contained so much more than even his career-masterpiece, *Faust*, expressed. But here in *Three Philosophical Poets*, as again in *Egotism in German Philosophy*, Santayana’s cultural criticism worked to conflate Goethe’s personality and career-work as evidence of “modern Romanticism.”

In both writings, Santayana repressed Goethe’s masterpiece *Faust*, reductively portraying it as “a theory of radical experience,” one that is “arrogant” and “egotistical” in its “endlessness and purposelessness”—and, of course, as the very mother of all Germanic “transcendental egotisms.” The problem here is that Santayana indulged in this overwrought description of Goethe as a straw man for his own doctrinal promotions inscribed in his recently published *Life of Reason* and other early writings. In net effect, for his own polemical purposes, he deflated Goethe’s brilliant, timeless, archetypal literary masterpiece into a historicist doctrine. His account of Goethe, limited to *Faust*, did not take the full measure of the German’s lyrical genius, wealth of aphoristic writings, and extensive Nature Studies, nor—as we will see—even the full range of subtleties of his conception of *Faust* as portrayed in Johann Peter Eckermann’s *Conversations of Goethe* (a work praised by Nietzsche as the greatest work of German prose).

Contrary to Santayana’s “radical empiricist”—a swipe at William James, in passing?—narrow-banded interpretation of Goethe’s *Faust* in *Three Philosophical Poets*, let me provide here a more generous *exegesis* of the text. Neglected by Santayana, I intend to account for the hero Faust’s spiritual development (*Entwicklung*) in Part Two, which involves his transcendence of the tragically mundane adventures

of Part One, his synthesis of the Gothic world and Greek classicism, as well as finally his rejection of the devil's magic and Faust's salvation by divine grace, in Part Two.

A key passage presaging these affirmative outcomes comes at the beginning of Part Two when Faust wakes up from a magically refreshing sleep and vows to pursue "the highest human existence" (*zum höchsten Dasein*).⁴ Another key passage, Part Two's surprising ending, features, against the medieval tradition, *Faust's salvation*, which symbolically expressed Goethe's musings on his immortal entelechy that he propounded on various occasions to Eckermann.⁵ We should note that this theme of his soul's "entelechy" dovetailed with Goethe's central tenets concerning *productive agency (die Tat)* announced in an earlier scene of Part One. Compounding these intratextual resonances, the interpretive key to Goethe's poetically symbolized "final signified" is the mysterious "Eternal-Feminine," itself the ultimate form of the metamorphoses of many female avatars in the course of Faust's birthing (*Entstehen*, genesis) into eternal life. By the end of Part Two, the Eternal-Feminine (*das Ewig-Weibliche*) symbolizes the "supreme fiction" of the co-operating divine activity in its productive, loving, forgiving, grace-conferring, affirmative power over against and beyond Mephistopheles's avowal to bring everything back to Eternal-Emptiness (*das Ewig-Leere*).

In the first 'Faust Study' scene of Part One, Mephistopheles introduces himself as "the spirit of perpetual negation" whose only element is that of *life-destroying fire* (lines 1335-78); and Faust recognizes him as "the strange son of chaos," the arch-enemy who raises in cold rage his clenched satanic fist against life (1379-85). To bring Faust's soul down into the fires of hell, Mephistopheles takes him on all kinds of lowlife adventures. Fast-forwarding to the scene in which Faust is being laid in the grave prior to his soul's redemption, Mephistopheles utters a triumphant repetition of his own philosophy of Eternal-Void:

Why bother to go on creating?

⁴ *Faust*, Part Two, lines 4679-4685:

Des Lebens Pulse schlagen frisch lebendig,
Ätherische Dämmerung milde zu begrüßen;
Du, Erde, warst auch diese Nacht beständig
Und armest new erquickt zu meinen Füßen.
Beginnest schon, mit Lust mich zu umgeben,
Du regst und rührst ein kräftiges Beschleissen,
Zum höchsten Dasein immerfort zu streben.

How strong and pure the pulse of life is beating!
Dear Earth, this night has left you still unshaken,
And at my feet you breathe refreshed, my greeting
To you, ethereal dawn! New joys awaken
All round me at your bidding, beckoning distance,
New stirring strength, new resolution taken
To strive on still towards supreme existence. (transl. David Luke)

⁵ Pertinent for *Faust, Part Two*, which culminates in Faust's salvation by the Eternal-Feminine, are Goethe's own musings on his entelechy (that is, the soul's incessant appetite for its own internal perfection by nature and grace).

Making, then endlessly annihilating!
 ‘Over and past!’ What’s that supposed to mean?
 It’s no more than if it had never been,
 Yet it goes stumbling round as if it were.
 The Eternal Void is what I’d much prefer.
 (lines 11595-11164)

Mephistopheles’ key lines concerning the Eternal-Void are expressed in the subjunctive case (*Ich liebte mir dafür das Ewig-Leere*). As we have intimated, Mephistopheles is to be trumped by the last saving lines of the entire play, *das Ewig-Weibliche / Zieht uns hinan* (“Eternal-Womanhood / Draws us on high”).

Now, almost all of this rich literary fare is put under erasure by Santayana’s account. His chapter on *Faust*, in net effect, *under-reports* how Goethe clearly intended this final confrontation between *das Ewig-Leere* (“The Eternal Void”) and *das Ewig-Weibliche* (“Eternal-Womanhood”) which, in symbolic form, represents the sublation of Mephistopheles’s negativity into the higher positivity of Faust’s salvation. But again, we must note that his hero Faust, for all his incessant labors and magical adventures, did not achieve his own salvation. He is *redeemed* through the loving intercession of Gretchen, who personifies the Eternal-Feminine more symbolically than Helen of Troy and all the other human and mythological female characters of the play. In overall effect, Faust’s “romantic” strivings (*Streben, Entstehen*) and spiritual development (*Entwicklung*)—as well as those of his pre-human counterpart, the idiot savant “Homunculus” of Part Two (symbolic of Goethe’s scientific proclivities and of mankind’s origins in the organic evolution of the world)—fuse with the *generative love* of the Eternal-Feminine. All this consummatory poetic symbolism runs counter to Santayana’s “episodic” mis-interpretation of “false endlessness”!

Already in Part One, a famous line 1238 contains Goethe’s hermeneutical principle, as he portrays Faust as tweaking the New Testament to his own purposes. Faust’s interpretation of the Bible boldly displaces any metaphysics of abstract *Logos, Sinn, or Kraft* in the words: “In the beginning was the Deed (*In Amfang war die Tat*).”⁶ In the dramatic finale of Part Two we come to see that it harbingered the

⁶ *Faust*, Part One, lines 1224 ff. :

‘In the beginning was the *Word*’; why, now [*das Wort*]
 I’m stuck already! I must change that; how?
 Is then ‘the word’ so great and high a thing?
 There is some other rendering,
 Which with the spirit’s guidance I must find.
 We read: ‘In the beginning was the *Mind*.’ [*der Sinn*]
 Before you write the first phrase, think again;
 Good sense eludes the overhasty pen.
 Does ‘mind’ set worlds on their creative course?
 It means: ‘In the beginning was the *Force*’, [*die Kraft*]
 So it should be—but as I write this too,
 Some instinct warns me that it will not do.
 The spirit speaks! I see how it must read,
 And boldly write: ‘In the beginning was the *Deed*’. [*die Tat*]

Eternal-Feminine's merciful power at work in the universe over and above but in co-operation with human activity. Goethe turned the tables on the medieval chapbooks in another ingenious way when he portrayed the Eternal-Feminine's grace as working to save not only Faust's "immortal part" but Mephistopheles' as well!

Once again, true to his own deconstructive agenda, Santayana repressed the literary ingenuity and intuitional networking of these inter-resonating scenes. He rather depicted the scene of Faust's salvation as just another one of his "episodes" along a horizontal line of endlessly discontinuous experiences characteristic of the modern romantic mind. But let us let Goethe declare his own "final signifier" on the interpretation of *Faust*, Part Two. In *Conversations with Goethe*, Eckermann reports as follows:

We then spoke of the conclusion (of *Faust*, Part Two), and Goethe directed my attention to the passage:

Delivered is the noble spirit
 From the control of evil powers;
 Who ceaselessly doth strive will merit
 That we should save and make him ours:
 If Love celestial never cease
 To watch him from its upper sphere;
 The children of eternal peace
 Bear him to cordial welcome there.
 (lines 11934-11941)

"In these lines," said he, [Eckermann continues to report Goethe's words],"is contained the key to Faust's salvation":

In Faust himself there is an activity that becomes constantly higher and purer to the end, and from above there is eternal love coming to his aid. This harmonizes perfectly with our religious views; according to which we can obtain heavenly bliss, not through our own strength alone, but with the assistance of divine grace.

You will confess that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage; and that, amid such supersensual matters about which we scarcely have even an intimation, I might easily have lost myself in the vague—if I had not, by means of sharply-drawn figures, and images from the Christian Church, given my poetical design a desirable form and substance.'

These are Goethe's own words in 1831 on the "final signified" of his *Faust*! As well, according to Goethe's paralipomena, his earliest plans for *Faust*, dating from 1770-75, already included a conception both of the Helena story and of Faust's salvation, both of which became significant features of Part Two (which was only begun around 1816). As noted above, Goethe's plans here were indeed unique, running against the grain of the received tradition. His salvation of Faust explicitly traversed the medieval chapbooks and puppet plays which featured Faust's selling his soul to the Devil; it also reversed Thomas Marlowe's similar portrayal of the

perdition of Faust, a traditional denouement that was revived by Thomas Mann's *Dr. Faustus*.

Santayana's *misreading* of Goethe is no more transparent than here. But the bigger issue of interpretation becomes that of placing Goethe's *Faust* within the general framework of his pro-ontological romanticism. According to Van Kromphout's well documented analysis, Goethe's way of thinking transmuted Plotinian emanationism and Spinozan pantheism by considering nature as "completing" spirit. Goethe's revitalization of Spinoza became the trajectory of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* phase (c. 1797-99) first articulated in those *Jena-zeit* years. This revitalization of Spinoza was to be a key component in the trans-Atlantic paradigm transmitted to 19th-century American transcendentalism and eventually to Peirce. In Emerson's analogous version, spirit achieves "natural embodiment" in the sense that "the world realizes mind." The ontological focus of these writers emphasizes co-operative "ripeness" and "fruition," a theme played out constantly in their respective poetics of the *kairos*, the fullness of time in "the eternal moment" (*Der Augenblick ist Ewigkeit*). As Goethe said to Eckermann: "Every moment has infinite worth because it is representative (*Repräsentant*) of all eternity." Similar passages occur in Emerson. For example, the idea governs one of his favorite poems, "Days." Another signification of essential (ontological) productivity is the positive deed (*die Tat*) which Goethe inscribed in Faust's struggle to translate St. John in lines 1224-37. *Im Anfang war die Tat* reaches fruition at the end of Part Two, where deficiency (*das Unzulängliche*) and ineffability (*das Unbeschreibliche*) find their culminating divine realization in "Event" and "Deed" (*hier wird's Ereignis . . . / Hier ist's getan*)—Goethe's famous concluding words that were to inspire Mahler's Eighth Symphony.⁷

As Emerson came to appreciate, the entire *ensemble* of *Faust, Parts One and Two*, was Goethe's expression of archetypal *poiesis* in realization of essential Ideas in Nature. Its fantastic characters (Chirons, Griffins, Sirens, Sea Nymphs, Phorcyads, Leda and her daughter Helena, Proteus, Nereus, Galatea, and a score of others), he wrote, "are eternal entities, as real today as in the first Olympiad." Emerson goes on to praise Goethe's imagination as follows:

Much revolving them he writes out freely his humour, and gives them body to his own imagination. And though that poem be as vague and fantastic as a dream, yet it is much more attractive than the more regular dramatic pieces of the same author, for the reason that it operates a wonderful relief to the mind from the routine of customary images,—awakens the reader's invention and

⁷ *Faust*, Part Two, final lines, 12104-12109:

Alles Vergängliche,
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird's Ereignis;
Das Unbeschreibliche,
Hier ist's getan;
Das Ewig-weißliche,
Zieht uns hinan.

fancy by the wild freedom of the design, and by the unceasing succession of brisk shock of surprise. (Emerson 1983, 751)⁸

What is more, *Faust, Part Two*, was not only Goethe's "phantasmagoria of imagination" (as he wrote in the Prelude); it represented his basic ontological vitalism. The ultimate surprise and "final signified" turn out to be Faust's salvation through the intercession of Gretchen, signifying his central doctrine of the positive fruition of creative striving. But even there, it should be noted that just as Mephistopheles proclaims her eternal damnation in the closing scene of Part I, a surprising voice from on high—*Ist gerettet!* ("She is saved!" line 4612)—announces *her* salvation, at the same time preparing the way for Faust's salvation at the end of Part II. As noted above, Emerson, the Transcendentalist philosopher and poet, became a chief conduit for 19th-century American appropriation of the connotatively polysemic expressions of Goethe's text. Emerson deeply assimilated Goethe's nature pantheism, itself an "organic" vitalization of Spinoza via Schelling. Much that is most characteristic of Goethe—for instance, his identification of truth with fruitfulness of experience (*Was fruchtbar ist, allein ist wahr*); his claims that the essence of human nature requires productivity of expression and that the historical realization of an archetypal Idea is the only test of its truth or falsehood; his indifference to anything unlikely to advance (*fördern*) his development—carried over into Emerson and informed the later formulations of American pragmatism by Peirce and James. Unlike Hegel's, Goethean and Emersonian "Nature" is not a "defection" (*Abfall*) from the Idea, but rather its necessary incarnation.

In short, Emerson assimilated Goethe's Romanticism and hit the ground running. Thus, for example, Emerson's "Days creep by, each full of facts, dull, strange, despised things . . ." ends with a celebration of the *arrival* of "inconceivably remote purpose and laws"—of animating, enlivening World-Spirit—"on the shores of Being and into the ripeness and domain of Nature" (Van Kromphout 47). Accordingly, in his 1841 address "The Method of Nature," Emerson wrote: "The termination of the world in a man, appears to be the last victory of intelligence. . . An individual man is a fruit which it cost all the foregoing ages to form and ripen" (Emerson 122). In "Nature" (1844), Emerson went on to exclaim:

Man carries the world in his head, the whole astronomy and chemistry suspended in a thought. Because the history of nature is characted in his brain, therefore is he the prophet and discoverer of her secrets. (Emerson 122)

Or again,

The world is mind precipitated, and the volatile essence is forever escaping again into the state of free thought. Hence the virtue and pungency of the influence on the mind, of natural objects, whether inorganic or organized. Man imprisoned, man crystallized, man vegetative, speaks to man impersonated. (Emerson 122)

⁸ In "Goethe; or, The Writer," in *Representative Men*, 1860 (Emerson 1983, 611-762).

Similar Goethean passages abound in such other celebrated essays as “History,” “Self-Reliance,” “Circles.” (These are also clear precedents for Peirce’s doctrine of the synechistic affinity of nature and mind.)

Returning to Goethe’s *Faust*, it is fair to point out that Santayana’s blinkered vision mis-read one of the world’s greatest literary classics. *Faust* was not “radically empiricist” in a pejorative sense of an endlessly episodic tragedy, rather a symbolic expression of the metamorphoses and prosperous issues of ontologically productive human activity. (This expression was of course central to William James’s radical empiricism.) It evades the normal conventions of continuous plot and moral character-formation in its time-free profusion of symbolic correspondences, its multidimensionality of chthonic, terrestrial, and celestial horizons, and its kaleidoscopic free play of wit and irony.

All of this Santayana, of course, could relate to as “literary” work, but the exigency of his portrayal of Goethe’s work as symbolic of modern egotistic romanticism—in contrast with his preferred cultural symbolics of Lucretius and Dante in *Three Philosophical Poets*,—strait-jacketed his interpretation. He deflated it to the terms of his polemical culture criticism. And he mis-interpreted the final signification of *Faust* as a whole, which consisted in the interplay of the terms of *Streben*, *Entwicklung*, *Sehnsucht* in the linkage between the lines of *Im Anfang war die Tat* of Part One and the final lines of Part Two, *hier wird’s Ereignis . . . / Hier ist’s getan*.

In *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916, reissued in 1939), Santayana had a chance to do better with Goethe. However, his account of Goethe there begins with once again labeling him an “instinctive egotist” and ends with his grouping Goethe and Emerson together as “absolute egotists”—both figures falling prey to his procrustean cultural reductionism that converted literary genius into historicist, psycho-sociological categories.

Conclusion

In retrospect, Santayana’s misinterpretation of Goethe’s *Faust* imposed a historicist straitjacket of egotistical romanticism on a timeless literary masterpiece. Like his polemical account of Emerson, his interpretation of Goethe—and of both as iconic symbols of his *bête noire*, northern European Protestant modernity—enacted his own anti- or post-romantic philosophy. His animus endured into his old age when he captured both in the phrase “Emerson, the Puritan Goethe.” He grounded his anti-modernism in the terms and presuppositions of his Epicurean “life of reason,” an advocacy which later flowered in the production of *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and the four volumes of *The Realms of Being* and other later-phase writings. My immediate purpose here has been to redress whatever historical damage Santayana’s misinterpretations may have caused or still cause among his readers as well as to address fundamental philosophic issues.

Back, then, to foundational philosophic issues. I have stressed above that Santayana’s own account of human experience, comprised of the two factors of skepticism and animal faith, while it valorizes the life of the imagination qua “life of the

spirit," does so on an epiphenomenal ground. His "life of the spirit" is essentially a misnomer, a *contradictio in adjecto*.

Santayana ostensibly agreed with Goethe's and Emerson's vitalistic conceptions of nature (*natura naturans*), their anti-dogmatism, anti-rationalism, anti-bluff empiricism, and their attendant senses of spontaneity and open-ended play of the imagination—and not in terms of a "progressive politics" of either a left-progressive or Marxist sort—but in pursuit of the classical ideals of the True, the Good, and the Beautiful. His naturalism might be construed as a function of his synthesis of pragmatism, which he inherited from William James, and of idealism, which he inherited from Royce, and never an "extravagant" metaphysical doctrine. But Santayana crucially diverged from James and Royce in adding his skeptical Platonism to his naturalistic perspective. This combination of skeptical Platonism and materialistic naturalism converged in his bottom line "modest Epicurean humanism." To be sure, it is a rare combination. My thesis has been that this rare philosophic combination allowed him consistently to advance both his "life of reason" and "life of the spirit" as strategic components of his anti-romanticism.

But we have seen that these two trajectories—of "the life of reason" and of "the spiritual life"—the latter in the form of endorsing "the highest poetry" that takes the place of religion—were already the front and center *idealistic* contributions of Goethe and Emerson. In its own way Santayana's philosophy *shadowed* their romanticism of experience free of the dogmas of the past and grounded in a "vital" naturalism. But his "life of the spirit" remains an internally contradictory concept if there is no *life* in spirit.

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Further Reflections on Culture, Humanism, and Individualism in the Context of Santayana's Political Thought

The word politics has a nobler and a meaner sense, and it is only in the latter that most people use it. It may mean what relates to policy and to polity—to the purposes of human cooperation and the constitution of society—or it may mean what relates to the *instruments* of policy only, as for instance to the form of government or to the persons who shall carry it on. (DP 164)

Santayana took account of both these meanings and dimensions of politics. The latter, as manifest in the extant socio-political arrangements, became the subject of his description and criticism, the former he projected imaginatively in the form of a rationally governed state (empire) providing for its citizens opportunities for flourishing and thereby making their life worth living. The associated idea of vital liberty became a criterion for judgment of the forms of political power. Just like Plato in the *Republic*, Santayana was aware that the ideal *politeia* could never be realized in practice; neither did he wish to offer solutions to concrete problems of the day. But the very effort of criticism and designing a nobler alternative was something deeply humane and implied the existence of a moral horizon different than that embodied by facticity.

The evaluations of Santayana's political thought vary. John Gray thinks that the powerful criticism by Santayana overshadows the weakness (vagueness and impracticability) of his positive project. Till Kinzel ascribes to Santayana "an astonishingly comprehensive perception of the phenomena of political life" (LRAT 95). Matthew C. Flamm, in turn, sees a positive potential within the very womb of Santayana's criticism, which "constitute[s] no less than a political theodicy from which liberals ought to draw leverage in their own *apologia*" (LRAT 130). John Lachs notices a number of worthy ideas in Santayana's political philosophy and admits that Santayana managed to disclose some truths about the mechanisms operative in society and politics. Yet, the lack of clear moral guidance, Lachs claims, makes for his ultimate failure as a political thinker. Santayana in his account, fails to enlighten his readers in most pressing matters concerning the relation between man and community. I assert that even though criticism indeed constitutes the best part of what Santayana has to offer, the value of Santayana's socio-political reflections goes beyond that of a merely critical and descriptive undertaking; it offers a few ideas that may inspire and illuminate a positive project even if it does not provide one in an explicit manner.

In previous work, I have focused on the hermeneutic dimension of Santayana's political thought and stressed the significance of the idea of necessity and of government understood reductively as a mechanism of avoiding war and managing necessity. These are the mechanisms controlling the ongoing struggle of interests, the participants of which oscillate in-between the condition of being empowered and dominated. Santayana has no illusions about the fact that some lives thrive at the price of the belittlement of some other lives. This is a pre-political principle,

which may be associated with the Heraclitean idea of existence as an unceasing conflict. "People long coerce one another of their private initiative," writes Santayana, "or follow some tradition before they begin to do so through special military or legal agents. Government concentrates domination in its own hands, and regulates it. It neither originates nor abolishes domination" (DP 82). A primary understanding of politics, then, articulates the centrality of the struggle to survive and to secure to oneself the best position among other actors. It at once suggests the limits of any conscious and rational political activity, which always inherits the burden of the past conflicts. The "meaner" sense of politics mentioned by Santayana is intimately connected to the silent acceptance of this status-quo as a "default mode" of political reality. It also articulates the fact that politics remains within the scope of an ancient bond of necessary servitude, which is suffered by humans primarily in relation to nature and fate, and, then, to custom and law.

This servitude, which cannot be superseded as it is part and parcel of the human condition, is presented by Santayana, paradoxically, as complementary to the human good called vital liberty or the ability to recognize and develop one's potential *in harmony* with the existing circumstances. Harmony is what has to be attained if liberty and servitude are to coexist. Harmony is to be sought as a mode defining the relations between the conflicting impulses within an individual psyche and between an individual and his/her community. Thus, I suggest that Santayana's idea of vital liberty and harmony has something in common with the ancient understanding of justice, as developed in Plato's *Republic*. Moreover, harmony makes sense only in the presence of plurality and diversity. The associated role of the state would be to enable harmonious relations between diverse individuals of divergent and incommensurable preferences and aspirations.

The subject of vital liberty is an individual human being. Individualism is consistent with Santayana's advocacy of vital liberty and the idea that "each man is by nature an end to himself" (DP 73). And this is something he shares with the original liberal perspective, even though his idea of vital liberty is but a very specific formula of freedom. The individual in question is also subject to self-government and government. But while vital liberty is, finally, always an individual attainment, (self-)government concerns both individual and collective subjects. Besides, it never occurs in a void, but in society and in a medium of culture. While vital liberty depends on harmony and integrity; government, dealing with a plurality of often conflicting units, may well seek to establish coexistence according to the principle of enforced domination. The relation of the extant government to the ideal of vital liberty, then, becomes target of criticism. Government, in the light of this horizon, is expected to become—in Plato's vein again—an *art* aiming at a harmonious socio-political arrangement. As an art, it is expected to become part of the human world *sui generis*, not merely a mechanism controlling and legitimizing "animal" impulses engaged in an eternal struggle. We are thus, on the level of politics in its "nobler" sense. That, in turn, requires of those engaged in governing to represent some (politically significant) virtue. Santayana is skeptical about the possibility of a beneficent and lasting government based on purely procedural arrangements. He thinks the human factor is crucial, which is consistent both with his naturalism and individualism.

The *spiritus movens* behind Santayana's analysis is a pursuit to increase the chances of individuals, with all their diverse and hidden potential, to flourish and live good lives. If this is to happen, it is more important for the socio-political organization in view to be a harmonious one, allowing for a peaceful coexistence of the many than to represent this or that specific type of government. Still, given the aim in view, one may point to what is obviously excluded from the array of acceptable options, namely—a totalitarian system. To this I would also add, tentatively, any modern system that by virtue of extreme economic differences leads, through material degradation, to an exclusion of whole groups of people from a proper participation in culture, limiting dramatically their chances for vital liberty. Evidence that Santayana might endorse such a view may be found in his critical essays on liberalism, even though his opinion about the rise of welfare states at that time is ambiguous. He wrote,

Now the mass, hopelessly out of the running in the race for wealth, falls out and drifts into squalor. . . . The liberal system, which sought to raise the individual, has degraded the masses. . . . (SE 186)

By introducing the ideas of vital liberty and the common good consisting of the creation and preservation of beauty in the human world, Santayana moves from the critical and descriptive approach to a prospective one. The formula of a rational, competent and morally representative government is a demanding and fragile one, always in danger of falling back into politics in its primary sense of struggle. Yet, if such a government emerges happily and lasts at least for a season, then politics may rightly inspire hope, because, unlike all the inherited institutions and customs with their inertia, government is “an art in method and in the use of means”¹ and brings chance for reform. This is where the notion of “politics” acquires its alternative sense, where it is connected to the essentially human dignity of thinking and, more generally, human virtue.²

Let me note that the said flourishing of human life does not ask for any additional justification—it is for its own sake and constitutes an ultimate moral horizon. The thinker does not use the traditional notion of natural rights or laws; he preserves the notion of human nature, but thinks of it as a vague and flexible thing (although not infinitely flexible, politically useful and hence worth preserving).³ The idea of

¹See: DP 119.

² Rationality is something humane and in Santayana's view only humane things can play a broadly understood “redemptive” function. It rests in the human interest to make this little territory where humans can decide rational. There seems to be symmetry between rational self-government in individual life and rationality in political life. The aim of rationality is establishing a harmonious organization in place of conflict. Moderation and disinterestedness are other virtues appearing in Santayana's repertoire. All in all, the alliance of practical wisdom and ideal allegiances (these are responsible for the moral component, i.e., an aspect of a spiritual gain, that according to Santayana must accompany any form of coercion imposed by government) are preconditions for good government and self-government.

³ “Endless alternatives are compatible with human nature, which innately is a vague thing,” see: DP 70. On the other hand, Santayana sometimes remarks that human beings cannot be moulded arbitrarily and the lack of insight into human nature is a failure of some political theories.

the human condition is more pronounced in his thought, and it is important insofar it is a source of limitations and, if I read Santayana correctly, a condition of possibility of wisdom. Most importantly in this context, Santayana has an idea of the psycho-spiritual constitution of a concrete human being endowed with potentialities, desires, and aspirations, and a propensity to find fulfillment in pursuing them. This idea, which is one where constitution (or nature) is a source of ideal commitments, is central for his political thought and makes it at once naturalistic *and* idealistic, or, in other words, one where the ideal is inspired by nature (but not by facticity).

Despite the fact that his primary definition of politics and government might suggest otherwise, Santayana explicitly opposes the Hobbesian idea that self-preservation and power accumulation is the highest aim of man and the source of his morality. It is not that these instincts are not real. Yet, there are other, equally real facts “competing” with the grim reality of strife. One of them is that human beings live in the medium of culture and culture may cultivate other impulses or channel the same impulses differently and assume unexpected forms. Culture may well idealize self-sacrifice rather than self-preservation. Among the sources of human morality and the concomitant idea of a good life, culture seems to be the most prominent. The plasticity of human beings and the indissoluble bond between humanity and culture are ideas that Santayana seems to draw upon in his political reflections, which is not to say that they ever annul the more “primordial” and violent dimension of human existence.

Let me turn now, very briefly, to the issue of individualism. Santayana’s endorsement of individualism has been criticized as futile from a perspective of community. Though there may be some truth in this judgment, I suggest it overlooks the significance of individual virtue and attainment to any human community. One should keep in mind that Santayana was writing at a time when the phenomena of mass societies and the power of propaganda became problematic, and the idea of “socialization”, in the context of totalitarianism, at least ambiguous. George Orwell and Aldous Huxley were warning against anti-individualism. Questions arose about intellectual autonomy and morality when one is incapable of resisting the pull of the crowd. It is helpful, then, to clarify the type of individualism endorsed by Santayana. I read it as connected to a trait of humanism in his thought, which, next to his idea of spiritual life, constituted one of very few ideal allegiances of the philosopher. Leaving aside the fact that humanism has various faces, I do not intend to label Santayana “a humanist” (although he sometimes called himself so) for I do not think he was a doctrinaire in any sense. Rather, I think that one may call the motivation behind his well-known critiques of egotism, fanaticism, barbarism, and militarism humanistic. His humanism sheds light on his individualism, which is at a far remove from a predatory, Spencerian-type of egoistic individualism of power. Rather, in its eclecticism, it may be associated with Socratic self-knowledge, a humanistic articulation of individuality by the Stoics, the Spinozist ideal of intellectual autonomy and even a post-romantic individualism of authenticity. When Santayana opposes what he calls “brute humanity” and associates the coming of brute

humanity with the idea that “[c]ivilisation is perhaps approaching one of those long winters that overtake it from time to time” (COUS vi-vii), he seems to be speaking on behalf and in defense of the virtues of a “polite humanity.” The—let me call it “apollonian”—individualism and humanism he endorses, then, seem to be intimately connected, and, to stress it again, are very much unlike the “predatory” modern individualism associated with egoism.

Positive projects armed with practical solutions have dominated political philosophy of the twentieth century. It is unclear how effectively they have served the wellbeing of humanity, but I think it significant that, as John Lachs remarks, we still lack answers to the most fundamental questions concerning the relation of individuals to communities. In response to such fundamental issues, Santayana preferred critical (or critical-hermeneutic) and speculative reflection, which aims at illuminating errors, enhancing (self-) understanding, and inspiring imagination. This approach provides moral guidance in the form of an idea of toleration; it conveys sensitivity to certain—often fatally overlooked, yet crucial from the viewpoint of common life—values (or, better, virtues) like *disinterestedness*. A culture deprived of a substantial degree of disinterestedness (and, I would add, self-sacrifice), is, from a humane perspective, impaired. Santayana’s ideal of vital liberty, if ever approximated, would likely be conducive to disinterestedness, be it by fostering *arts* and *acts*, which, pursued as good in themselves, would enrich the common element of culture, making humans more resistant to or independent of the potential threats and evils of politics in its primary sense. Santayana thus exhibits his awareness of the significance of unintended consequences of human action. He seems to have more faith in long-term effects of the development of philosophy and liberal arts for the condition of culture, civilization, or humanity at large, than about the immediate consequences of this or that political action. Besides, as already mentioned, the thinker is deliberate in not giving priority to any specific form of government or political doctrine—they are a means, not ends. He sees a philosopher’s task in terms of *paideia*, as enlightening human will so that it “sees in the first instance how to attain its purpose without making or inflicting unnecessary sacrifices” and is able to “revise or rescind itself” (DP 120-21). Meanwhile, it is not my intention to suggest that Santayana considers philosophy, as Plato did, as the noblest possible human vocation, an art (*techne*) that raises one far above others. Rather, his relation to philosophy was ironic at times and, as Nora Horvath noticed, he was inclined to think that “philosophies are only conventions, and would be handicaps if we did not outgrow them” (LRAT 160). The question is whether his thought still fulfills the expectations we have for a political philosophy. I think it does, unless we stick with a narrow and technical understanding of political philosophy.

Returning once again to the “haunting” question of the individual versus community, it is, at least to some extent, resolved by the supra-individual and transpolitical medium of culture, which is at once a “transcendental” source of all values and aesthetic forms. *Santayana was too well aware of the role of culture in forming individuals and communities to overestimate politics*, especially politics of the day. Culture, like all human reality, changes, but it is less volatile, more lasting and more likely to carry along its heritage, hence—metaphorically speaking—culture tends

to be wiser than politics and, potentially, less contaminated by the actually competing forces and their interests. For Santayana, politics is but one dimension of the world of human affairs, and it sadly happens to be one of the least disinterested ones. However, while culture penetrates social and political life, a reverse process seems to be more potent in the contemporary world.

In this light, one better understands Santayana's critique of modern culture and his concern with the politicization of public opinion in a mass society as well as the ever stronger marriage of politics with economy and military technology, concomitant with their becoming less transparent, more parasitic, and more threatening. Like Plato in his own era, Santayana is sensitive to the anthropological placement of contemporary politics. He locates it at the fragile conjunction of life with *logos* and observes that ideologies and fads, spreading like contagions, influence public opinion, and that socio-political phenomena are often co-fabricated by the language of propaganda, which he calls "a purely egotistical tool" (DP 128), and which is an equivalent of unprincipled ancient sophistry. These elements of Santayana's critique of the existing democracies may be read as a warning against not only totalitarian governments but also autocratic forms of political organization. "The exercise of autocratic power", he writes "has become almost normal . . . for party leaders . . . and it is not in themselves or for what they do that they triumph: they triumph as demagogues" and may become "perpetual dictator[s]" (DP 117-18).

All the above reflections lead me to yet another conclusion, namely that *Santayana's relativism has limits*. The source of these limits is his pluralistic, individualistic humanism, which in itself offers something morally "tangible". Even if it cannot be classified as a specifically political project, it tells us something important about the relation of humans to society and the political realm. It problematizes the already-mentioned ambivalent relation between vital liberty and government, by introducing into this relation a third party, namely, human culture. Santayana's intention is to make this third party an ally of the individual and his/her vital liberty. What may be said in defense of the idea of limits of relativism is that Santayana discerns within culture certain threads and tendencies that he calls emphatically "inhuman" and labels them as "sins against humanity." I doubt that by calling them so he merely shares with the reader his private, idiosyncratic sympathies. I am inclined to believe that, even though he does not consider these judgments as "absolute" in any metaphysical sense, he thinks them true from a humane perspective and hopes, perhaps even believes, that his readers share his moral intuitions, whereby they form a community of certain humane orientation. By calling something "inhuman" he does not mean that it is in any sense unnatural or metaphysically "evil", but rather, that being natural, it still conspires against the vital interests of a specific kind of natural being—a human being. Recall that for Santayana the dignity and specificity of a human being rests primarily in understanding, appreciation of beautiful forms, and sympathy with otherness. When Santayana complains about loss of chivalry, fear of discomfort, and subservience and conformity to majority opinion, calling them "a shocking degradation modern society has condemned the spirit" (DP 207), he alludes to the fact that human imagination has been instrumentalized and enslaved by material forces and interests.

To give more specific examples, in one of his essays, Santayana says “[n]othing will repay a man for becoming inhuman” (“Logic of Fanaticism” 19). The inhumanity here consists in “hatred of the rest of the world.” Elsewhere one reads about “crime against humanity”, being a kind of hubris that leads to sacrificing the human good in the name of egoistic and megalomaniac schemes. Faust—a reappearing figure in Santayana’s writings and an archetype of these inhuman tendencies—stands for a bearer of an infinite desire that he is keen on realizing without regard to the cost. Thus, he is bound to “grow feeble, vicious, and sad, like other sinners” (DP 231). In politics and society, an inflexibility, an excessive integrity, a scary, “absolute singleness of will . . . works havoc” (DP 229-30). What is merely a flow in a private person, may turn into a “sin” in a politician, a faction, or a government.

To conclude, given that “government [in the second, “meaner” sense] is essentially an army carrying on a perpetual campaign in its own territory” (DP 79), Santayana has good reasons for seeing the politicization of life, starting with the politicization of language, as a danger for culture. That is also why he thinks personal virtues are needed for governing oneself and others. Virtues (the humane element), as trans-political “powers”, may be the only chance to withstand the otherwise irresistible thrust of different forms of competition, conflict, and struggle for domination. An inexplicit idea of his political thinking, then, is not overestimating politics.

The individualism endorsed by Santayana and certain humanist ideas he enjoyed, along with a distance to political life are relevant to modern politics in that they constitute a safety guard against totalitarian tendencies. It seems that the threat of totalitarianism, the essence of which is anti-individualism, uniformity, and a total politicization of the common world, can hardly be countered without recourse to human individuality. It is an individual who is the bearer of virtues, the source of morality, and the one who rebels. Though a single individual is isolated and thus powerless, a number of similar individuals may constitute a community, a minority of like-minded persons who perhaps may start a movement. But this actual community starts from a virtual human community, not limited by time and space – in other words, human culture.

What may save humans from the evils of politics is the fact that culture and a human community in a broader sense, have deeper roots and longer influence than politics. It remains in the best interests of humans to preserve at least partial autonomy of culture as well as individual, intellectual, and moral independence from the ever-expanding power of politics. The question remains whether and how it can be done.

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The Democritean Tradition in Santayana, Nietzsche, and Montaigne

Introduction: Santayana, Nietzsche, and Montaigne

During his 1940 stay in Venice, George Santayana “spied and fished out” two books, Michel de Montaigne’s *Essais* and a French translation of Friedrich Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science*—“both excellent stopgaps.”¹ He compares them in a letter to Nancy Saunders Toy: “Montaigne is of course a capital rogue: prose still decorative and eloquent; but Nietzsche on the whole inspires more respect: more incisive, braver, more unhappy” (LGS 2 April 1940).

Santayana’s remarks are interesting on various counts. First, this is not the sole comparison between Nietzsche and Montaigne that Santayana draws. A quote from the latter ends a book on the former: Santayana cites Montaigne to conclude *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1915), whose three chapters on Nietzsche are still the best criticism available. “As Montaigne observes,” he writes,

He who sets before him, as in a picture, this vast image of our mother Nature in her entire majesty; who reads in her aspect such universal and continual variety; who discerns himself therein, and not himself only but a whole kingdom, to be but a most delicate dot—he alone esteems things according to the just measure of their greatness. (EGP 168)

Deemed by Daniel Pinkas “the best short approximation to Santayana’s vision we could possibly hope for,” this quote does not exhaust the affinities Pinkas, among other scholars, finds between the two philosophers (Pinkas 26).² However,

¹ Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 1st International Conference of the Philosophy of Humor, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland, held in conjunction with the ISHS conference in 2016, and at the APA Eastern Division, Philadelphia, USA, under the auspices of the George Santayana Society in 2020.

² In addition to the Democritean cheerfulness, which Santayana shares with Montaigne, he shares the latter’s views on friendship, moderation, vanity and traveling: “Traveling through the world produces a marvelous clarity in the judgment of men. We are all of us confined and enclosed within ourselves, and see no farther than the end of our nose. This great world is a mirror where we must see ourselves in order to know ourselves. There are so many different tempers, so many different points of view, judgments, opinions, laws and customs to teach us to judge wisely on our own, and to teach our judgment to recognize its imperfection and natural weakness” (Montaigne, *Essais*, 1965, III. 9, 933; my translation). Another important affinity has been observed by John McCormick: behind Soliloquies in England “stand Montaigne and the French tradition of concision, lucidity and point” (McCormick 1986, 237). Pinkas remarks that “what Santayana claims to have learned from the French centers on two things: the quest for lucidity and the demands of polished style. The quest for lucidity, in other words the endeavor not to deceive oneself, including about one’s own proclivity to self-deception, leads inevitably to Montaigne, to whom all the roads of modern scepticism and naturalism lead anyway. Santayana’s plea for honesty in philosophy—‘philosophy is nothing if not honest’ (SAF 187)—calls to mind Montaigne’s famous address to his reader: ‘c’est icy un

Santayana was not flattered by this comparison, as he saw no profound resemblance between his thought and Montaigne's and denied all influence of the latter on his philosophy.³

Santayana's comments on the *Essais* and *The Gay Science* in Venice may shed light on the reasons he would consider this comparison superficial: He chooses Nietzsche over Montaigne.⁴ Santayana's respect for Nietzsche's unhappiness and courage brings to mind the inverse attraction that Nietzsche had to Montaigne's cheerfulness and bravery. Already in the early text, "Schopenhauer as Educator," Nietzsche praises Montaigne:

I know of only one writer whom I would compare with Schopenhauer, indeed set above him, in respect to honesty: Montaigne. That such a man wrote has truly augmented the joy of living on this earth. Since getting to know this freest and mightiest of souls, I at least have come to feel what he felt about Plutarch: "as soon as I glance at him I grow a leg or a wing." If I were set the task, I could endure to make myself at home in the world with him.

Schopenhauer has a second quality in common with Montaigne, as well as honesty: a cheerfulness that really cheers. *Aliis laetus, sibi sapiens* [cheerful for others, wise for himself]. For there are two very different kinds of cheerfulness. The true thinker always cheers and refreshes, whether he is being serious or humorous...in any case as a victor: and this it is—to behold the victorious god with all the monsters he had combatted—that cheers one most

livre de bonne foy, lecteur,' and the Montaigne quotation at the end of Egotism in German Philosophy provides the best short approximation to Santayana's vision we could possibly hope for: 'He who sets before him, as in a picture, this vast image of our mother Nature in her entire majesty; who reads in her aspect such universal and continual variety; who discerns himself therein and not himself only but a whole kingdom, to be but a most delicate dot—he alone esteems things according to the just measure of their greatness' (EGP 165; quoted in Pinkas 1999, 26)." See Pinkas 1999, for the importance of the French aphoristic tradition (La Rochefoucault, La Bruyère, Pascal, Vauvenargues, Chamfort and a few others) for Santayana's extraordinary "quotability."

³ Amongst various letters that address this topic, let me quote the one he wrote to William Elton from Rome on Oct. 7, 1947:

It would not have occurred to me spontaneously that there was any affinity between Montaigne's way of thinking and mine; but when you say you feel that there is, perhaps I can see where it might lie. We are both Mediterranean-blooded Menschen, and we take a low familiar view of human nature. It does not shock us, but we do not respect it or ask much of it. Where we certainly part company is in the inner reaction to those observations. Montaigne has no ideals, except a sort of anticipation of Rousseau and moral democracy. I am not a democrat in my affections, but interested in perfect even if simple things. As to influence, I don't think Montaigne ever had any on me. I have never studied or read him much; what I like best in his *Essays* is the Latin quotations. The sixteenth century had vulgar tastes, and they satisfied him, although he was fair-minded enough to know that there was something better, and kept a door open for others in religion and for himself in friendship. Perhaps I am really a little like him in that last respect. One can hardly judge oneself; one looks through one's prejudices. (LGS)

⁴ See LGS 2 April 1940 quoted above.

profoundly. . . . For at bottom, there is cheerfulness only where there is a victory. (UM, III, 2)

Nietzsche noted in various places the therapeutic influence Montaigne had on him.⁵ Echoing the well-being Nietzsche found in Montaigne, Santayana qualifies Nietzsche's *Gay Science* as "admirable" in another letter to Ms. Toy, and adds, "I may be wrong, but I find great comfort in Nietzsche." Nietzsche was a kindred spirit, for the following reasons:

He is not explicit, he is romantic, but he implies my world of two or more storeys, if he does not draw its plan and elevation, as my architectural propensities lead me to do—without, I admit, any technical accuracy; because I am really a self-indulgent impressionist, like Nietzsche himself, and wish to sketch my buildings in perspective. (LGS 10 October 1939)

Twenty years separates this letter from Santayana's deadly criticism of Nietzsche in three chapters of *Egotism in German Philosophy*. There he reproached the entire German tradition, from Kant, Fichte and Hegel—excepting Schopenhauer—right up to Nietzsche, for embracing "egotism," or "subjectivity in thought and willfulness in morals." The problem with this view is that it "assumes, if it does not assert, that the source of one's being and power lies in oneself, that will and logic are by right omnipotent, and that nothing should control the mind or the conscience except the mind or the conscience itself." Thus, egotism "denies that we are created beings owing reverence to immense forces beyond ourselves, which endow us with our limited faculties and powers, govern our fortunes, and shape our very loves without our permission" (EGP 168).

In this early text, Nietzsche is "lamponed" by Santayana, to use Diana Heney's expression: A "constitutional invalid," Nietzsche is described as the belated prophet of romanticism who prefers "the bracing atmosphere of falsehood, passion, and subjective perspectives" to truth (Heney 79). Santayana condemns him for romanticizing evil, even encouraging us to accept evil in order to feel the intensity of our aggressive nature, whereas Santayana refuses to acquiesce in any doctrine that defies the exercise of power even if it leads to personal or others' happiness. Whilst further assessment of the Nietzsche-Santayana's kindship and opposition is the topic of another work,⁶ it is noteworthy that Santayana sees in Nietzsche "a keen satirist," "full of shrewd wit," yet notes insightfully,

⁵ For further references, see Amir, *Laughter and the Good Life: Montaigne, Nietzsche, Santayana*. (Bergson). It is noteworthy that Montaigne is the sole philosopher that Nietzsche never criticizes.

⁶ Irving Singer remarks that "he resembles Nietzsche, however, not only in basing his moral philosophy on naturalistic premises but also in depicting a state in which the human spirit may finally reconcile itself to the evils that attend the frailty and fragility of the world. We may find in Nietzsche's doctrine of amor fati an anticipation of Santayana's idea that spirit can liberate itself only by accepting reality through acts of renunciation and self-purification. This is the side of Nietzsche that links him to Schopenhauer, and Santayana and Nietzsche are both followers, albeit critical, of Schopenhauer. But the Nietzschean concept implies something more strenuous, more activist than the kind of contemplation Santayana identifies with the spiritual life" (Singer 2000, 119). A few scholars compare Santayana to Nietzsche, finding similitude but also differences. "The truth is a terrible thing," he has the vicar of Iffley

He is the jester, to whom all incoherencies are forgiven, because all indiscretions are allowed. Behind his “gay wisdom” and trivial rhymes lies a great anguish. His intellect is lost in a chaos. His heart denies itself the relief of tears and can vent itself only in forced laughter and mock hopes that gladden nobody, least of all himself. (EGP 139, 143)

Very few philosophers noted Nietzsche’s laughter at the beginning of the 20th century,⁷ and even fewer commented on it. This remark in itself indicates Santayana’s interest in laughter.⁸ However, the criticism of Nietzsche’s laughter is even more incisive given some commentators’ attitude to Santayana’s laughter, also in relation to Nietzsche’s. For example, recalling Nietzsche’s proposal to rank philosophers according to the quality of their laughter, Pinkas suggests that Santayana “is a clear contender for the upper ranks of Nietzsche’s philosophical hit-parade,” due to “the importance of humor and laughter, both in his writings and on a personal level.” (BGE 294; Pinkas 162) Moreover, Roger Kimball claims that it is Santayana who is “the cheerful, affirmative figure that Nietzsche pretended to be but wasn’t,” and Santayana’s student, Horace Kallen, deems him “our times one laughing philosopher,” a view shared by many yet contested by others.⁹

These initial comments, however partial, should suffice to draw attention to the complex relationships the three modern philosophers entertain amongst themselves and, in particular to the laughter they share. It follows, then, that one further commonality is their attitude toward the laughing philosopher, Democritus, and their interest in the historical Democritus. I dwell on the former and mention only briefly the latter because the purpose of this article is to identify four elements related to laughter and the comical in the thought of Santayana, Nietzsche, and Montaigne, which I trace back to Democritus. I focus on laughter, self-referential laughter,

say in *The Last Puritan*. “It is much darker, much sadder, much more ignoble, much more inhuman and ironical than most of us are willing to admit, or even able to suspect.” Robert Kimball remarks that this is just the sort of thing one might expect to find in Nietzsche (“Truth is ugly,” he declared in *The Will to Power*). However, here Kimball points to an important difference between them: “Where Nietzsche engaged in unending histrionics, Santayana behaved like a gentleman. Nietzsche described himself as ‘the Antichrist,’ said he was ‘dynamite,’ and presumed to instruct us about ‘how to philosophize with a hammer.’ Santayana was much calmer. He sought no detonations. He wished to smash no idols. He came much closer, in fact, to being the disabused spiritual aristocrat that Nietzsche admired but sweated too much to resemble. ‘Criticism,’ Santayana said, ‘must first be invited to do its worst.’ But only for the indelicate, he thought, did thoroughgoing criticism lead to nihilism or madness. Out of scepticism came faith, but it was an animal faith, modest, grateful, thoroughly materialistic: disillusioned but also at peace” (Kimball 2002, 18). For Santayana’s relationship to Nietzsche, see also Kerr-Lawson 2008, Padrón 2001, and Krempleska 2019, 170–75.

⁷ For the reception of Nietzsche as a Philosophy of Laughter, see the Prologue of Amir, *The Legacy of Nietzsche’s Philosophy of Laughter*.

⁸ For a thorough analysis of Santayana’s attitude to laughter, to the comic and the tragic, to humor, irony and cheerfulness, see Amir, *Laughter and the Good Life: Montaigne, Nietzsche, Santayana*, (Bergson) and Amir 2019a.

⁹ Kimball 2002, 1; Kallen 1964, 35. For Santayana as a laughing philosopher, see Kallen 1964; 1968, chap. 4; Ames 1964, 64; Wood 2001, 25. Will Durant, among others, contests this characterization of Santayana (Durant 1926, 551).

cheerfulness, and metanoia from the tragic to the comic. Let me begin with Democritus and follow first with Santayana and then with Nietzsche and Montaigne.

Democritus

Democritus was the fifth-century founder of Greek atomist philosophy and the proponent of an ethics of tranquility and/or cheerfulness. He was known in his own age as a sage but entered tradition as the “laughing philosopher.”

1. Laughter

Democritus the Laughing Philosopher was a character widely known in the Ancient world, and several sources discuss Democritus’s tendency to laugh on any and all occasions.¹⁰ The sole testimony we have in Greek of the laughing Democritus is in an anonymous legend of the first century, the *Novel of Hippocrates*, composed of a collection of 27 apocryphal letters of the renowned doctor (Hippocrates Letters 10-17). Democritus laughed so much that the people of Abdera believed he had gone insane and called Hippocrates to heal him. The Abderians characterized Democritus’s laughter as indiscriminate and Hippocrates initially viewed it as sadistic and depraved: Democritus laughed as if everything concerning mankind was worthy of laughter. But when Democritus explained to him through a long series of examples that he was laughing at the folly of humankind, Hippocrates could only conclude that Democritus was truly a wise and serious man, and that he was laughing to make a serious point.

In the Latin testimony, Cicero (106–43 BC) is the first to mention Democritus in the context of laughter (Cicero 253). At the latest in Horace’s days (died year 8 BC), Democritus is referred to as “the laughing philosopher.”¹¹ The laughing philosopher appears for the second time in Sotion (first century AD), through Stobaeus’s testimony four hundred years later. There he is contrasted, as the philosopher who laughs at men’s follies, with Heraclitus, who weeps at them.¹² It is

¹⁰ See Amir 2013 and 2014b for fuller accounts of Democritus the laughing philosopher, the relations between this figure and Democritus the atomist philosopher of the 5th century BC, and the tradition the former inaugurates.

¹¹ For the laughing philosopher’s legend, see Salem 1996, 82–114. For his influence throughout the centuries, see Muller 1994, 9–51.

¹² Melancholy and arrogance were often associated with Heraclitus. By the Roman period, he is known as the “weeping philosopher.” This gloomy reputation is the result of a slow but steady stream of genuine misinterpretation, and genuine if hostile frustration with the obscurity of his fragments. Heraclitus as the “weeping philosopher” fits with Diogenes Laertius’s general assessment of his character and makes an easily identifiable caricature, one that would serve as a perfect foil to the other extreme, the “laughing philosopher” Democritus. In the anecdotes that compare Heraclitus with Democritus, Heraclitus’s tears are those of compassion. He does not despise his fellow men, as in Diogenes Laertius’s *Lives of Philosophers*, but despairs for them (Chitwood 2002, 188n133). His sobriquet has been deemed “completely trivial” by modern scholars (e.g., Kirk and Raven 1981, 184; Kahn 1979, 168), but it was a favored biographical and satirical characterization, not the least because it fitted so well with Heraclitus’s other generally admitted biographical traits of arrogance, misanthropy, willful

Sotion's student, the Roman Stoic philosopher Seneca (4 BC–AD 65), who first presents the contrast between the two philosophers and who make their tears and laughter indicative of their philosophical systems (Seneca, *De Ira*, 2.10.5). Following Sotion, Seneca introduces anger as a third alternative to laughter and crying, which is another twist to the story of Democritus (Stobaeus, *Florilegium*, 3.20.53).

2. Self-laughter

Various explanations are given of Democritus's laughter. What was Democritus laughing about? In Horace, the context is laughing at the multitude who likes only distractions (Horace, Letters 2, 1 154ff). Hippolytus, the prolific writer of early Christianity (170–236 AD), writes that "this (philosopher) turned all things into ridicule, as if all the concerns of humanity were deserving of laughter." (Diels 360, 20) The relationship of laughter and atomism that Lucian advances in *The Sale of Philosophers*, which represents Zeus as putting Democritus and Heraclitus up for sale as examples of the creeds of "smiles" and "tears," is reprised in the *Suda*, a byzantine lexicon of the 10th century: Democritus was called "wisdom" or "laughter," because he was laughing at the vacuity of human efforts (Diels and Kranz 22C5). An anterior funerary epigram refers to a Democritus laughing at everything—including human science and books or efforts to learn—and who concludes laughing still in the grave (*Anthologie* 81).

Hippocrates first thought that Democritus was a victim of the black bile that Democritus was writing a book about. This begins the tradition of laughter and melancholy, which the Middle Ages consider the medical form of *acedia*, the sin of being disgusted by God. Humanist thinkers in the Renaissance attribute to Democritus this melancholic laughter and prefer him to the weeping Heraclitus. According to one early doxographer, however, what made Democritus laugh was the foolishness of those who do not understand that everything, apart from atoms and void, is nothing but a product of human conventions (See Cartledge 1988).

In all of these explanations, one element is missing, however: Democritus ridicules our incapacity to laugh at ourselves and recommends, accordingly, self-laughter. This is all the more surprising as this is the gist of Democritus's argument:

Why did you criticize my laughter, Hippocrates? You people do not laugh at your own stupidity but each laugh at another's, some at drunk people, thinking themselves sober, some at lovers, though they have a worse disease themselves, some at sailors and some at those who practice farming. (Hippocrates 1990, L. 17.5)

Along the same lines, in the extant fragments of the treatise *On Cheerfulness*, the historical Democritus severely condemns those who find faults with their friends, admonishing us, "Do not laugh at the misfortunes of men, but pity them," and suggesting that it is better to reprove one's own faults than the faults of one's neighbors (Diels 405). This idea is later reprised by Horace, who states: "Why do you laugh? Change the name and the story is about yourself." From now on, Democritean philosophers are induced to laugh at themselves.

obscurity, and obdurate silence. For Heraclitus, see Chitwood 2004, chap. 2. For Heraclitus's characterization as "gloomy," see Gomez 1984, 3; Kahn 1979, 1 and n16; Lutz 1954, 313.

3. Cheerfulness

Some of the extant fragments of *On Cheerfulness* (*peri enthumies*), the treatise on ethics that the historical Democritus wrote, address cheerfulness: “A life without festival is like a long road without an inn to rest in,” and “best for a person to live his life as cheerful and as little distressed as possible. This will occur if he does not make his pleasures in mortal things.” (Diels 426; Stobaeus Florilegium 3.1.47; Diels and Kranz 68 B189)

These fragments can be taken into account if a relation between the historical Democritus and the laughing Democritus of the legend can be established. Various classical scholars believe so, including modern philosophers, such as Santayana and his student, Kallen. Many see Democritus’s *On Cheerfulness* as being at the origin of all further ideals of peace of mind, as advanced by the Cynics and the Hellenistic schools, the Stoics, the Epicurean, and the Pyrrhonists. While all these schools made use of laughter in their path toward peace of mind, Jessica Berry makes a good case for *enthumie* being more cheerfulness than tranquility (Berry 2004; Halliwell 2008, 353). In his groundbreaking *Greek Laughter: A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Early Christianity* (2008), Halliwell points to the possibility of Democritus’s laughter being a component of cheerfulness or peace of mind (*enthumie*), and interestingly characterizes it as “existential laughter.” (Halliwell 363)

4. Metanoia

Democritus was not always a laughing philosopher, not even according to the legend told in Hippocrates’s letters. He was an erudite, a polymath, a man whose nickname was “wisdom.” The following quote describes the metanoia he underwent, if not from the tragic to the comic, then from indifference to laughter:

That man has been made ill by the great learning that weighs him down. ... For, previously inattentive to everything, including himself, he is now constantly wakeful night and day, laughs at everything large and small, and thinks life in general is worth nothing. (Hippocrates 1990, L 10.1)

These four elements, laughter, self-laughter, cheerfulness and metanoia to the comic, which can be found in Democritus’s legend and fragments, are even more easily found in his followers, the laughing philosophers, Montaigne, Nietzsche and Santayana. I begin with Santayana.

Santayana

The entirety of Santayana’s philosophy is framed in Democritus’s worldview, according to David Dilworth (1989). As early as *Three Philosophical Poets*, Santayana had a clear grasp of the difference between the thought of Democritus, on the one hand, and of Epicurus and Lucretius, on the other (Dilworth 1989, 9). The intentionality of Santayana’s symbolic naturalism, with what Dilworth calls its

"radical epiphenomenalism" and doctrine of essences, is essentially described in Democritus's terms.¹³ He explains,

In Democritus's very doctrine of the geometrical properties of the physical elements we find contained a postulate as to an affinity with the world's finer and rarer energies that eventuates in the highest sympathies of the human and divine minds. Democritus's ethics of imperturbable wisdom, cheerfulness, moderation and friendship stem from this source. (Dilworth 1989, 9)

Santayana has been recognized as "one modern Democritus" also by his student, Kallen (1964, 35; 1968, chap. 4). Kallen identifies Santayana's and Democritus's laughter as the commonality of their philosophies. He suggests that their philosophical laughter was at once "a nullification of the universal menace and a liberation from the apprehensiveness it ever evokes." He further argues that their laughter signaled their accepting the "plight of man for what it is," and "keeping up their existence of struggle to go on struggling cheerfully, fearlessly, without false hope, and without the illusions which fear and such hope project, institute, and nourish" (Kallen 1968, 67). As I focus on laughter, cheerfulness and the comical, I do not dwell on Santayana's attitude toward the historical Democritus and focus rather on the former's views of laughter, self-laughter, cheerfulness and his *metanoia* from the tragic to the comic.

1. Laughter

Santayana believes the first philosophers are the best, and he ranks Democritus and Aristotle the highest among them (see Krempelwaska 89-100). In the Preface to *Dialogues in Limbo*, whose protagonists are Democritus, Socrates, Alcibiades,

¹³ Most commentators see Santayana as an epiphenomenalist. Angus Kerr-Lawson has repeatedly argued so (i.e., 1986). John Lachs debates the pros and cons of this view (1964) and concludes that Santayana has wholeheartedly embraced it, yet Matthew Brodrick (2013) opts against it. Santayana's following letter may clarify his position:

And this leads me to make a slight complaint against you for having said that I am an "epiphenomenalist"—I don't complain of your calling me a "pragmatist" because I know that it is mere piety on your part. But the title of epiphenomenalist is better deserved, and I have only this objection to it: that it is based (like the new realism) on idealistic prejudices and presuppositions. An epiphenomenon must have some other phenomenon under it: but what underlies the mind, according to my view, is not a phenomenon but a substance—the body, or nature at large. To call this is [sic] a phenomenon is to presuppose another thing in itself, which is chimerical. Therefore I am no epiphenomenalist, but a naturalist pure and simple, recognizing a material world, not a phenomenon but a substance, and a mental life struck off from it in its operation, like a spark from the flint and steel, having no other substance than that material world, but having a distinct existence of its own (as it is emitted continually out of bodily life as music is emitted from an instrument) and having a very different kind of being, since it is immaterial and moral and cognitive. This mental life may be called a phenomenon if you like, either in the platonic sense of being an instance of an essence (in which sense every fact, even substance, is a phenomenon) or in the modern sense of being an observable effect of latent forces; but it cannot be called an epiphenomenon, unless you use the word phenomenon in the one sense for substance and in the other sense for consciousness. (LGS to Horace Meyer Kallen, Madrid, 7 April 1913)

Aristippus, and the younger Dionysius, Santayana writes: “I imagined myself intruding into the company of those ancient sages, Democritus and Socrates, whom I recognized to be my real masters, above the heads of all moderns” (DL 1). The reference to Democritus is not accidental. Santayana recognizes the roots of his materialism in the ancient materialism of the Greek atomists. He appreciates not only Democritus’s naturalism, but the laughter associated with it: Disguised as “the Spirit of a Stranger still living on Earth,” Santayana testifies that he prefers the laughter of Democritus to Heraclitus’s sorrow on the transitoriness of things (DL 206). His association of naturalism and laughter can be considered as an innovation in the literature on Democritus:

A thorough materialist, one born to the faith and not half plunged into it by an unexpected christening in cold water, will be like a superb Democritus, a laughing philosopher. (LR5 52-53; AT E-90, 76)

Oblivious of Democritus, the unwilling materialists of our day have generally been awkwardly intellectual and quite incapable of laughter. If they have felt anything, they have felt melancholy (LE 228). By “the laughing philosopher Democritus,” Santayana understands one whose attitude towards materialism would be “active, joyful, impersonal, and in respect to private illusions not without a touch of scorn” (LE 227).¹⁴ Following Democritus, scorn is emphasized as the attitude of the naturalist: “The naturalist will believe in a certain harshness, as Nietzsche did: he will incline to a certain scorn, as the laughter of Democritus was scornful” (LE 224; also TPP 37). This is how Santayana describes the Greek philosopher:

The ethics of Democritus, in so far as we may judge from scanty evidence, were merely descriptive or satirical. He was an aristocratic observer, a scorner of fools. Nature was laughing at us all; the wise man considered his fate and, by knowing it, raised himself in a measure above it. All living things pursued the greatest happiness they could see their way to; but they were marvelously shortsighted; and the business of the philosopher was to foresee and pursue the greatest happiness that was really possible. This, in so rough a world, was to be found chiefly in abstention and retrenchment. If you asked for little, it was more probable that the event would not disappoint you. It was important not to be a fool, but it was very hard. (TPP 33)

Although Santayana attributes the view that “nature was laughing at us all” to Democritus (TPP 33), there is no evidence to back this up, not in the historical Democritus, nor in the testimonia. To the best of my knowledge, no such view—nature’s playful laughter requiring a similar response—has ever been voiced in philosophy.¹⁵

Santayana prefers “to laugh with Democritus” (DL 206) for both naïve and satirical motives that he describes in the third volume of his autobiography: he notes that “a sense of the ludicrous, a love of laughter” was native to him, yet he also

¹⁴ It is noteworthy that the followers of Democritus’s naturalism, the Epicureans, included in their maxims the injunction to laugh: “We should philosophize and laugh at the same time and never stop claiming the...of true philosophy” (Epicurus 1940, Maxim 40).

¹⁵ I have elaborated on this topic in Amir 2019a. Note also the passage, on which I elaborate in note 18 below, “It is the thing that jokes, not I” (LGS 28 December 1887).

discloses how “a kindred but less innocent motive was satirical” (quoted in Kallen 1964, 33). In the same vein, Van Meter Ames comments on “the frequent laugh and the hermetic smile” of Santayana, who “has the detachment of Democritus and the laughter” (Ames 64, 65). Ames’s view is echoed by Santayana’s old-age portraitist, Harry Wood, who notes that Santayana “had surely also turned himself ‘like the superb Democritus’ into a ‘laughing philosopher.’” He adds:

I wish that those who found him only a singer in a minor key who “never caught the heart cleansing laughter of paganism” (Durant 1926, 551) might have sat with him an hour. They would have a lifetime deposit of the twentieth-century’s most precious laughter stored in their ear-memories, as I have. (Wood 2001, 25; quoted in Pinkas 2007, 162)

Although there is no quarrel about the fact that Santayana laughed much, there is a good amount of controversy about the nature of his laughter as well as the form of laughter that he advocates.¹⁶ Santayana bases his view of laughter on both the naturalistic tradition, taking Democritus as his forerunner, and the spiritual tradition, making it proof that the two are not antagonistic and may be united, albeit in laughter. Because Santayana describes laughter as both a bodily affection (RS 249) and as a spiritual phenomenon, laughter expresses both spirit and body. It signals their union as well as the momentary liberation (RS 192, PSL 85) from the investment in one’s animal nature that the disinterestedness of the spiritual life represents. Thus, Santayana recommends laughter as both a momentarily self-transcendent spiritual phenomenon and as the adequate response to a naturalistic view of the universe. Laughter appears as a burst of spirit and not as a phenomenon of psyche, and rightly so, for “it is the spirit that makes human nature human” (RS 212), spirit being “the culmination of life, at least in our planet” (RS 285). Spirit is “the function of transcending the self” (RS 160) or “an intellectual and moral self-transcendence” (RS 197). Its alliance with laughter is natural, then, for laughter is self-transcendent. Laughter can be used as a tool of liberation, which also enables a partial union of the spirit with the good, as Santayana explains under the marginal heading “transition to laughter” in *The Realm of Spirit*:

There is a partial union that the spirit may reach vitally at any moment, as in laughter. Here there is no acceptance of ultimates, only merriment at present absurdities and deceptions. The Olympians did not pray to Fate, they did not care enough for that; but being free and happy, they laughed at existence. (RS 247)

Laughter’s main function in Santayana’s philosophy is to enable the liberation from false restrictions and spirit’s unity with the immediate. Laughter’s role is thus crucial in enabling deracination and self-knowledge, which are intrinsic to Santayana’s moral philosophy and necessary to the Santayanan good life. Laughter liberates because it arises from the recognition of the fundamental contingency of all forms of existence and from awareness of the potentiality and liberty, which epitomize matter for Santayana.

¹⁶ I have elaborated on that in Amir 2019a.

2. Self-laughter

Santayana writes in “Emotions of the Materialist”: “The only true dignity of man is his capacity to despise himself” (LE 230). All systems of philosophy and religion may be counted as tragic masks.¹⁷ So long as they are still plastic in the mind of their creator, they seem to him to wear the very lineaments of nature. Santayana gives a deadly criticism of the Philosopher, who “cannot distinguish the comic cast of his own thought”:

Yet inevitably it shows the hues and features of his race; it has a curious idiom and constitutional grammar, its quite personal rhetoric, its ridiculous ignorances and incapacities, and when his work is finished and its expression set, and other people behold it, it becomes under his name one of the stock masks or dramatis personae of the moral world. In it every wrinkle of his soul is eternalized, its old dead passion persisted in, its open mouth, always with the same rictus, bawling one deaf thought for ever. (SE 160)

Of all people, philosophers should laugh at themselves. Philosophy is commendable because it

strips the human world of all authority and liberates the spirit intellectually; but it cannot strip the world of its power, or even of its ascendancy over the philosopher’s soul. He remains an unhappy creature, divided against himself and tempted to play the Pharisee; for in his theoretical pose, he professes to dominate the world and benevolently to criticize it, while in his life and person he is hardly less subject than other men to every worldly requirement, vice, and affectation. And in him, this domination of the flesh and the world over the spirit seems less excusable than in simple honest people, in whom it may be positively amiable and *a part of the comedy of existence*. *So it might be in the philosopher too, if he were frank enough to laugh at himself*. (RS 159; emphasis added)

Moralism, as all forms of domination, is to be corrected by laughter. Summing up his philosophy in *The Idler and his Works*, Santayana qualifies “the liberal, empirical, psychological philosophy” into which he was plunged as “miserably artificial, like a modern town laid out in squares. There was nothing subterranean acknowledged in it, no ultimate catastrophe, no jungle, no desert, and no laughter of the Gods” (IW 8). Here, laughter is related to depths, to inhospitable surroundings and to a threatening world. Elsewhere, Santayana relates laughter to truth and to sublimity: “The modern hatred of religion is hatred of the truth, hatred of all sublimity, hatred of the laughter of the gods” (PP 453). It is because the philosopher cannot laugh that he is ridiculous. G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell represent for Santayana thinkers who suffer from “colossal folly...keenly excited about not knowing where they are” (SE 216, 210). “They are really here,” he reminds us, “in the common natural world...and they have only to remove their philosophical bandages in order to perceive this” (SE 210).

¹⁷ For the tragic in Santayana’s thought, see Krempleska 2019, 140–19.

3. Cheerfulness

“Wisdom,” says Santayana, “is to take everything with good humor, with a grain of salt” (PGS 11). Dilworth maintains that “the ironic thrust” of Santayana’s thought always leads to his ethics of toleration:

The key-note to this is again his text’s studied ethics of cheerfulness stemming from his dispassionate appreciation of the inexhaustible abundance of the potential forms, as well as the energized intuitions, of the true, the good, and the beautiful. (Dilworth 1989, 19)

Moreover, Santayana’s moral relativism means that a neutral observer could view all moral perspectives as equal, but such a view must be balanced by the understanding that no animal stands on neutral ground. There is a polarity between the ideal neutral or objective understanding of behavior, on the one hand, and the committed and vested interest of particular living beings, on the other hand. A polarity is an incongruity that can be construed comically. Hence, the fun that Wahman finds we can have “with the paradox that our intimately valued existence is not valuable absolutely. A smiling acceptance of this paradox is not admitting to a failure of life, nor need it be a retreat from its fray” (Wahman 81).

Yet Santayana’s good humor or “ethics of cheerfulness” —his frequent mood of tranquil, disillusioned, detached, even humorous, spirituality, as Dilworth characterizes it (1996)—sits at the heart of his eclecticism, with his commitments to pluralism, historicity, and relativity. Spiritual men are not necessarily alike (RS 197); they do not share cheerfulness or laughter as their characteristic demeanor. However, wise men seem to have something in common, according to Santayana, since wisdom is to take everything with good humor, with a grain of salt (PGS 11, 14). Echoing Plato, Santayana declares, “unmitigated seriousness is always out of place in human affairs” (SE 6). That means that a sense of humor is necessary for happiness, for “to be happy, you must be wise” (EGP 152).

4. Metanoia

Santayana is famous for arguing that “Art does not seek out the pathetic, the tragic, and the absurd; it is life that has imposed them upon our attention, and enlisted art in their service, to make the contemplation of them, since it is inevitable, at least as tolerable as possible” (SB 138).¹⁸ It follows that the comic and tragic aspects of life are reconciled because they are not contradictory. In his autobiography, Santayana explains, “between the laughing and the weeping philosopher there is no opposition; the same facts that make one laugh make one weep. No whole-hearted man, no sane art, can be limited to either mood” (PP 156). In this he echoes Montaigne’s view, as expressed in the chapter, “We Taste Nothing Pure” of the *Essays* (1958):

¹⁸ See also his letter to William Morton Fullerton of 28 December 1887: “... But as to your prohibition to be serious, I consider it an insult to a philosopher. I am always serious. It is a great mistake to suppose I am ever in fun. It is the thing that jokes, not I. If this world, seriously and solemnly described, makes people laugh, is it my fault? I am not to blame for the absurdities of nature” (LGS). I am grateful to Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. for attracting my attention to it.

Free life has the spirit of comedy. It rejoices in the seasonable beauty of each new thing, and laughs at its decay, covets no possessions, demands no agreement, and strives to sustain nothing in being except a gallant spirit of courage and truth, as each fresh adventure may renew it. (SE 102–3).

Surd and absurd are related terms (Stobaeus 1924, *Florilegium* 3.1.47; Diels and Kranz 1972, 68 B189). To reject the absurd is to reject our material nature, to sin towards life. Ramón del Castillo goes as far as saying that “since existence is inherently comic, rejection or denial of the comic amounts to a denial of the human condition.” (Del Castillo 7) Santayana now claims that what satire justly reveals and what the genteel tradition sadly cannot accept is that “existence is absurd” (GSA 160). Indeed, “we do not consent to be absurd, though absurd we are” (SE 68).

In *The Sense of Beauty*, the pleasure in the comic is never pure as it is mixed with pain. Now we are asked to meet existence on its own terms, the adequate response to it being joy and amusement (SE 141, 144). Santayana praises the comedic aspect of life and relates it to “the sportive side” of our nature, which is absent from *The Sense of Beauty*: “The whole drift of things presents a huge, good-natured comedy to the observer. It stirs not unpleasantly a certain sturdy animality and hearty self-trust which lie at the basis of human nature” (AT, G-2–3, 98):

We too exist; and existence is a joy to the sportive side of our nature, itself akin to a shower of sparks and a pattern of irrevocable adventures. What indeed could be more exhilarating than such a route, if only we are not too exacting, and do not demand of it irrelevant perfections? The art of life is to keep step with the celestial orchestra that beats the measure of our career, and gives the cue for our exits and our entrances...In this world there should be none but gentle tears, and fluttering tip-toe loves. (SE 144)

Charles Dickens “saw the absurdity and understood the life” and is thus considered a good philosopher by Santayana. This description could fit Santayana as well, as he explains:

Facts, however serious inwardly, are always absurd outwardly; and the just critic of life sees both truths at once, as Cervantes did in *Don Quixote*. A pompous idealist who does not see the ridiculous in all things is the dupe of his sympathy and abstraction; and a clown, who does not see that these ridiculous creatures are living quite in earnest, is the dupe of his egotism. (SE 70)

However balanced the account of the different masks seems to be, a further complication of the relations of the tragic to the comic lies in Santayana’s recommendation of the comic mask. Indeed, comedy is preferable to tragedy, because “the happy presence of reason in human life” is perhaps better exemplified in the former than in the latter. In comedy we see no terrible sub-human or super-human fatality to render reason vain. Reason therefore can make “its little runs and show its comic contradictions and clever solutions without disturbing the sound vegetative substance and free flowerings of human society. In comedy we laugh at our foolish errors, correct them with a word, and know no reasons why we shouldn’t be happy ever after” (PP 510). Moreover, Todd Cronan notes that Santayana confessed in

1921 his predilection for “comic poetry,” one that need not contain “much philosophic scope” (Cronan 22).

Finally, Santayana believes that “when laughter is humble, when it is not based on self-esteem, it is wiser than tears” (SE 97). Where the spirit of comedy has departed, company becomes constraint, reserve eats up the spirit, and people fall into a “penurious melancholy in their scruple to be always exact, sane, reasonable, never to mourn, never to glow, never to betray a passion or a weakness, nor venture to utter a thought they might not wish to harbor for ever.” People who abjure comedy are trapped by rationality because they have no way to change their minds without appearing foolish. Thus,

The comedy goes on silently behind the scenes, until perhaps it gets the upper hand and becomes positive madness; or else it breaks out in some shy, indirect fashion, as among Americans with their perpetual joking. Where there is no habitual art and no moral liberty, the instinct for direct expression is atrophied for want of exercise; and then slang and a humorous perversity of phrase or manner act as safety-valves to sanity; and you manage to express yourself in spite of the censor by saying something grotesquely different from what you mean. This is a long way round to sincerity, and an ugly one. (SE 138)

Santayana contrasts this with the Spaniard’s humility. Knowing himself “to be a creature of accident and fate,” he recovers his dignity by wearing “a chosen mask in the comedy of life,” even if this is a non-ludicrous mask (BR 151).

Santayana’s predilection for the comic over the tragic does not sit well with interpretations of his thought that sees it as more tragic than comic, as Lyon does (1987), or consider it a tragicomedy, as Wahman does (2005). To do justice to those interpretations we may emphasize the change in perspective Santayana mentions and various commentators describe.

First, to relate this change to Democritus, it is in the *Dialogues in Limbo* that Santayana has him say, “Shed your tears, my son, shed your tears. The young man who has not wept is a savage, and the old man who will not laugh is a fool!” (DL 57). Moreover, in the revised introduction to the second edition of *Reason in Common Sense* (1922), Santayana reflects on his change of perspective since having written the book nearly twenty years earlier:

I now dwell by preference on other perspectives...I cannot take every phase of art or religion, or philosophy seriously, simply because it takes itself so. These things seem to me less tragic than they did, and more comic; and I am less eager to choose and to judge among them, as if only one form could be right. (Quoted in Flamm 19)

Thus, McCormick argues that the comic “sits cheek by jowl with the tragic in Santayana’s mind, and particularly in his old age,” when “comedy and tragedy merge” (McCormick 1983, 15). Moreover, Cronan traces the same evolution in Santayana’s view of art. He notes that “satire, caricature, and the comic in general are not terms in high regard in Santayana’s early writings,” yet he points to a newly conceived “comic outlook,” an “aesthetic metanoia” around 1911, when Santayana left Harvard (Cronan 21, 23). Santayana enunciates the new outlook in the Introduction to the *Realms of Being*: the best part of our destiny—the tragic destiny of

the body—is that we may often forget it. “Play-life is our real life.” (Cronan 23) Finally, both Kallen (1964) and Levinson (1990) trace the evolution in Santayana’s thought from a more tragic view of life to one in which the comic is predominant. As both accounts are persuasive, I refer the reader to them.¹⁹

Concluding Remarks

This article aims to find laughter, self-laughter, cheerfulness, and metanoia toward the comic in Democritus, the laughing philosopher, and in his followers, Montaigne, Nietzsche and Santayana, in order to generalize these commonalities and articulate the thread that connects them.²⁰ Whilst in this part I noted the relationships between the three modern thinkers that may ignite an interest in the topic I address, I could focus in depth only on Democritus and Santayana due to space limitations. I leave for the second part of the article the discussion of Nietzsche and Montaigne, and the concluding remarks on the common traits of these four, and hopefully more, laughing philosophers.

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Nietzsche, Friedrich.

In references to Nietzsche’s writings, Arabic numbers refer to sections or to chapters, as in Zarathustra. Roman numbers refer to books or parts. For example: Z, II, 4, 2 means Thus Spoke Zarathustra, part II, chapter 4, section 1. P stands for “Prologue” or “Preface” (the former in references to Zarathustra and the latter in references to other books)

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¹⁹ As well as to my study of *Santayana, Laughter and the Good Life: Montaigne, Nietzsche, Santayana, (Bergson)*.

²⁰ For the formulation of such a thread, I will use the insights I gained on the ways that lead in and out of laughter in my study, *Philosophy, Humor, and the Human Condition: Taking Ridicule Seriously* (2019).

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Physical Space and Time

Part 1: Natural Moments Introduced

Angus Kerr-Lawson, one of the founding editors of this Bulletin, was an assiduous defender of Santayana's ideas. Nevertheless, in the course of explicating a number of those ideas, he encountered what he considered imprecisions in Santayana's thought that posed problems for anyone trying to interpret his theories. At his death, Kerr-Lawson was writing a book on Santayana. We present a selection from it here.

One of the issues he wrestled with in his book concerns Santayana's notion of a natural moment. A natural moment, as Kerr-Lawson explains in what follows, arose from Santayana's effort to explain time as part of the natural world in a way that avoids both the abstraction of mathematical representations and the subjectivity of psychological ones. In the end, Kerr-Lawson thought that natural moments did not solve the problem Santayana was facing. But to reach that conclusion, he first had to spell out Santayana's concept. The selection that we publish here is the first part of a chapter on physical space and time. In this selection, Kerr-Lawson introduces natural moments and gives us a hint as to where the difficulty with them lies.

Early in *The Realm of Matter*, Santayana seeks and finds an account of substance that is appropriate for the philosophy he is developing. In those pages, he treats this as the linguistic task of finding a name for substance. In developing his own ideas of what substance must be, he characterizes it in terms of ten properties, and these lead him to conclude that 'matter' is the very name he is looking for. He thereupon announces that in his system of philosophy the name of substance is to be matter. Despite Santayana's formulation of the issue, this is more than a linguistic question; in point of fact, it is his extended argument for materialism. He affirms materialism frequently throughout his books, in arguments that explain why matter must be the cause of some event or thing or situation. These arguments are scattered and most are brief. However, this justification of materialism begins in the first chapter of *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and follows a train of thought that ends only with the following statement at the end of the third chapter of *The Realm of Matter*.

The field of action is accordingly the realm of matter; and I will henceforth call it by that name.

A system of philosophy cannot legitimately prove the existence of a realm of matter; but the philosopher who admits natural knowledge must posit some substance, and Santayana argues that this substance is matter; he is a materialist.

Following this affirmation of the materialist character of his system, Santayana develops the consequences of the ten properties, which now play a somewhat different role, and become the basic assumptions of what he calls natural philosophy. In the remaining chapters of *The Realm of Matter*, he elaborates on his notion of matter seen as an assumption or posit required for effective performance in the field

of action. I first explore his claim that matter constitutes a physical space and a physical time, and examine a small number of their representations.

Because of this tie to human action, the materialism that Santayana develops here is entirely different from scientific theory. As he says, physical science depends on minute experiments that explore the behaviour of matter in the small; whereas he wishes to deal entirely on the level of human activities, or as he calls it, on the field of action. He is aiming for a minimal set of posits or assumptions that provide a setting in which we can understand and explain our and others' actions. Some might see a problem in having two such radically different accounts of matter; however, since he assumes from the start the existence of a realm of matter, he can view these simply as two different attempts to come to terms with one and the same existence. Philosophers in the empiricist tradition who refuse to accept the notion of a material substance and therefore do not admit something like the realm of matter into their discourse, might find it contradictory or at least hard to explain that there can be two entirely different theories here, both of which are accepted as valid. However, with the explicit posit of a substantial material realm, the situation becomes more clear. These are just two attempts to represent a single obscure physical reality. The point is really an obvious one, but in Santayana's judgement it is lost to many thinkers whose ideas trace back to those of Hume.

Something similar to this account of matter is characteristic of his treatment of space and time. That the relative cosmos constitutes a space and a time is asserted in two of the ten basic properties, and Santayana refers to these as *physical* space and *physical* time. He completely accepts the relativity to matter of the spatial and the temporal, as is confirmed by his statements that matter has parts and *constitutes* a physical space and that it is in flux and *constitutes* a physical time. Like the cosmos itself, these are posits that philosophers and scientists investigate and seek to explain.

I do not comment on the wide range of spatio-temporal issues, and indeed will just focus on two problems of special interest to Santayana. The first concerns the excessive emphasis that struggling humanity places on the here and now. In order to understand the true nature in the realm of matter, one must "discount" a preoccupation with the transcendental centre where one is situated. This centre, he insists, has no genuine priority over other space/time loci. In the realm of truth, as he understands it, all such centres have equal status.

A second main concern is the difficulty of representing change in the conceptual framework that he allows himself; he is seeking to explain the flux of existence in terms of eternally fixed essences. Just as it is for the ancient Greeks, Santayana sees a major problem in explaining physical change. He offers two novel devices, each of which is a response to the problem, insofar as the irrational nature of change permits any solution at all. Together these constructions represent his solution to the problem. One is the notion of a *trope*. Despite the intractability of the flux, there must be an essence that represents any given change, and this essence is a trope. As he defines them, tropes could serve the larger philosophical community by clarifying the nature of laws. The second notion, that of *natural moments*, is introduced in "The Flux of Existence" prior to the chapter on tropes; much of this chapter will be a discussion and critique of his doctrine of natural moments. Although very

different from tropes—natural moments are existential whereas tropes are essences—the two are compatible one with the other, and together make up his account of how we represent change.

The unwarranted fondness for the present moment can be considered an undesirable aspect of sentimental time. Mathematical time is also found objectionable by Santayana, and natural moments can be seen as his initial proposals for an alternative treatment of time. He finds especially objectionable the vast number of instants that constitute mathematical time. These have no counterpart in physical time itself, he feels. If we take a single extended natural event, its progress through time should be constituted by the event itself; he believes that nothing about the event calls for the infinitely small of mathematical time. Natural moments are meant to define durations appropriate for the actual temporal conditions of the event. Mathematical intervals have no intrinsic length that might correspond to some real measurable distance, and natural moments are meant to represent physical time with units of duration that are tied directly to the event itself. Unfortunately, he ignores the contributions to time that will be made by other events at the same time but in different places, as if each event defines its own time without any contribution from other events. As I construe the situation, he believes that this reading is sanctioned by the modern concept of relativity. But I argue that this is a misreading.

Timothy Sprigge sees the chapter “Pictorial Space and Sentimental Time” in Santayana’s *The Realm of Matter* as an example of his finest writing; as might some others, he does not believe that the elegance of the prose is a hindrance to clarity of thought. Its major goal is to establish the distinction between physical space and physical time on the one hand, and on the other the various important impressionistic and scientific concepts of these. Santayana takes note of the numerous shortcomings of versions of the latter, and he condemns the tendency to ignore the former. The distinction is central to everything Santayana says about space and time. Physical space and physical time are real existing aspects of matter that we seek to understand. Just as Santayana does, I shall concentrate on time rather than space, because of the special problems he finds there. Of course, these problems and his approach to them do not at all exclude space; but many of the problems of space and his solutions for these are similar to those of time, although perhaps seen by him as less pressing.

Two representations of physical time are most commonly seen: it can be presented as *sentimental time*, as found in intuition; or it can be treated as *mathematical time*, such as is done in science. Sentimental time and mathematical time are essences and no part of the realm of matter, which is the authentic seat of physical time. Although we may think of time in terms of one or other of these (and must think of it in terms of *some* specious representation), any attempt to treat either as a fit replacement for physical time is to confuse appearance with reality. However, according to his account, exactly this is what happens when philosophers see as their first and only task the replacement of unclear, ill-defined notions like that of physical time by something precise. Santayana believes, and I think he is correct, that the notion of a latent physical existence we call time, not entirely understood and not strictly definable, should be retained in discourse, even though it may be in

the background. Accuracy of description to any level desired is appropriate for representations of this physical existence; but these ought not to be treated as the chief object of inquiry, which is the thing itself.

Although scientists strive to develop a fully refined theory of time, I believe that they never lose sight of something different, a hidden postulated existence called time; and this is their object of study. Others may have different theories in pursuit of this same goal. Their mutual goal is a better understanding of something other than their theory, namely a latent presence that is the seat in which changes take place; this unseen existence is called by Santayana physical time. Philosophers, he says, should also retain the distinction, but frequently fail to do so and often identify in thought the physical reality with some favourite representational concept; this might be a version of mathematical time for the student of science, or of sentimental time for the student of phenomenology, or it might be something entirely different. Such a failure to make this distinction falls in naturally with the empiricist tradition; but Santayana wishes to restore physical space and time to their rightful place in philosophical discourse.

Relativity of Space and Time

Santayana maintains that space and time are not absolutes: they are constituents of matter and must be understood through matter. This is only a part of his message, and doesn't get to the heart of the questions he raises, but it is certainly an important part. Many philosophers agree on the point and firmly reject the Newtonian concept of absolute space and time seen as substances. He applauds what in his day was the newborn theory of relativity; but he is not claiming a detailed understanding of special and general relativity when he condemns the idea of absolute space and time. Rather he is thinking of the principle that space and time are dependent for their existence on matter, and should not be seen as separate substances. The sources of his belief in relativity in this sense, he says, are his favourite ancient materialist philosophers rather than modern physical theory. This notion of relativism is an unmistakable part of his arguments for the five indispensable properties of a substance that sustains human action: it must consist in parts and *constitute* a physical space; and it must be in flux and *constitute* a physical time. Since these five and the additional five presumable properties are assumed in the further development of his theory of matter, it is in his discussion of these ten properties that one may find his argument for relativism, an argument depending heavily on the aim of finding a setting in which human action can be understood. Beyond this, he seems to feel that the burden of proof falls on the advocates of an absolutist view. Relativist principles date back to antiquity, whereas the view that space and time are substantial is just a momentary perspective in the history of philosophy, and one that recent theory has thrown further into doubt.

One focus of Santayana's account of space and time is his emphasis on its dispersed character, where each locus is seen as a *transcendental centre*, a place and time from which a sentient organism might view the immediate surroundings or the entire universe. The field of action, for all of us, is seen from our own transcendental centre, and there is an inevitable but mistaken tendency to give priority to the

place and time where we are situated. It is easier to accept the relativity of the particular place where we are located than it is the current moment in time, and I shall restrict my discussion to the temporal issues that arise.

The notion that there is and can be but one time, and that half of it is always intrinsically past and the other half always intrinsically future, belongs to the normal pathology of an animal mind: it marks the egotistical outlook of an active being endowed with imagination. Such a being will project the moral contrast produced by his momentary absorption in action upon the conditions and history of that action, and upon the universe at large. A perspective of hope and one of reminiscence continually divide for him a specious eternity; and for him the dramatic centre of existence, though always at a different point in physical time, will always be precisely in himself. (RB 253)

The “insane emphasis” we place on the actual present must fade away under the aspect of eternity, when we turn to the realm of truth. However, this is not to deny change or temporal events themselves; the changes of the material world are recorded as truths, but truths with the “partisan heat” removed, and with the focus on one special centre dropped.

It appears, then, that there is nothing special about the present moment other than the momentary absorption of an individual living and acting in that moment. Time is populated by myriad “transcendental centres”, each of which can be seen as the present from its own point of view, and none of which have ontological priority. I have some personal doubts about Santayana’s summary dismissal of the present, and I consider these as I outline the views of two philosophers who have commented on his theory of time. One is Timothy Sprigge, who notes that those like Santayana who give an equal ontological status to all moments, past, present, and future, generally have a difficult time retaining the reality of time in their systems. However, he says, Santayana “makes valiant efforts to free it [time] of these implications of changelessness, efforts which seem at least to point in the right direction” (Sprigge 183).

Gale on Santayana and Time

I look first at the comments of Richard Gale, as presented in his “Santayana’s Bifurcationist Theory of Time.” Gale appeals to the A and B categories of time famously defined by J. M. E. McTaggart.

The best way to enter deeply into a philosophical system is through its account of the nature of time. This is especially true for Santayana’s philosophical system. He will be seen to hold a type of B-Theory of time that recognizes the B-relations of precedence and simultaneity between events as objective but relegates their A-determinations, consisting in their being intrinsically past, present, and future, to the junkheap of mere subjective appearance. This results in a highly bifurcationist philosophy in which the scientific image of a world stripped of all properties that give human life a meaning turns out to be the true one and the manifest or common sense image of the moral agent the false one. It will be shown, furthermore, that the deep parting of the ways

between Santayana and his illustrious contemporaries, James, Bergson, Dewey, and Whitehead, all A-Theory process philosophers, is over the issue of bifurcationism, especially in regard to the nature of time. The moral that is to be drawn from my story is that ultimate disagreements between philosophers are due to their rival sentiments of rationality as to what constitutes a rationally satisfying explanation of reality, with these men, in opposition to Santayana, requiring that it be an anthropomorphic or humanistic one.¹

For Gale, perhaps James and the other process philosophers mentioned in this passage present a more rationally satisfying explanation of reality. His final conclusion, however, is that philosophers of all persuasions will appeal to myths and will find meaning and value in their own way, and that Santayana must acknowledge this. Such a view is in fact entirely congenial to Santayana; but he can still point to anomalies in the views of those who praise and accept science but advance a philosophy that downplays, even renounces, the naturalism that is the fundamental inspiration of science. In their eyes, a philosophy based in human experience can incorporate science into a unified whole, as against Santayana's bifurcationist position. They feel the need to defeat the chilling effects of hard scientific doctrine on our experience of the moral and aesthetic, and offer philosophies that tone down the very dichotomies that Santayana brings to the fore with his realms ontology. Of course, he instantly traces these systems to flawed empiricist and idealist origins.

As Gale says, Santayana's view of time embraces the B-Relations of precedence and simultaneity but not the richer three part division of 'past/present/future' found in the A-Theory.² He denies the existence of an absolute although changing present located between an absolute past and a perhaps vacant future. An urgent absolute present, characteristic of the A-Theory and of sentimental time, and especially a radical absolute difference between the status of future events and past ones, are no part of Santayana's physical time.³ However his account of time is more than just B-Theory. Although the absolute present is absent from his realm of matter, he bestows a special importance to a certain notion of "presentness", which is a chief characteristic of each *transcendental centre*. Thus an absolute present may be banned from his account, but relative presentness is everywhere. Sprigge attaches some importance to this idea, as we see below. Of course, one can always speak of a relative present in the B-Theory, seen as those events occurring at the same time as some chosen event. But presentness defined in this way will not play the fundamental role that it has in his transcendental centres. For Santayana, presentness is an *intrinsic* part of every event or moment, whether it is seen as past, present, or future. I believe that, with the transcendental centres and the presentness tied to

¹ The paper is based on his address to the *George Santayana Society* in December of 1998.

² Santayana did not share McTaggart's view that, without the A-Series, there could be no change and therefore no time; in his realm of matter, everything that exists is perpetually in flux, and is indeed characterised by change. However, he does have to take pains to preserve something of this robust notion of time when he turns to the realm of truth, where he faces difficulties reminiscent of McTaggart. Sprigge does not find any explicit reference to an influence of McTaggart on Santayana, but was not denying one.

³ In the sequel I shall be inserting into the text material from my original comments on the Gale paper.

each of these, Santayana's account of time goes well beyond McTaggart's basic B-Theory.

Perhaps Professor Gale exaggerates the influence that one's theory of time has on one's ethical preferences. He suggests that Santayana's partiality for contemplation and the life of spirit is a consequence of his rejection of the A-Theory; whereas James and other process philosophers embrace the A-Theory in their immediate concerns for urgent moral questions. I question his argument here, and point to the influence on Santayana's thinking of the transcendental centres. Even though he does not assume there is an absolute present, moral agents still have a present within their transcendental centre, so that the full range of ethical choices remains open. However, Gale is not wrong to point to a connection between Santayana's view of the good and his account of time. For instance, he criticizes in some what he sees as an overly strong emphasis on the here and now: he is critical of the philosophy of the foreground he finds in Dewey, where sentimental time is embraced and everything is subordinated to immediate experience. He certainly believes that philosophers who are too much enticed by the foreground and who hypostasise the present experience are apt to miss the temporal plasticity essential to the life of reason. The sort of moral agency described by Gale seems to be open to the sort of criticism Santayana directed against James:

But what is a good life? Had William James, had the people about him, had modern philosophers anywhere, any notion of that? I cannot think so. They had much experience of personal goodness, and love of it; they had standards of character and right conduct; but as to what might render human existence good, excellent, beautiful, happy, and worth having as a whole, their notions were utterly thin and barbarous. They had forgotten the Greeks, or never known them. (COUS 85-6)

In Gale's view, Santayana is led by his theory of time to back off from a useful focus on the present moment and to adopt a meditative model of life. However, lapses away from concern for the present moment are occasional, and although they may sometimes favour the timeless contemplative view of things proper to the realm of truth, they may also be serving to help formulate in reflection an ideal life of reason.

I see Santayana's treatment of spirituality rather differently than does Gale. In *The Realm of Spirit* and in some other late works, Santayana gives us what he calls a "lay religion," aimed at a liberation of the spirit for the one in a thousand who have the aptitude, preference, determination, and stamina for such a regimen. He sees this as a religious question, in an individualistic sense; but this does not invalidate his discussions of society. It is not up to the naturalist philosopher to insist on this austere vocation for the many unsuited to a life of contemplation. The move to an exclusive spirituality is a lay form of salvation for those suited to it and having psyches sufficiently integrated for the task. But for most, spirituality cannot be more than momentary, and improves the tone of our lives rather more than it alters the kinds of actions we take. Santayana's doctrines, both early and late, take these into account. In *The Life of Reason* he asks how one may balance the spirituality requisite for understanding and universal sympathy, with the threat this might pose

to the maintenance of one's own ideals. He calls for a single-minded pursuit of those ideals, but for an external policy, which is charitable—with no claim that this would be easy. The same theme recurs in the late “Apologia” essay in *The Philosophy of George Santayana*. He applauds the text of the *Bhagavad Gita* for espousing a version of spirituality which invites a return to the world of action, for those like Arjuna whose destiny calls for it. Once again, he looks for a balance. Much of what he says about spirit is not merely devoted to those committed to a spiritual life; moments of pure spirit may enrich all lives, without at all disrupting the workaday existence. In a measure and for a time, people may be moved from their selfish pursuits, as elaborated in the prudential morality of the life of reason, toward a more genuine and disinterested justice or charity. It is important here to keep separate Santayana's own sentiments from his philosophy. In the latter, he only sees the spiritual life as appropriate for a few. In his own case, however, it is clear that in his later life there was a marked turn towards the post-rational. The issue is a contentious one, and Gale is far from alone in his reading of Santayana's position.

Gale's intriguing claim that the surest way to penetrate to the heart of any system of philosophy is through its treatment of time is certainly not refuted by Santayana's naturalism. With the introduction of essence comes a different perspective on time, that of the eternal. This means that both the subjective bias of sentimental time and a serene view under the aspect of eternity have their place; which one will dominate for any person depends on the psyche of that person. Questions about time do take one to the very centre of his naturalism, as Gale would have it. However, the question whether Santayana's moral philosophy moves too far in the direction of spirituality to the prejudice of action will not be answered by his stance on time.

Sprigge on Santayana and Time

Santayana's philosophy must be seen as strongly bifurcationist in the sense used by Gale: the glory of life is spirit, but spirit is epiphenomenal. It may seem destructive of human values to have mere matter as the really real and spirit as powerless. However, for Timothy Sprigge this way of placing what gives life its meaning in an impotent spirit has merit in that it is then protected in a definitive manner from the ever-increasing encroachments of science on our notions of mind and action. It seems to him that “if man is at one level explicable mechanistically then some sort of epiphenomenalism must be true, and Santayana's attempts to make sense of the theory are particularly instructive” (Sprigge 219). This aspect of Santayana's philosophy is especially attractive to Sprigge, and so is the second aspect of his thought under consideration here, his account of time. He endorses the speculative treatment of time that he finds in Santayana, and especially his account of the relationship between truth and time.⁴ In his discussion of truth, Santayana rejects the present moment in a strong and forthright way: the realm of truth is a view from nowhere in which there is a decisive move away from A-Theory and elimination of

⁴ See his Chapter IX “Truth and Time”

the present moment (intrinsic *and* relative). However, from the perspective of the realm of matter, his rejection of A-Theory is more open to questions.

In his chapter "Truth and Time", Sprigge divides philosophies of time into two categories: in the first it is assumed that there is no fundamental ontological difference between past, present and future; and all other theories are placed in a second category. He really wants to consider just two theories from this second class, in a search for an adequate account of time. For both of these the future is dismissed as non-existent. One is the empiricist, pragmatist theory which considers only the present as real, and the second is what he calls the Theory of Absolute Becoming. He dismisses the pragmatic view in summary fashion, since for him the complete denial of the past is a fatal flaw, but he considers the second theory at more length. In it, the present and the past belong to reality, although in different ways, while the future has no existence whatsoever. Reality is:

... a spatio-temporal totality, containing the whole past, and (whether bounded in other directions or not) bounded in one plane by *the present*, a surface 'for ever' being covered by new matter such as possesses a unique kind of liveliness for just this one 'moment' that it remains upon the surface. . . . In short, future events are utterly unreal, but once entered into reality by being momentarily present they always remain a part of reality. The one great alteration to which they are subject lies in that loss of liveliness, that death which they are suffering even in their birth as living 'nows'. Once dead and entered into history they suffer no further change except in respect of their proximity to the uniquely living surface. . . . (Sprigge 184)

This theory follows common sense in two important particulars. It admits a real past, unlike the pragmatist view which he says is absurd in not doing so. And "it preserves our sense of the open-ness of the future and of the real transitoriness of things in time" (Sprigge 184). However, he goes on to argue that the theory is incoherent, and in his refutation he brings in Santayana's position. Indeed, he finds that, in doing justice to these two requirements of common sense, this latter position "goes further towards meeting the same demands than any other alternative of which I know" (Sprigge 184).

Sprigge recognizes a key point in Santayana's argument, as I did not before I read his commentary — the presence in every event of an intrinsic presentness. In the chapter "Pictorial Space and Sentimental Time" the point is made several times, for instance in this marginal note: "Events can be truly past or future only relatively, and in case they are intrinsically present" (RB 265). And in the text he argues for the importance of this feature. Sprigge finds in this argument strong support for Santayana's account of time. I shall try to pin down what he has in mind (although it is not an argument for which I have much intuitive grasp).

The Present

Santayana's account of time does not admit a march of time from an absolute present into an immediate future; his is not an A-Theory. However, I cannot cast aside so easily an A-Theory which recognizes a real present. Of course, modern

physics does not countenance a single absolute time, and without this one cannot have a uniquely defined universal present. The present would have to be defined relative to some co-ordinate system; and it is natural to see this restriction and the choice of some present within it as defined by a particular transcendental centre. However, this is not necessary and I can instead assume that there is some real present within this frame of reference.

One argument against such a choice is based on physical theory, in which there is no privileged time. One has complete freedom to select an arbitrary time and place as base point for a transcendental centre. Since science does not make a place for a special real present, so the argument goes, there can be no case for having one. But, no, this is not a valid argument. Theory does not deal in particulars at all, but it is scientifically all right to make such a choice. One can define time in terms of the actual present moment, or one can think of the present moment in the large without any special reference to some centre, and nothing in the general theory will invalidate this choice.

It seems to me that, if a philosophy is to take account of human action, it should admit the notion of a present time separating a past that has in part been already affected by our actions from a future that is the locus for our plans and projects. By setting aside this consideration, perhaps Santayana departs here from his task he assigns himself of giving a philosophy of action. I would not see this present as dependent on some arbitrary choice of a centre, but as the real spot in the course of events which has if fact has been achieved.

It is always possible and indeed legitimate to undermine any position or perspective that has absolutist tendencies and view it as dependent at bottom on the selection of a transcendental centre. Santayana relies on this as the final arbiter of questions about time. His position on this issue is no doubt bolstered by Einstein's theories, in which the measurement of time must always be relative to a co-ordinate system. For a co-ordinate system that is based on the selection of some transcendental centre, one would naturally select the mathematical origin of the co-ordinate axes as locus for a transcendental centre where an observer is located. However, the origin of a co-ordinate system is not special in any way; it is an arbitrary choice, and this caters to the position I take. In fact there will be an infinite number of other transcendental centres that lead to this same co-ordinate frame. One can in fact think of the frame without seeing it as tied in any fashion to some centre, and I believe this is the way in which one can think of the frame objectively. It is necessary, in light of relativity theory, to abandon the notion of an absolute time, but one can still have a time that is defined throughout a particular chosen co-ordinate frame without any reliance on the spatial location of an observer.

It appears to me that Santayana is too much influenced by this argument from relativity theory and too quick to trace temporal issues to transcendental centres. Because of this, I believe, he is led to positions that are in some tension with other important aspects of his thought. I am thinking of his frequent appeal to statements like this: "That mankind is a race of animals living in a material world is the first presupposition of this whole inquiry. I should be playing false to myself and to the reader if I did not assume it" (DP 6). This might seem to be a throw-away line, but in my eyes it is significant and is a superior guide to the kernel of his naturalism

than one finds in the introspective development of the second half of *Scepticism and Animal Faith*. It offers a vision from outside the flow of events it envisages. It leaves no room for the notion that experience is at the heart of things, no room for a philosophy of the foreground. It encourages the view of knowledge that it cannot be literal, but is valid nevertheless, since it leads to fruitful interactions of organisms with things.

This simplest of models sheds some light on the issue at hand, turning on the question whether or not the observer lies entirely beyond the time determined by the flow of events. If the former, the observer would be something of a god, and would see things from the viewpoint of eternity. This is the realm of truth. But the issue here would concern the less remote case where the observer moves along with the flow of events without participating—as when someone travels on a boat—making observations at a particular time which is special, not in the sense that the observer makes it important, but merely because the observation was made when the craft had reached a particular point in its voyage? It is difficult not to see things in this fashion, but Santayana appears not to make any appeal to such a model. Likely he would say that a perspective cannot be within time without participating in the events determining that time. However, I see nothing in his position that would rule out this perspective.⁵ In any case, it is unlikely that the point would much concern him, so long as the suggested observer would not introduce into the realm of matter a piece of egotism.

Problem of change: Mathematical time

In “The Flux of Existence”, chapter 5 of *The Realm of Matter*, Santayana raises a question that pre-occupies him and leads him to define his natural moments. What, he asks, is a fruitful way to represent and discuss the flux of existence: “How penetrate into the inner flow of this existence?” (RB 280); “How express in human language . . . this mixture of self-assertion and instability proper to any moment of existence?” (RB 278). He has reservations about any form of specious time presented to spirit, since it cannot give the actual transition or genesis which is the real character of the flux. The very nature of intuition excludes it from anything but a specious representation of time and change. We can only intuit one essence at any moment; even if this essence comprehends a view of previous events and a prediction of the likely future, these vistas will only make up part of the specious present.

The unity of apperception which yields the sense of change renders change specious, by relating the terms and directions of change together in a single perspective, . . . intuition of change excludes actual change in the given object. (SAF 25)

Santayana concludes that transition cannot be synthesized or represented truly by essences. This cannot be a surprise to his readers. He has already argued at some length in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* that the representation of things can only

⁵ Of course, Santayana could well be thinking of the theory of relativity, which discredits any absolute notion of simultaneity.

yield non-literal truth, even in the case of *fixed* things. Evidently, with changing things, we are at an even farther remove from our objects than we are with fixed things, due to the intractability of change. He does not make this point or mention at this point his previous sceptical arguments. However, the problem of change appears to force a second deeper respect in which intuition must fail to portray the reality of matter. He analyses this challenge in an extended discussion which culminates in the introduction of natural moments. That the problem of change is his motivation here is amply demonstrated in this lengthy preamble (RB 267-80). If we recall his stated purpose in *The Realm of Matter*, this doctrine should be a superior representation of change for the purpose of our effective participation in the field of action. However, he does seem to go beyond this and to challenge the standard representation of time in science and daily life.

Santayana describes the difficulty as the problem of finding a suitable representation of time; he is searching for a mode of discourse about change that avoids sentimental time (which is too subjective) and mathematical time (which is too abstract). In obvious ways, felt temporal spans are short or long according to the spiritual intensity of the moment; it is evident that sentimental time is utterly unreliable as an objective measure of events taking place. Santayana sees clearly that for an objective temporal standard one must look to recurring natural events themselves. This principle is widely accepted and is normally carried out through mathematical time; however, Santayana has serious reservations about this as a representation of the flux. It is hopelessly abstract and detached from those events.

Sensuous, dialectical, or moral view of it [time], however legitimate, are necessarily summary, superficial, and poetical, being created by a psyche biased and synthetic in her reactions. Mathematical views are more impartial, but wretchedly abstract. (RB 280)

The doctrine of natural moments is Santayana's attempt to circumvent the difficulties he finds in the application of mathematical time, and to give at least the beginnings of an improved account of physical time. Here is another formulation of the problem:

It is imperative, then, if we wish to understand existence and the succession of its moments, to disregard any synthesis created in imagination between the essences of these moments, or between what are supposed to have been their essences. Actual succession is a substitution, not a perspective. Now, when this transcendental synthetic glance is discounted, are there other elements left in the experience of change which might serve to describe fitly the nature of a flux actual and physical? (RB 272)

As this passage indicates, and as all his discussions of natural events confirm, he assumes from the start that events are to be described in terms of *moments*; in order to explain how to deal with the intractable notion of change, he suggests a special kind of moments that are just small enough temporally so as to be changeless, but are not the artificial infinitely small mathematical instants.

Tropes and Natural Moments

Santayana's full account of how to deal in concrete terms with change includes his notion of tropes, as given in chapter 6 of *The Realm of Matter* immediately following the discussion of natural moments. The notion of trope is sufficiently given by the following:

Now, in a flux, the total essence realised in the form of its flow during any particular period obviously cannot be realised in any one of its moments, when only this moment exists; it can be realised only progressively, by the order in which those moments arise and vanish. This order is the trope; it is the essence of that sequence seen under the form of eternity; and since existence, in this event, has realised that essence, that essence has descriptive value in respect to this world. It belongs to the realm of truth. (RB 294)

The trope is an essence that represents the form taken by an event with all the fury of existence stripped from it, as is indicated by his noting that it belongs to the realm of truth. In his account of tropes, it seems to me, Santayana is faithful to his practice of skirting problems best left to science. Change is difficult or even impossible to represent, but each change must have an essence, and we can speak of this essence or trope while leaving its study for science. With natural moments, however, I believe he strays a little from these principles and embarks on theoretical considerations that encroach on the concerns of scientists and mathematicians.

It is unsurprising that, in a philosophy that calls on fixed eternal essences as the sole objects of intuition, the representation of change will pose problems. Santayana puts a different and opposite spin on the point, saying that philosophers would be more willing to admit a serious problem with change if they were conversant with the notion of essence and aware of its power. "Modern philosophers, being contemptuous of essences and without a clear conception of them, usually assume the reality of change and succession without much scrutiny" (RB 270). He does not regard the eternal fixedness of his essences as the source of the problem but as its only viable solution. Essences play an important part in his account of natural moments, and tropes are defined explicitly as essences.

Math time leads to a trap

As discussed above, Santayana denies that space and time exist independently of the matter arising in it; we live in a "relative cosmos" in which the realm of matter "constitutes" a physical space and "constitutes" a physical time. The notion of an absolute time is a figment of imagination; those who embrace such a notion are barred by it from useful discernment of the flow of existence. Even though Santayana makes little effort to establish this relativist position, he is zealous in his insistence that those who claim to be relativists choose representations of time (and space) that support this interpretation; the concepts we use to depict space and time must be tied closely to physical space and physical time. Many will agree on these points, and will condemn the notion of time as an absolute. Nevertheless, he makes the radical suggestion that those who think of physical time in terms of

mathematical time may have already fallen into this trap. He believes that the mistake of taking time as absolute and free-standing is characteristic of the modern philosophical stance, even while the notion of absolute time is being denounced. In his eyes, this error is made in the following widely held understanding of what takes place in change and succession:

... the flux is composed of states of existence, mental, material, or simply qualitative, each of which is a unit and contains no variation; yet they succeed and replace one another because they arise in an underlying pervasive medium, absolute time, which itself lapses inherently and inevitably at a uniform rate, so that all its moments are already dated, and at a precise remove from one another. (RB 270)

The prestige of the mathematical continuum is great, and Santayana is taking on well-established principles and formidable theories. For almost everybody, it seems natural to consider the succession of events in terms of fixed states of affairs as situated each at some point on the so-called "real line." Numerous mathematical difficulties are clarified and resolved with this technical device, which is universally used in science. However, Santayana is pointing to difficulties he finds in the continuum as a representational system; as an account of change, he says, it dissolves into puzzles. He rejects the uniform measure of a mathematical time scale because it is not tied to and determined by actual physical changes, and runs along as if it represents a prior substantial medium, an absolute time, a doubly infinite mathematical continuum. "Each of its moments would be exactly like every other: far from measuring a scale of duration, they would collapse into identity" (RB 270). Through his doctrine of natural moments, Santayana hopes to rectify this split between the representation and the thing represented. He wants there to be a closer tie between real temporal durations and our representations of them than is found in mathematical time: the infinitely plastic intervals of real numbers are too abstract and too detached from real events. Any interval can be stretched to fit any duration because there is no intrinsic bond between points on a continuum and the elements of real physical time. The link between real temporal moments and durations on the one hand, and the mathematical real line on the other, is deficient. Because of these and other shortcomings that he sees, he questions mathematical time.

An important advantage that Santayana draws from his theory of essences is the clarity obtained in certain circumstances when these are considered in their own right. His objections to mathematical time here do not mean he is backing down about it as an essence being used to represent something from the realm of matter, a different realm of being. The problem for him is one of finding a better representation of ever-changing matter; that this will also be in terms of essence is taken for granted, but he is looking for an essence different from and preferable to mathematical time.

I cannot agree with Santayana's position here, and believe that one can adopt a mathematical representation of time (and space also) without falling into the trap of hypostasis. I do not question the excellent distinction he makes between real physical time and mathematical time and his contention that some like Kant fail to make the distinction; but he is sometimes overly suspicious about those who make

use of the mathematical time that they have confused the two. It is not at all clear that those who think of matter in terms of mathematical space and time are taking these as absolutes. Indeed, I myself think it is perfectly clear, in the case of practising scientists, that they *do not* hypostasize mathematical space and time and that they retain a healthy appreciation that they are investigating physical space and time. The fact that mathematical time is detachable from physical time is for them the source of a useful representational flexibility, but in their researches they keep at all times the real thing, physical time, at the back of their minds. And if philosophers have in the past fallen into this error, I believe that they do so much less frequently today.

Natural moments

With his *doctrine of natural moments*, Santayana offers a method for representing the inner flow of existence, one that he thinks better describes physical time than those in common use. A natural moment, he says, “is a realised essence of any sort, so long as its realisation continues” (RB 287). Thus they are states of substance; only they are not seen as instantaneous material states, since he suspects that these states exist unchanged for a very small but nevertheless positive duration. As such, natural moments can be seen as components of events. He also likes to think of them as units of time that can be components of durations. These moments are “concrete but ultimate elements in the web of existence, within which there is no change or variation of essence . . .” (RB 280). Here is the longer passage from which this sentence is drawn. The flux, he insists, is not to be understood in graphic terms:

If there is to be a lapse, the flux at each point must possess an essence from which it lapses. These points, which are the terms of any possible change, I will call *natural moments*. By natural moments, I do not mean instants or cross-sections of the whole flux, where everything is supposed simultaneous; I mean rather any concrete but ultimate elements in the web of existence, within which there is no change or variation of essence, yet which are not merely their essences, but events exemplifying those essences, facts generated and dated in a general flux that outruns them on every side. Within each natural moment there can be assigned no temporal divisions or scale; if a duration is assigned to it at all distinguishable from its intrinsic being, it must be assigned by virtue of some external measure or scale, drawn from an alien medium or perspective in which the moment is supposed to be embedded. In its own person, a natural moment may be called lasting or instantaneous with equal propriety. . . . this undivided moment has material continuity with other moments which generate it and which it generates, so that its life is but one incident, an indivisible beat between states of existence which are not itself yet are its closest kin. (RB 280-1)

This discussion of the nature of time is unusually technical for Santayana. My main complaint is based on the above comment on an “external measure or scale.” He *appears to be* saying that any temporal divisions or scale that might refine the

intrinsic scale of the natural moment will be alien and arise illegitimately from abstract mathematical time. However, such refinements can be legitimate and must arise from other natural moments arising in other events. Any useful measure or scale must take into account other events as well; he seems to ignore this point and to give an unjustified independence or isolation to individual natural moments.

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Santayana as a Stoic Pragmatist in John Lachs's Interpretation

The term *stoic pragmatism* was coined by John Lachs (2005/2014, 2012, 2014, JLPP) for a theory and practice of the good life both in social and individual contexts. Stoic pragmatism has two main philosophical sources of inspiration. The first is American pragmatism, especially William James, John Dewey, and George Santayana, whose links with pragmatism are detectable and whom Lachs has called “a pragmatist” (Lachs 2003, 155-166), “in certain respects a pragmatist” (SP 62), a “proto-pragmatist” (ibid., 28), and finally a “stoic-pragmatist” (Lachs 2005/2014). The second is the philosophy of Stoicism (capital S in this text), especially the ethics of the Roman Stoics: Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Cicero who, by the way, was more a sympathizer of Stoicism and an elaborate articulator of its ideas rather than a regular Stoic philosopher. In his works, Lachs reduces the whole tradition of the Stoic philosophy to its later, Roman version in which, indeed, metaphysics was less pronounced than ethics: “the heart of stoicism is its ethics, not its metaphysics or epistemology” (Lachs 2014, 203).

Despite many unquestionable discrepancies between these two important yet historically distant philosophical traditions, an effort to have them “enrich and complete each other” (SP 51) finds its justification in providing “a better attitude to life than either of the two views alone” (SP 42). As a result, “Stoic pragmatists believe that intelligent effort can make life longer and better. At the same time, they acknowledge human limits and show themselves ready to surrender gracefully when all efforts at amelioration fail” (Lachs 2014, 206).

In the present text, except for presenting an outline, I will not go into details about stoic pragmatism as such or refer to the comments about it, interesting as they may be (Padrón 2013, Brodrick 2014, Miller/Taoka 2015; Kegley, Pinkas, Rubin, Trotter, Sullivan, Weber—in JLPP), although I will get into details about its links with Santayana's thought. I do it because I try to understand the role of Santayana in Lachs's project and focus on Santayana as a (possible) stoic pragmatist. I tackle such claims as one saying that a fully developed version of stoic pragmatism would “resemble Santayana's ideas in a surprising number of particulars” (SP 143), a naturalistic ontology appearing to be one of them:

Starting, as he does, with human animals struggling for life in a vast and indifferent world, [Santayana] can view our achievements in a sobering cosmic context. He can relegate knowledge and language to their subsidiary position in the economy of life and ground a stoic pragmatism in human desire, need, and mortality, all with the contingency of all things. (ibid.)

Lachs admits that including Santayana into the stoic pragmatists is not entirely accurate or unproblematic, yet it “reveals important tendencies in his thought” (Lachs 2014, 206).

What is Stoic Pragmatism and Why a Pragmatism with a Stoic Correction is Needed?

A stoic pragmatist hopes that if we pragmatically interpret some of the Stoic (and Hellenistic) ideas that refer to the good life and weave them into contemporary contexts, they can help us act in ways that increase our happiness and sense that life is meaningful. This individual road to happiness helps make social life better. Stoic pragmatism is an open project in the sense that it wants actual improvement of the quality of life for living individuals rather than a new theory about such improvement. It hopes to do it by showing, explaining, and encouraging better *attitudes* towards life among various audiences. Stoic pragmatism abandons “the research/discovery paradigm of philosophy” as “wrongheaded and unproductive” (SP 21) and focuses on the expansion of philosophy beyond the practices of academic circles. Stoic pragmatist philosophers should be instrumental in giving (and justifying) the patterns and strategies of the good life in different contexts. Lachs is doing this himself:

The stoic side of my view explains also my conviction that many things riling people greatly really do not matter at all. This is the foundation of my desire to leave people alone to conduct their lives as they see fit, that is, of my respect for autonomy and also of the tolerant attitude I take to the harmless varieties of human nature. (SP 2)

Stoic pragmatism should promote philosophy understood as a guide to life for many audiences rather than a methodologically coherent set of theories for a limited circle of experts. The present hyper-professionalization of science-oriented philosophical research that makes philosophy look abstract and superfluous for the general public is Lachs's main criticism of American pragmatism (and the contemporary philosophy in general) and seems to be the main reason why he proposes his idea in the first place.

Therefore, stoic pragmatism can be seen as, at least partially, a result of Lachs's critical assessment of American pragmatism. Having been unable to offer an adequate attitude to life, it needs “a stoic correction” (SP 56). Although he has never declared openly his pragmatism, this is the strain of thought that, apart from Santayana's philosophy, has been the closest to him; hence, his concern about its very condition and the hopes it can offer. Namely, despite the *praxis* being announced as the central theme in pragmatism it is, in fact, the *theory of praxis* that is discussed most profoundly in the pragmatist camp. Despite James's moral message to evoke “energies of men” as well as Dewey's appeal to deal with the problems of people rather than of philosophers, a great part of the work that pragmatists take on deals with exchanging views among professors and candidates for professorship within academic institutions about theoretical issues, hardly understood by anybody outside of academia. Whereas, if members of the public need anything from the philosophers at all, it is not new theories rendered in technical language about problems that hardly anybody outside of academia would see as important. As a result, we witness a growing abyss between philosophy and the wider audiences for whom philosophers seem irrelevant. It is not the fault of these audiences, but that of the philosophers themselves because they seem not to care or they forget that “philosophy becomes marginalized only when it distances itself from the problems of life”

(Lachs 2003, 11). Richard Rorty, expressed the same type of concern in the context of first-rate analytic philosophers who have dominated philosophy departments, yet remain “busy solving problems which no nonphilosopher recognizes as problems: problems which hook up with nothing outside the discipline.” As a result, “what goes on in Anglophone philosophy departments has become largely invisible to the rest of the academy, and thus to the culture as a whole” (Rorty 1998, 129).

Having stated this, we must admit that the professionalization of philosophy would not merit much criticism if it could deliver tangible, practical applications into the sphere of public life. As a result, dedication to philosophical tasks would be as easily explainable as the results of, say, medical research. The need for medical research, even those efforts performed by very small groups of specialists who employ hermeneutic jargon, is easily explainable to everybody who practically requires, in a practical sense, medical treatment now or at some later date. In other words, the professionalization of philosophy would not be so problematic if its results were understood by everybody else, not just philosophers who arrive at them. The lack of convertible results of the supposedly excellent results of philosophical research, in epistemology for example, as to the betterment of the human condition may suggest either the futility or the inconclusiveness of the research. Lachs disregards this type of effort almost completely: “To this day, philosophers have not faced up to the fact that their *philosophical* efforts have failed to contribute even a small fragment to the sum of human knowledge. Worse, there is not a single philosophical proposition that commands universal assent in the field” (SP 14).

In this way, pragmatism follows the lot of those philosophical schools that pragmatists themselves have and still do criticize for impracticality and abstract speculation. Pragmatists fail most often when they narrow their efforts to constructing theories and performing scientific-like analyses even when they deal with *praxis*. James and Dewey seem to be exceptions to this for Lachs, and not without some justification. For example, the title of the recently published book *Sick Souls, Healthy Minds: How William James Can Save Your Life* by John Kaag (2020) parallels the way stoic pragmatism would recommend him to wider audiences. However, most of the pragmatist output these days plunges into a science-oriented direction, and hardly appeals to wider audiences, for example, in elevating the sense of the quality of life and its significance. In opposition to this way of doing philosophy, many Greek philosophical schools were practice-oriented in the “practical” way, not merely by *discussing* the problems of the *praxis* but evoking practical attitudes towards life. Stoicism, like some other Hellenistic schools (the Cynics, the Sophists, the Cyrenaics, the Epicureans, and even the Sceptics), can be exemplary and refreshing at this very moment in history.

Viewed thus, the possibly misleading and problematic term of *stoic pragmatism* (Pinkas, JLPP) may appear as just that (problematic) to an academic audience. Professional philosophers may, indeed, have problems in understanding why these two seemingly different philosophies are united in order to produce stoic pragmatism which, in the final analysis, contains very little of both. This target audience (academics), however, is the one that Lachs criticizes most. A profound hope of his is to appeal to much wider audiences having little philosophical training yet entertaining philosophical needs, and it is for these individuals that stoic pragmatism can and should be informative. *Informative* here means more stimulating and providing

guidance rather than teaching anybody the differences between philosophical schools and ideas:

My interest was not in historical comparisons or ideological purity, but in pursuing actions that enrich the large facts of human life and strains of reflection that illuminate them. In this light, calling my view stoic pragmatism is not misleading, even though it doesn't put in play every feature, and only the features, of the two fused views (Lachs JLPP, 166).

Does stoic pragmatism have a methodology? Stoic pragmatism relinquishes academic rigor not only by abandoning “an odd sort of essentialism or in something like natural kinds among philosophical positions” (Lachs 2003, 155). Instead, it welcomes descriptions of “sound practices,” an account of “largely unintellectualized attitudes,” and “normative recommendations for actions” (SP 71) so as to show the human condition in a variety of common forms. Also, stoic pragmatism looks for a practical application of various forms of educational effort, short-term and life-standing, in the context of human development and personal self-fulfillment as a way a given individual can thrive in society, something that Aristotle, the Stoics, and other ancients called *eudaimonia*. Actually, this should be the main aim of education, not a merely professional training, since “the function of education is to enable people to live longer and better lives” (Lachs 2014b, 426). Here pragmatist meliorism—in Dewey's definition, “the specific conditions which exist at one moment, be they comparatively bad or comparatively good, in any event may be bettered” (Dewey 1920 [1988], 181-82)—meets, at least partially, the Hellenistic idea of self-fulfillment. In stoic pragmatism progress takes place when given human beings are able to use circumstances, be they technological, economic, cultural, political or other, to flourish in a richer, better, fuller, and more qualitative manner with some definite goal that allows each of them to live a decent and meaningful life. Economic progress and a higher GDP do not amount to progress in human self-realization although they substantially may contribute or condition it, and here stoic pragmatism would be somewhere between the Stoics and Santayana on the one hand and, on the other, the pragmatists who usually appreciate the fruits of a free-market economy.

Santayana as an Inspiration for Lachs in Conceiving Stoic Pragmatism

Santayana never defined himself as a *stoic* or a *pragmatist* and had some reservations about both. Nevertheless, I have reasons to suspect that Santayana was one of the protagonist figures, if not the primary one, on whom Lachs was concentrating while developing his ideas. My argument for this claim goes something like this. All his intellectual life, ever since his graduate studies, he has been preoccupied with Santayana to the extent of becoming one of the most accomplished experts on Santayana ever; on the other hand, it is very telling that he has confessed that the idea of stoic pragmatism has been within him for a long time, and that “perhaps from the first, a defining feature of my thought” (SP 23). As we probe into Lachs's bibliography (Padrón JLPP), we see that 1964 was the year when he published his two first articles fully devoted to Santayana, and it is the same year in which he published his first text written in the spirit of his stoic pragmatism (“To Have and To Be”). These two “strands” in his intellectual activity continued up and through

“Santayana as Pragmatist” (2003) in which he interpreted Santayana from a pragmatist viewpoint, until finally his *Stoic Pragmatism* (2012), and his 2014 paper “Was Santayana a Stoic Pragmatist?” and even later on (Skowroński 2020). I have no hard scholarly evidence to claim that Lachs has been developing the idea in parallel fashion to his scholarship on Santayana, or that he has intellectually kneaded Santayana into whatever form that could be used to support his arguments for stoic pragmatism, or that stoic pragmatism is a sort of continuation of Santayana's thought. I would like, however, to reflect for a moment about the Stoic-Santayana relationship in light of stoic pragmatism.

Santayana's philosophy taken as a whole can hardly be interpreted as merely stoic, and Lachs would agree with this. Santayana, despite including some stoic traits (of which I write below) never indicated that Stoic authors were an important source of inspiration in his thought, as was the case with the pre-Socratics, Plato, Lucretius, and Spinoza. To be sure, Spinoza's philosophy was inspired by the Stoics to such a degree that Leibniz accused him of heading “a new sect of Stoics” (Miller 2009), yet this seems to be a different story. It is probably ontology (monism or dualism? naturalistic or pantheistic?) that would be the most difficult area for his interpreters to agree about the possible links between Stoicism, Spinoza, and Santayana. For example, if we wanted to accept Lachs's view that the Stoics and Santayana share a “robust naturalism” (Lachs 2014, 204), we would have to agree about some interpretative presuppositions as to, for example, the factual role of *pneuma* and *deorum providentia* in the thoughts of particular Roman Stoics.

On the other hand, however, if we follow the most contemporary interpretations (the so-called *Modern Stoicism*, of which I mention below) and take a look at the term *stoic* as predominantly an ethical term with hardly any important reference to its original theological metaphysics (*logos, pneuma, telos, providentia, fatum*), we could justify Lachs in taking Santayana on board. I mean, there some elements of the Stoic doctrine, or the Hellenistic ideas appropriated by the Stoics, that seem comparable to Santayana's and as if appropriated by stoic pragmatism via Santayana's philosophy. These are the following: *askesis* (comparable to Santayana's understanding of philosophy as a way of life), *apathy, ataraxia* (that can be convertible, at least at some points, into Santayana's ethics of detachment), *dignitas* (a term frequently used by Santayana in axiological contexts, as did the later Stoics, juxtaposing *dignitas vs pretium*); *oikeiosis* (close to Santayana's claim about openness to other ways of life but keeping one's own as the center) and *kosmopolites*, akin to Santayana's cosmopolitanism, one that Herman Saatkamp interprets literally as “citizen of the world” (Saatkamp 2011). Additionally, there are also some other possible links like *psyche*: Santayana viewed it as advisable to follow the Stoics “who made the psyche material” and to use it for an “inward ground of experience” (POML 129).

Nor was Santayana a full-fledged pragmatist and Lachs would also agree with this claim. Santayana's understanding of democracy, liberalism, and the betterment of social institutions separates him pronouncedly from almost all American pragmatists. His ontology and scholastic categories differentiate him even more. The Spanish, Latin, and Catholic elements in his thought have led some scholars to label him a *Spanish philosopher* and view him as part of the Spanish cultural scene no less than the American (Skowroński 2007). Yet, Santayana shares, at least to some degree, a few basic claims that pragmatists like James and Dewey have put forward:

naturalism, pluralism, relativism or perspectivism, secularism, toleration, activity, freedom, individualism, humanism, and non-cognitivism. Some of these and others “bear remarkable resemblance” to James and Dewey (Lachs 2003, 155) and even to Josiah Royce (SP 144-158). Lachs sees Santayana and Royce as a common source for stoic pragmatism with the ideas of the specious present, eternity, truth, and their “understandings of the ontological isolation of individuals in a large and largely alien world” (SP 155).

Lachs does not want to incorporate Santayana into the camp of the pragmatists. Instead, he wants “to see how much viewing him as a pragmatist contributes to our understanding, assessment and appreciation of his philosophy” (Lachs 2003, 156). But why does Lachs want to see this? Is it not an indication of his getting closer to pragmatism and trying to use a part of Santayana's work to help settle Lachs's own dilemma as to how to cope with his two philosophical heroes, Dewey and Santayana—as he declared in 1995, these two were for him the “dominant sources” (Lachs 1995, xv) of his own thinking?

Why the Stoics and not Santayana?

If, then, Lachs's point of departure was a mixture of a Jamesian-Deweyan-Santayanan fusion of pragmatism, why did he not develop and promote it? Why he did not name it “Santayanan pragmatism” or something similar and, in this way, indicate the Santayanan accent, especially since it was Santayana who “taught me that the ultimate issue in philosophy and in everyday life is the health of one's soul” (SP 185)? Why did he not move in the direction suggested by H. S. Levinson's book *Santayana, Pragmatism, and the Spiritual Life*? Choosing “the stoic” is all the more astonishing given that Lachs is *not* an expert on Stoicism as he is on Santayana. He has not written any texts on Stoicism and his knowledge is at one remove from the original texts. I mean, there are only two sources he quotes or refers to: Nicholas White's English translation of Epictetus's *Enchiridion* (Epictetus 1983) and Moses Hadas's English translation of Seneca's selected writings (Hadas 1958).

Perhaps, the fundamental reason could be Lachs's own personal experience; namely, recognizing the virtues of Stoicism “is closely connected with aging” (Lachs JLPP, 212). Although Lachs cannot be characterized as stoic at any stage in his evolution as a thinker, some permanent Stoic traits can be detected in his attitude. And this, independent of his evolving views about historical Stoicism. Most probably these traits appeared even earlier in his life than the pragmatist influences which he underwent while in Canada and the United States. Prior to this, it was in his native Hungary that he first experienced “gratuitous violence and sudden death” during WWII and the subsequent years under the Communist regime. As a ten-year-old boy, he thought about “the evanescence of life and the uncontrollability of fortune” (SP 182). After fleeing his homeland and settling in Canada, studying philosophy seemed almost predetermined, given his interest in predominantly philosophical, if not stoical, themes such as: “God, the meaning of life, and the right compartment toward death” (SP 182). All of these have been manifest, as time has passed, in his philosophical writings throughout sixty years of his career. At some point, however, certain accents started to be more prevalent than others, and these accents have a stoic character.

Since there may be even more reasons why Lachs has adopted “the stoic,” the following hypotheticals could be taken into consideration. The first could be that by “stoic” Lachs wants to indicate the practical aspect of the philosophically public guidance the ancient schools offered as a “correction” to an overly science-oriented pragmatism, and this could be his main aim, not evoking the Stoics as a particular school: “Would it have been better to call my view Stoic, Epicurean, Aristotelian and Hellenistic Pragmatism? That would have attracted an audience of two readers, each baffled by what mooncalf I had in mind.” (Lachs JLPP, 166). Here, Santayana does not seem to suit his purpose well. It seems to me that Lachs’s perspective as a life-long teacher, educator, and mentor has influenced his assessment of Santayana’s philosophy. This influence can be seen in his assessment that Santayana’s “texts are difficult and his commentators few” (Lachs JLPP, 133). Something was missing in Santayana if you wanted to evoke the energies of men, as William James would have put it. Santayana failed to contribute much to the philosophy of education (Lachs 1988, 132) whereas “the ultimate purpose of teaching philosophy is to reach a broader audience” (SP 185). Lachs may be closer to Levinson’s criticism of Santayana, which ascribes to him aristocratic, elitist views, according to which “people” do not have enough education, and that is why they require representation by leaders. Levinson, however, moves on to a pragmatist viewpoint, and broaches the idea that efforts should be made to “educate them sufficiently to manage themselves and to deputize the specialists among them to help them out when they know they do not know enough” (Levinson 264).

The other crucial way in which Santayana does not fit Lachs’s framework is Lachs’s belief that philosophers have an obligation to exercise their influence in the public sphere, especially in education (understood very broadly). Philosophical teaching that embraces philosophical themes at various levels of complexity, should be a significant part of any intellectual’s public service. More specifically, it deals with the types of obligations—Lachs often stresses philosophers’ “obligation to address the problems of daily living” (Lachs 1995, xiii)—that philosophers display to audiences, along with responsible guidance. At this point, in my view, the Stoics, with their doctrine of *oikeiosis*, could serve better. Contrary to conventional thinking—perhaps due to the commonly misunderstood terms of *apathy* and *ataraxia* (tranquility) that they were cold individualists—the Stoics did engage in social issues—Marcus Aurelius and Seneca being the most conspicuous examples. Also in Stoic philosophy, teaching is regarded as a public mission. Guiding those who want to learn is one of the most basic obligations of teachers, and is well in line with all of Stoicism, starting with its Greek founder:

Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas, has for many years been devoted to philosophy in the city and has continued to be a man of worth in all other respects, exhorting to virtue and temperance those of the youth who came to him to be taught, directing them to what is best, affording to all in his own conduct a pattern for imitation in perfect consistency with his teaching (Hicks, Diogenes Laertius 7.11)

The other tentative answer as to “why the Stoics, not Santayana?” could be the growing popularity of Stoic themes in recent decades. Since I have no evidence that Lachs has been influenced by this tendency, the following remark is mere speculation as to Lachs’s intentions, yet speculation justified if we wanted to situate stoic

pragmatism in the contemporary philosophical and cultural context. My reasoning goes like this.

There must be something exceptional in the philosophy of Stoicism such that within it, or at least within Stoic ethics, there is an invariable lode of wisdom that has stood the test of time. It has had a continuing relevance long after its classic representatives have died, and long after their ideas reappeared in the medieval Christianity (in which Seneca was widely known and commented on) and the Renaissance (neo-stoicism). For many centuries of the modern age Stoic philosophy has been inspirational even when its crucial parts, such as its cosmology and theology, have been ignored. Recent decades have not been that much different. There have been numerous scholarly studies (e.g., William Irvine's *A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy* [2009]; Ryan Holiday's *The Daily Stoic: 366 Meditations on Wisdom, Perseverance, and the Art of Living* [2016]; Massimo Pigliucci's *How to Be a Stoic: Using Ancient Philosophy to Live a Modern Life* [2017] and many others) and a segment of these studies has assumed the general name of *New Stoicism* or *Modern Stoicism*. One of the principal figures of this movement, Lawrence Becker, interprets Stoic themes from a contemporary perspective as if Stoicism has had a continuous history up to the present and some of its themes have developed according to the successive developments of physics, logic, and ethics (Becker 2017 [1998], xii-xiii). At the same time, some elements of Stoic philosophy, especially taken from its ethics, are incorporated into different contemporary contexts that lie outside of academia: business, coaching, leadership, and many other enterprises and platforms.

Interestingly, Lachs is not the first to link Stoicism with pragmatism. Frank McLynn, in his biography of Marcus Aurelius (2009), takes Stoicism as a primitive version of pragmatism: "Stoicism was a primitive form of pragmatism, in that one knew in advance that the value of duty would always overrule that of pleasure, and strenuous virtue that of lazy indolence or apathy" (McLynn, xvi). McLynn continues: "Cicero was a convinced atheist, but thought religion and belief in the Olympians played a vital part in promoting social stability. Long before William James, the Romans had invented the pragmatic argument for religion" (McLynn, 229).

Still another possible answer refers to Santayana's perfectionism that is hardly realizable by many members of the public to whom stoic pragmatism is addressed. Lachs's idea of "good enough" (Lachs 2012b) is more suitable to meet the expectations of potential adepts of philosophy. To be sure, Lachs sometimes sympathizes with this idea when his stoic pragmatist mixture of perfectionist-meliorism catapults forward higher practical demands from philosophers: "Philosophers ought to know better, speak better, and act better" (Lachs 2015, 7). Generally, however, such demands are not expected from the audiences.

Santayana as a Stoic Pragmatist

Lachs's paper "Santayana as a Stoic Pragmatist" could be his most condensed presentation of the topic. I write "could be" because the paper focuses almost exclusively on the Stoic-Santayana relationship. The pragmatist-Santayana relationship is discussed only sparsely, Lachs's other works make up for this deficit though. Hardly anything in this paper, in spite of its title, specifies how Santayana can be regarded as a stoic pragmatist. Lachs instead lays out program for reconstructing

Santayana as a stoic pragmatist and indicates the ways that this reconstruction may advance. In presenting Santayana as a stoic pragmatist here, I refer to “Santayana as a Stoic Pragmatist” as a basic point of reference, which I supplement with other sources, especially the book *Stoic Pragmatism*.

There are several ways in which Santayana can contribute to stoic pragmatism. These include philosophy as a guide to life, public activity, the problem of death, the approach towards material possessions, a naturalistic ontology, and other themes. Yet, the practical philosophy of life is the vast personal reservoir from which Santayana can contribute to stoic pragmatism:

A central point of Marcus Aurelius's reflection was to enable others to choose well and to control their emotions.... there is no denying that Epictetus's thought aims at instructing people in how to live well. Similarly, Santayana would have considered his writings of little value if they had captured the ontology of the world but established little relation to the daily decisions of perplexed human beings. (Lachs 2014a, 203)

Thus, at the vital center of the whole idea of stoic pragmatism, which is the *good life*, Santayana can be exemplary. Perhaps not entirely exemplary due to his solitary lifestyle (not at all reliable to those who want to know more from Santayana about family contexts) but rather as one who shows us that it is possible to work out one's own attitude towards life. Even more, stoic pragmatism insists that philosophers should not practice philosophy by merely talking, teaching, and writing *about* practicality, but rather by engaging themselves in particular social matters, for example: by making their own lives exemplary, by being public intellectuals, by being effective in education, heard in political disputes, being instrumental for those who face tough existential dilemmas, ethical purposes, bioethical choices, and, perhaps most importantly, by being courageous in doing these things. Santayana, like the Stoics (and many others in history) cannot, I think, be accused of not being courageous in creating and making known his views against the intellectual fashions that dominated his own age. Santayana is a model in exemplifying the process of creating a meaningful life as a singular task for each of us with an awareness of our own self-limitations. In this, he quite exquisitely matches the idea of furnishing us an archetype of a specific and meaningful life.

Stoic pragmatism assumes the naturalistic scope of life which implies that a posthumous life is excluded from deliberation. And here we have another “stoic correction” to pragmatism. Pragmatism lacks, Lachs claims, a solid reflection on death and dying, whereas for the Stoics and for Santayana the finality of human existence is one of their central themes (Lachs 2014, 204). It is central in the sense of giving us a practical perspective to our lives, as if it were a journey within certain limitations of time, and a robust sense that beyond the finish line, little is important. What is that important, if its final moments become a suffering agony? Stoic pragmatism does not recognize such external forces as the state, governmental institutions, the church of any denomination, the synagogue, or the mosque as *morally* justified in imposing grave consequences or unnecessary pain on a singular person. In a particularly hopeless situations, to go on, against one's wishes: “Telling others what they should do is for the most part wrong, but making others carry on the burden of a horrible life when they want to be set free is nothing short of wanton cruelty” (Lachs 2014b, 466). This does not mean at all that at any time suicidal

tendencies should be consented to as legitimate. The pragmatists' and Santayana's own anthropological assumptions appreciate that we all have certain potentialities and thanks to their development we can thrive and enjoy our growth in order to make the most of them, to the benefit of ourselves, our families, and our communities. The recognition of the internal potentialities of humans is one of the most significant factors that needs to be taken into consideration: "A generous reading of human freedom leaves it open for adults to finish the book of life at any time they desire. If they are young and healthy, their doing so is a lamentable error" (Lachs 2014b, 471).

This links us up with individual dignity. Stoic pragmatism seems to be closer to the Stoic understanding of this term than to the Christian, and this has a direct impact on Lachs's ethical and bioethical considerations. Stoic pragmatism embodies understanding of the phrase *quality of living*, along with the phrase *dignity of living* as integrating *autonomous liberty*; and the more autonomy and liberty are in danger the more in danger will be the quality and dignity of living. Stoic pragmatist bioethics would like both philosophers and medical doctors to respect the formula expressing that "confusing a human life with the life of a human body is a pernicious mistake" (Lachs 2003, 131), and convert it into practically helping people live better and happier, and die better and happier.

The next point is the attitude toward possessions. Both the Stoics and Santayana are similarly resolute about our plausible enslavement by material goods, as in the case of hyper-consumerism. Santayana's "practice of living out of a suitcase and avoiding burdensome attachments is clearly in line with what stoics recommend" (Lachs 2014, 204). The term "possession" means also something less obvious than consumption, and that is our dependence on our being possessed by more and more powerful institutions regulating social life. Namely, the sense of a good and meaningful life has for many people been circumscribed, by making us too dependent on external factors: social institutions, public communication, images, news, etc., the functioning of which we have hardly any control over. Institutions of various kinds have a tremendous influence on our lives, but we have almost no effect upon the dynamics and character of these institutions. It is exactly this sense of the limitedness of our agency that causes us to be less complacent, despite the opulent conditions of life all around us. At this point, stoic pragmatism's main motif stresses that philosophy should be seen more of a *guide to life*, and renders Santayana close to the Stoics' (and other ancient schools) ideas of *ataraxia* or tranquility, and, in some sense to pragmatists like James.

Finally, the *life of reason* resembles, to some extent, *self-control* and *self-knowledge* (Lachs 2014, 204) that were so much pronounced in the ancient world and seem to be critical in stoic pragmatism. One can compare the Hellenistic and Stoic *askesis* as a path toward *eudaimonia* with Santayana's "to be happy you must be wise" (EGP 152) and the art of the harmonization of clashing tendencies.

Possible Controversies

Santayana scholars may wonder if co-opting him into stoic pragmatism is beneficial. Does such a co-option help emphasize some of Santayana's original intentions? Does it clarify them? Or, perhaps, it hopes to attract new audiences? One can never know in advance if removing some elements of original thought, Santayana's

in this case, and employing them elsewhere is in the end good for original thought. On the other hand, Santayana did very often do it himself, and his eclectic philosophy uses many sources: Greek (Plato), Latin (Lucretius), Medieval (Scholastics), Early Modern (Spinoza), American (James), and others. Lachs cannot be, then, criticized for doing something similar, that is, taking some elements out of Santayana, leaving others, and going on with his own original project.

More perplexing yet may be stoic pragmatism as a collection, or a sort of “melting pot” for its sources: Santayana, Stoicism, pragmatism in various versions, and the philosophy of Lachs himself—do these overlap? Or, should these be seen as a set of ideas? Do they melt into one more or less coherent doctrine with specific methods, aims, and themes? Whatever the case, what would the status of Santayana's ideas be in stoic pragmatism? It is, indeed, an interpretative problem. What exactly constitutes stoic pragmatism? For example, I assume, from Lachs's various statements, that nearly all his later output has been written in the spirit of stoic pragmatism, so I allow myself to fuse the term “later Lachs philosophy” with stoic pragmatism, not being completely sure that it is accurate. After all, there are Lachs's ideas, such as *meddling* and *mediation* that look compatible with stoic pragmatism, yet Lachs seems to separate stoic pragmatism from these (Lachs JLPP, xxv) as if to suggest that stoic pragmatism is one of his ideas apart from others he has been working on. Additionally, there are other views of his later philosophy, such as those presented in his *In Love with Life: Reflections on the Joy of Living and Why We Hate to Die* (1998), that could be labeled more as Lachs's philosophy proper or, perhaps, as a Lachsian version of pragmatism. I suspect that this type of dubiousness is harmless in light of Lachs's principal goal of stimulating interesting thought and action; fabricating scrupulous theoretical distinctions neither belongs to these, nor is there much at risk in making them (Lachs JLPP, 133).

Another question that can be considered is whether stoic pragmatism is a strain of development or a continuation of Santayana's thought and, if so, is it good news for scholars of Santayana? Most definitely, stoic pragmatism can be seen as an enrichment of Santayana scholarship by introducing new perspectives (e.g., hoping to reach new and wider audiences) or by focusing on novel aspects (e.g., Stoicism). The dissemination of stoic pragmatism could be, at the same time, the dissemination of at least some aspects of Santayana's philosophy. However, such controversial issues could be discussed and considered more by scholars of Santayana's philosophy, not by Lachs himself. I suspect that Lachs would respond that the most important feature in stoic pragmatism is trying to make a practical difference in the quality life of the public as a whole, independent of any intention to promote Santayana in any way.

As I understand it, the most serious controversy concerning stoic pragmatism is something that indirectly refers to the promotion of Santayana's philosophy also. Namely, stoic pragmatism claims that the public sphere, not just the university, should become the battleground for philosophers who use effective tools in helping people become more aware of their potentialities, be more rational in their choices, be less vulnerable to misfortune, and better oriented in what the *good life* stands for. Contrary to inspiring reservations about Lachs's views on public philosophy and philosophers' obligations (Brodrick 2014), I think this is an issue for those philosophers who have a coherent grasp of public affairs (especially now, in the digital era), and I have some sympathy with what Lachs is telling us (Skowroński 2020). But

the question is: how to do it? Does Lachs tell us how to do it? Apart from courage, which I have already mentioned, being a public philosopher seems to be Lachs's strongest recommendation. Here Santayana can serve as a prototype, who at a specific moment in time and history abandoned the university to devote his time to philosophy.

Now that digitalized ways of communication have entered a more intensive stage and the present coronavirus lockdown accelerates the technological revolution in education, we need to pause and take stock. Traditional philosophical discourse that is based on a textual culture seems to be evolving into more visual and digital formats in order to be heard by wider audiences. A public philosopher, to be heard by wider audiences, needs to become a sort of a digital-culture-public-philosopher. This cannot be just talking and publishing in a traditional way in front of a digital camera, although this is a good start. Given Lachs's numerous public speeches, including video-recordings on Internet platforms, especially YouTube, we could say that he has already shown us in a practical way what and how a stoic pragmatist could function as a digital-culture-public-philosopher. Yet, there are many more options which demand separate hearings. However, it will be interesting for someone attuned to stoic pragmatism to challenge these new virtual conditions. A first humble attempt has already been made (Skowroński 2020b) and at this point, I have some additional points to be made, which are the following.

Santayana and Stoic Pragmatism's Main Message

The situation of academia or, more precisely, the situation of what the liberal arts and philosophy departments can offer as education, is the clearest message that unites Santayana and stoic pragmatism. If we understand stoic pragmatism just from this one point of view, we could get involved in an interesting discussion about possible ways in which a philosopher can be more open to new challenges, the digital world as an example. Stoic pragmatism, by turning to the Stoic and ancient Greek ideas, does not signify any sort of escapism into the past; rather, it delves into classical sources, but its concern is future-oriented and is oriented to the wider public. Santayana's criticisms of Harvard could make stoic pragmatism even more grounded on this point. Namely, by studying Santayana's case and his lifelong reflections about how he came to understand higher education, one can immerse oneself more deeply into the question of whether education, especially university liberal arts education, should switch its focus to vocational preparation for commercial or administrative activities (this switch started at Harvard under Charles Eliot's presidency and takes place now in various universities). Stoic pragmatism is a voice against this change and suggests that audiences who have never been exposed to philosophy, have much to gain from it. One of the ways in which philosophy can earn a better reputation is by promoting an integrated and attractive vision of life. Lachs claims that Santayana has produced such a vision: a combination of naturalism with an equal demand for spirituality (Lachs 2013).

A Concluding Remark

Despite Lachs's claim, already quoted, that a fully developed version of stoic pragmatism would resemble Santayana's philosophy in many ways, I am not aware of any work by Lachs on this. To be sure, his recently published books can be interpreted in the light of stoic pragmatism. The subtitle of *Meddling* (2014), for example, dovetails into stoic pragmatism: *On the Virtue of Leaving Others Alone*, as does *The Cost of Comfort* (2019), yet they contain no reference to or development of Santayana's thought. So what should be expected from here on out? Perhaps Padrón is right by saying that *Stoic Pragmatism* is Lachs's "final say on where he stands with his lifelong involvement with Santayana's thought and writings" (Padrón 167). If so, stoic pragmatism could now be just a sort of invitation or a call to others to develop its principal ideas, especially in regard to practical life. And there is a reason why the work should be done, and it seems very convincing: "There is a large public waiting anxiously for what philosophy can offer—for careful thinking, clear vision, and the intelligent examination of our values. That is where the future of philosophy lies" (SP 193). Time will tell if Santayana's philosophy will be useful to those stoic pragmatists who would like to follow and apply John Lachs's idea in the years ahead.

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EGP Santayana, George. 1915. *Egotism in German Philosophy*. New York, NY: Scribner's.

JLPP Skowroński, Krzysztof P, ed. 2018. *John Lachs's Practical Philosophy: Critical Essays on His Thought with Replies and Bibliography*. Leiden-Boston: Brill/Rodopi.

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Remarks from the Pandemic Conference

The following remarks were delivered by John Lachs on 13 May 2020 at the conclusion of the George Santayana Society International Online Conference: "Harmony and Well-Being: Reflections about the Pandemic in Light of George Santayana Philosophy." The conference was put together by the George Santayana Society and the Berlin Practical Philosophy International Forum e.V.¹

It is striking to me that human beings consider the earth as their property. It is striking because the Bible endorses this appropriation, and this appropriation has a long history in human reflection. There has been no serious consideration of the possibility of human extinction. I do not mean to be somebody who is calling attention to absurd impossibilities but there is a possibility.

In the Middle Ages, there were always people left to restart the race. However, a couple of wrong turns and human beings can be wiped off the map. As I read Santayana, he might be the one person who would not be surprised. He would be distressed, but he lived in the shadow of this contingency. That is a nice way of putting it. A better way of putting it is simply focusing on what we need to flourish, but flourishing is a temporary achievement favored by matter only for a moment and without any guarantee that it will continue.

I am struck by how wonderfully fertile Santayana's thought is. There are so many different aspects of his work that engage people. If you just listen to this hour and a half or two hours. You deal with the whole world. You deal with everything that is philosophically and humanly interesting. For the first time in years, Santayana is an object of study in his letters and the letters are revealing. The letters make it possible for us to understand this human being and what he did to assure his survival, not in terms of years, but in terms of a way of maintaining himself—a human memory.

I see the spiritual life, as Santayana describes it, as the answer to the contingency of being. It doesn't involve any striving. It doesn't aim at happiness. It doesn't demand attention. It is something that is there, readily available to all of us, consisting of moments that are complete in themselves—consisting of total satisfaction in the moment. We sometimes do not understand this because we keep mixing up what we would like to happen and last forever on the one hand with the spirituality which is complete and open to us—yet not considered adequate—on the other.

I sometimes speak about Santayana's spirituality and speak about it in a way that people might be able to understand how incredibly satisfying it is. Still, they ask, "how long does it last?" The answer is it does not last any time at all. It is the fulfillment of the moment. I put it in terms of getting up in the morning and looking out the window and looking at the valley. Just that moment. Just that moment is

¹ The full conference is available online at: <http://berlinphilosophyforum.org/santayana-video-session-harmony/>.

eternal. Not everlasting. If you want a distinction that is worth volumes, it is the distinction between eternal and everlasting. This is not everlasting. It is not lasting at all. It does not matter or it does matter profoundly because in spirituality we find fulfillment, total fulfillment and total harmony, not harmony as in a piece of music but as in a harmony within the soul.

I'm deeply impressed by how Santayana is able to allow his long life to attract people to notice different things, important things. I suspected that he had that power, but people tend to disappear after they die, not leaving behind wonderful works. I find that this conference and previous conferences organized by the number of us—the number of you—have been absolutely exciting because it is the re-discovery of incredible value. So, all I can say is, let us continue. There is so much more in Santayana than what we have touched.

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Bibliographical Checklist

Thirty-Sixth Update

The items below supplement the references given in *George Santayana: A Bibliographical Checklist, 1880–1980* (Bowling Green: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982) prepared by Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. and John Jones. These references are divided into primary and secondary sources. Except for the book reviews and dissertations, the following articles and books are classified according to their years of publication. Readers with additions or corrections are invited to send these by email to bulletin@georgesantayanasociety.org, and to sanedit@iupui.edu. The Santayana Edition keeps an online, searchable version of the complete checklist at <http://americanthought.iupui.edu/aib/index.php>. As in prior years, the editors send a special thank you to Daniel Moreno for his time and effort in researching and compiling most of the entries for this year's update and to Guido Tamponi for several additional entries.

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Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works

Page numbers in articles refer to the critical edition of Santayana's work, if it has been published, unless otherwise specified in the references for a particular article. For a list of the volumes of the critical edition that have been published, see the next page. Authors should refer to the critical editions, when they are available.

These abbreviations should be used for citations only. To refer a work in the text, authors should spell out its name.

AFSL	<i>Animal Faith and Spiritual Life</i> , ed. John Lachs	OiS	<i>Overheard in Seville</i>
BR	<i>Birth of Reason and Other Essays</i>	OS	<i>Obiter Scripta</i>
COUS	<i>Character and Opinion in the United States</i>	PGS	<i>The Philosophy of George Santayana</i> , ed PA Schilpp
POEMS	<i>Complete Poems</i>	POML	<i>Physical Order and Moral Liberty</i> , ed. J and S Lachs
DL	<i>Dialogues in Limbo</i>	PP	<i>Persons and Places</i>
DNM	"Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics"	PP1	<i>The Background of My Life</i>
DP	<i>Dominations and Powers</i>	PP2	<i>The Middle Span</i>
EGP	<i>Egotism in German Philosophy</i>	PP3	<i>My Host the World</i>
GSA	<i>George Santayana's America</i>	PSL	<i>Platonism and the Spiritual Life</i>
GTB	<i>The Genteel Tradition at Bay</i>	RB	<i>Realms of Being</i> (one-volume edition)
ICG	<i>The Idea of Christ in the Gospels</i>	RE	<i>The Realm of Essence</i> (RB Bk. 1)
IPR	<i>Interpretations of Poetry and Religion</i>	RM	<i>The Realm of Matter</i> (RB Bk. 2)
LGS	<i>The Letters of George Santayana</i>	RT	<i>The Realm of Truth</i> (RB Bk. 3)
LP	<i>The Last Puritan</i>	RS	<i>The Realm of Spirit</i> (RB Bk. 4)
LR	<i>The Life of Reason</i>	SAF	<i>Scepticism and Animal Faith</i>
LR1	Bk. 1, <i>Reason in Common Sense</i>	SB	<i>The Sense of Beauty</i>
LR2	Bk. 2, <i>Reason in Society</i>	SE	<i>Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies</i>
LR3	Bk. 3, <i>Reason in Religion</i>	TTMP	<i>Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy</i>
LR4	Bk. 4, <i>Reason in Art</i>	TPP	<i>Three Philosophical Poets</i>
LR5	Bk. 5, <i>Reason in Science</i>	WD	<i>Winds of Doctrine</i>
MARG	<i>Marginalia</i>		

Bibliography of the Critical Editions of Santayana's Works

Listed in order of publication. Citations should refer to these editions.

For the *Letters* and the *Marginalia* the volume numbers are given below to indicate date of publication, but please note that the preferred method of citation omits the volume number.

For the *Letters*, the preferred citation format is:

LGS to [recipient], [date in dd Month yyyy format]

The recipient or date is omitted if the text explicitly refers to it. In case one or the other is omitted, there is no comma.

For the *Marginalia*, the preferred citation format is:

MARG [author], [work] [page number in the author's work]

The page number may be omitted if Santayana has three or fewer marginalia in the work. The author or work is omitted if the context makes the reference clear.

- PP [1944,1945,1953] 1986. *Persons and Places*. Eds. William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. Vol. 1 of *The Works of George Santayana*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
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- IPR [1900] 1990. *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*. Eds. William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr. Vol. 3 of *The Works of George Santayana*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
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Submission Guidelines

The editors of *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* invite submission of articles and essays about George Santayana from any discipline. Letters to the editors (not exceeding 300 words) are also welcome.

The editors may request revisions before a piece is accepted for publication. Upon acceptance, authors will be expected to approve editorial corrections.

Previously unpublished manuscripts are preferred and simultaneous submission is discouraged. Authors typically may expect notice of the status of their submission within three months of submission. Submissions are accepted all year with a March 1 deadline for inclusion in a particular year's issue.

These guidelines may be updated from time to time. To download the latest guidelines go to <http://georgesantayanasociety.org/submissionguidelines.pdf>.

Manuscript Style

- Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as e-mail attachments to submissions@georgesantayanasociety.org.
- Manuscripts should be double-spaced and in an editable file format such as Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or OpenDocument Text (.odt).
- Manuscripts should be prepared for blind review. Identifying information should not appear in running heads, footnotes, references, or anywhere in the manuscript. Identifying information in footnotes or reference may be replaced with blanks or dashes.
- Manuscripts should be prepared according to [The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition](#) guidelines. See also: [Manuscript Preparation Guidelines](#) and [Preparing Tables, Artwork, and Math](#).
- Footnotes should be reserved for substantive comments, clarifications, and ancillary information that would interrupt the flow of the main text. These should be kept to a minimum.
- Textual citations should conform to author-date system described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The author followed by the date (if the author has more than one work cited) and the page number should appear in parenthesis within the text wherever such a reference is needed. In block quotations, the parenthesis appears at the end just after the last punctuation mark in the block. For citations within the text, the parenthetical citation should be after any closing quotation mark but immediately before the final punctuation mark, unless the final punctuation mark is a question mark or exclamation point that belongs inside the quotation.

Example with date:

(James [1898], 175)

Bracketed date indicates that the reference occurred in the original edition, even though a later edition or reprint is listed in the references.

Example without date (author has only one work cited):

(Royce 144)

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- A reference list should be provided at the end of the manuscript, specifying which edition is used. Note that in author-date style, the date immediately follows the author's name and is followed by a period.
- References to classical writers, such as Plato and Aristotle, should use standard page numbers.
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- An author may use an abbreviation to refer to another author's work by preceding the bibliographical listing of the work with the abbreviation. For example,

AE Dewey, John. 1934. *Art as Experience*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company.
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- If an abbreviation or the author's name alone is used in a citation, do not put comma before the page number. If the date is included, place a comma after the date.
- The preferred way to cite one of Santayana's letters is to use the abbreviation LGS followed by the date and "to [recipient]." If either the recipient or date is given in the text, it may be left out of the citation.
- Wherever possible, references should be to authoritative scholarly editions, such as *The Works of George Santayana* (MIT), *The Collected Works of John*

Dewey (SIU), *The Works of William James* (Harvard), *The Jane Addams Papers* (UMI), etc. **An author not in possession of a particular scholarly edition should encourage his or her institution's library to acquire it or borrow the work through interlibrary loan.** Authors should notify the editor if, after such efforts, they still do not have access to a particular authoritative edition. Note that some of the critical editions of Santayana's works are available in modified PDF formats that enable accurate page number citation.

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- Authors should divide their manuscripts with appropriate section headings. Section headings may use paragraph styles Heading2, Heading3, etc. We do not recommend subsections, unless some obvious contextual reason calls for them.
- Except for block quotes, use no paragraph style other than Normal set to double space and to indent 1 inch before the first line. (These settings are for submission. They are not the settings for publication, but following these guidelines simplifies the transition to publishable form.)
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Submitted manuscripts and communication regarding submissions should be addressed to submissions@georgesantayanasociety.org. Correspondence about matters other than submissions may be addressed to bulletin@georgesantayanasociety.org

Angus Kerr-Lawson Prize

The George Santayana Society offers the Angus Kerr-Lawson Prize in tribute to the late Professor Kerr-Lawson's outstanding contributions to Santayana scholarship both as longtime editor of *Overheard in Seville: The Bulletin of the George Santayana Society* and as the author of many articles that appeared in this *Bulletin* and in other publications. Kerr-Lawson was an early participant in the George Santayana Society.

The prize is available to a scholar not more than five years out of graduate school for an essay engaging or rooted in the thought of George Santayana. We encourage applications from graduate students and junior faculty members. Authors may address any aspect of Santayana's life and thought. We welcome essays that relate his thinking to other figures in the American tradition and beyond and to contemporary social, cultural, and philosophic concerns. Relevant themes include materialism and naturalism, realism and Platonism, metaphysics and morals, and issues connected to American culture and intellectual history.

The winner will receive \$400 and be invited to present the winning paper at the Society's annual meeting in early January. The winning essay will be submitted for publication in the edition of *Overheard in Seville* that follows that meeting. In 2021, the winner will be notified by September. Authors should prepare submissions for blind review (no exposing references to the author within the composition) and send electronically in Word, ODT, or PDF format to: submissions@georgesantayanasyociety.org. The subject line of the email should read: "Kerr-Lawson Prize Submission, [author's name]." The deadline for submissions is Monday, 3 May 2021.

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Angus Kerr-Lawson, until his death in 2011, was the editor of *Overheard in Seville*. He was one of this *Bulletin's* original co-editors in 1983. Just before his death the University of Waterloo gave him the Distinguished University Professor Emeritus Award. In 2008 the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy presented him the prestigious Herbert Schneider Award for "distinguished contributions to the understanding of American Philosophy.

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Corrections to the Print Edition

- P. 7 Font size of apostrophe lowered
- P. 39 Drop cap of the first letter in the article
- P. 39 Apostrophe removed from *Finnegans Wake*
- P. 123 Drop cap of the first letter in the remarks