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## Remarks on Santayana's Influence on the Development of the Barnes Foundation's Aesthetics Theories<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Although recent work has been done on the Barnes Foundation and its philosophical and pedagogical background, almost all the research effort has been focused on the friendship and intellectual link between John Dewey and Albert C. Barnes. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, the impact of George Santayana's philosophy on the Foundation has not been systematically examined. The hypothesis that we present and develop in this article is that Santayana's thought is essential for the aesthetic theories elaborated within the framework of the Barnes Foundation: Barnes' theory of art criticism; Dewey's aesthetic theory, and even Lawrence Buermeyer's aesthetic theory. This article is a first approximation with the purpose of clarifying these philosophical, theoretical and historical relationships so as to start to fill the existing gap in contemporary literature on the topic.

*Keywords:* Santayana's Aesthetics; Barnes Foundation; John Dewey.

### RESUMEN

Aunque se ha escrito recientemente sobre la Fundación Barnes y su trasfondo filosófico y pedagógico, casi todo el esfuerzo de investigación se ha centrado en la amistad y el vínculo intelectual entre John Dewey y Albert C. Barnes. Desafortunadamente, hasta donde sabemos, no se ha exami-

nado sistemáticamente el impacto de la filosofía de George Santayana en la Fundación. La hipótesis que presentamos y desarrollamos en este artículo es que el pensamiento de Santayana es esencial para las teorías estéticas elaboradas en el marco de la Fundación Barnes: la teoría de la crítica de arte de Barnes; la teoría estética de Dewey e incluso la teoría estética de Lawrence Buermeyer. Este artículo es una primera aproximación con el propósito de esclarecer estas relaciones filosóficas, teóricas e históricas con el objetivo de empezar a llenar el vacío existente en la literatura contemporánea sobre esa temática.

*Palabras clave:* Estética de Santayana; Fundación Barnes; John Dewey.

## INTRODUCTION

This article has the purpose of reconstructing the links between the aesthetic theory of George Santayana and those aesthetic theories that emerged within the framework of the Barnes Foundation. To carry out this task, the argument is developed in four parts. In the first part (Remarks on the Barnes Foundation), general facts about the organization are presented, which constitute the frame of this work. In the second part (The Aesthetic Theory of George Santayana) the main features of Santayana's aesthetic theory are depicted. In the third (Crucial Evidence: The Letters Between John Dewey and Albert C. Barnes) the theoretical relevance of the personal letters between Dewey and Barnes is shown. This correspondence deals with aesthetics topics in general which link Santayana's aesthetic with exchanges between Dewey and Barnes, on the one hand, and with the intellectual *milieu* of the foundation, on the other. In the fourth part (Santayana's Influence on the Aesthetic Theories of the Barnes Foundation) the links between Santayana and the theories of Barnes, Dewey and Buermeyer are illustrated. Finally, a conclusion is presented.

#### REMARKS ON THE BARNES FOUNDATION

Initially established in the city of Merion (Pennsylvania) in 1922,<sup>2</sup> the Barnes Foundation represents the consolidation of more than a decade<sup>3</sup> of educational efforts by chemist and art collector Dr. Albert C. Barnes. The purpose of this institution was to provide "... education in the widest sense of the word, though it centers primarily in advancement of the understanding and appreciation of the fine arts" [Mullen (1925), p. 3].

Indeed, the Foundation's design was beyond the ambition of an immediate education of the public and the workers of Barnes' factories. As Robins [cf. (2015)], Campeotto & Viale [cf. (2018)] and Beltrán Llavador [cf. (2018)] point out, its most ambitious project was to transform art education in the United States, which at that time still had an antiquated procedure as summarized by Barnes in his critique of the system: "... it is characterized by professional incompetence, intellectual chaos and ignorance of the basic principles of educational science in numerous of the officials who shape and carry out the present obsolete practices" [Barnes (1925), p. 17].

To achieve its main goal, the foundation developed various lines of activities and theoretical productions. It worked primarily as an educational space, maintaining collaborations with the University of Pennsylvania and with Columbia University to offer courses in aesthetics and visual arts appreciation to students. Furthermore, seminars on aesthetics and art criticism were given in the Foundation's space, which were aimed at the general public, and at art education teachers, writers, artists and critics. In addition to the classes, there was a theoretical production<sup>4</sup> that involved the publication of books and theses, as well as articles in the foundation's own magazine named *The Journal of the Barnes Foundation*.

Besides educational activities, the Foundation fitted out an exhibition space for Dr. Albert C. Barnes' private art collection, which could be visited by any student enrolled in the institution.

According to recent data from Anderson that collection is “the greatest private art collection in America —valued at more than \$6 billion and including some 69 Cézannes (more than in all the museums in Paris), 60 Matisses, 44 Picassos, 18 Rousseaus, 14 Modiglianis, and no fewer than 180 Renoirs” [Anderson (2013), p. 17]<sup>5</sup>.

All this wide range of activities had both a philosophical and pedagogical background. For example, although Santayana has not been personally involved in the Foundation<sup>6</sup> as Dewey or his students have, his aesthetic theory is one of the fundamental roots of the philosophical conception taught there in the first years of educational efforts. In the words of Mullen, Barnes has pre-eminently taken ideas originating “... in the work of William James, John Dewey, and George Santayana” [Mullen (1925), p. 5] to formulate his own theory about art criticism and art appreciation.

Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, up to the present few studies have attempted to show exactly how Santayana’s theory influenced Barnes and the thinkers, such as Dewey or Buermeyer, who were involved in the foundation project. Although to fill this gap in the literature is beyond the scope of a paper, this work is a first attempt to deal with this neglected topic.

#### GEORGE SANTAYANA’S AESTHETIC THEORY

George Santayana was the first aesthete in the American academic tradition.<sup>7</sup> His works on aesthetic theory and on literary criticism served not only to establish him as a thinker among his peers, but also to strengthen aesthetics as part of the academic curriculum of the time.

His aesthetic theories present traits inherited from different traditions, such as eighteenth-century empiricism, nineteenth century idealism and the organicism of the turn of the twentieth century. With a tone famous for its peculiarity, Santayana tried to analyze central aesthetic subjects like beauty and art from a

perspective that considered natural circumstances. That is to say, he wanted to bring art and the aesthetic experience back to their earthly bases.

It is curious to note that Santayana's aesthetic production was deeply linked with his time working at Harvard University and his years in America. Between 1892 and 1895, Santayana taught a seminar on aesthetics that in 1896 became his first book *The Sense of Beauty*, which met considerable success between his peers and students.<sup>8</sup> In it, the Spanish philosopher dealt with beauty from a naturalistic and psychological perspective trying to understand the ordinary context where this particular pleasure experience arises.

By 1900, Santayana had already published his second book on aesthetic entitled *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* where he exposes his conception that both poetry and religion were imaginative aspects of human experience, that is, they were attempts to celebrate the human experience. From this perspective, religion is displaced to the same plane as poetry, and becomes itself nothing more than a particular type of poetry that can be applied to life.

Shortly after, in 1905, *The Life of Reason in Art* was published, the fourth volume of the series *The Life of Reason*, which sought to explain the origins and progress of human activities in the different areas of life. Considered by many analysts /critics to be one of his central works, it is a comprehensive presentation of his naturalistic philosophy of art, where the human phenomenon of art is examined in conjunction with its importance to human reason as it can be read below.

Of all reason's embodiments art is therefore the most splendid and complete. Merely to attain categories by which inner experience may be articulated, or to feign analogies by which a universe may be conceived, would be but a visionary triumph if it remained ineffectual and went with no actual remodeling of the outer world, to render man's dwelling more appropriate and his mind better fed and more largely transmissible. Mind grows self-perpetuating only by its expression in

matter. What makes progress possible is that rational action may leave traces in nature, such that nature in consequence furnishes a better basis for the life of Reason; in other words progress is art bettering the conditions of existence [Santayana (2015), pp. 8-9].

Five years later, in 1910, Santayana would publish again a book on aesthetics, but this time, it was a study that can also be interpreted as a book of literary criticism or literary aesthetics. Indeed, his *Three Philosophical Poets* was published as part of the Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature. From a philosophical point of view, it presented the biography of Lucretius, Dante and Goethe, and the analysis of their works, making dialogues between poetry and philosophy and establishing the concept of “poet-philosopher”.

In May 1911, Santayana formally submitted his application for retirement from Harvard, and in 1912 he would leave for Europe to never return to America. This change would also have an impact on his philosophy and subjects of interest. Since Santayana had never considered aesthetics as a separate discipline, once outside Harvard, his production on the subject became scarcer, limited to a few sporadic articles in academic journals.

Santayana’s choice to settle in Europe did not straightway prevent his theories from continuing to have an impact on American institutions. Indeed, Americans continued being his main readers and interlocutors throughout his intellectual life. Santayana’s aesthetic helped shape the first generations of aesthetes in America and resonated powerfully even in the thinker’s absence and in unexpected places, as in the case of the Barnes Foundation, as we will see below.

#### CRUCIAL EVIDENCE: THE LETTERS BETWEEN JOHN DEWEY AND ALBERT C. BARNES

It is a fact that Santayana’s aesthetic theories played an important role within the Barnes Foundation. Numerous passages from articles

published in *The Journal of the Barnes Foundation* as well as Barnes' books attest to this connection. It suffices here to quote one of the many excerpts where Barnes confesses this link, as we can read in his preface of *The Art in Painting*, his most famous book, where he wrote that "for the underlying principles of the psychology of aesthetics I owe much to Santayana ..." [Barnes (1937), p. 17].

Although this link has been noticed by Barnes' biographers, like Schack [cf. (2015)], it has been noted in a very limited way, in general just to emphasize that Santayana's books were readings and deeply appreciated by the critic, and that Barnes commented on them with his students and in his personal letters to friends.

Following this line of research, especial attention was paid to the correspondence between Dewey and Barnes, to try to understand Santayana's influence. This path was selected because between January 1918 and June 1949, the Spanish philosopher is frequently quoted, sometimes with comments on or references to his aesthetics and his works on literary criticism/critical literary works. In this sense, personal letters work here as essential historical evidence to argue that Santayana was read, and a conscious effort was made to assimilate his theories, so that they could be applied in the context of the educational project at Barnes Foundation. A very significant example of this transformation of Santayana's aesthetics theories one of the tools used by the foundation, is the following letter dated January 24, 1918:

It pleases me immensely when anybody reacts favorably to my pictures as you seem to have done in spite of the inadequate time and lack of sunshine. If you would like a better acquaintance with them come over soon for a week-end and we can look at them in the light of the chapters on "Plastic Representation", "Plastic Construction", and "Criterion of Taste" in Santayana's "Reason in Art" (*Corresp.* I, 1918.01.24, N.03763)

Also in the same year, on June 12, Barnes refers again to Santayana's philosophical works, but curiously enough, this time he

does so in his book *The Life of Reason* where he quotes the Spanish philosopher in a list of the most profitable readings on reason and science in contrast to his own last reading. This is interesting because it summarizes an acquaintance with Santayana's works beyond his aesthetics books.

Three years later, on January 7, Barnes writes again to Dewey to discuss some impressions he got from reading the book *Reconstruction of Philosophy*. Curiously enough Barnes mentions that he could understand better some chapters of Dewey's book because he had become used to read Santayana's works in seminars offered in his foundation. In his own words: "The last two chapters were very familiar because Santayana has alternated with you for several years in seminar dissection" (Corresp. II, 1921.01.07, N.04117.)

In the early 1930s, when Dewey was still working on his book *Art as Experience*, he and Barnes had important discussions on the aesthetic theory of expression. One of the theories he struggles to understand appears to be Santayana's. For Dewey, Santayana isolates the form of expression in his 1896 book, based on a certain theory of empathy that came from psychology, and which Dewey considers outdated as noted by Bahr (1999). Consequently, Dewey denies compartmentalization in his theory of expression and complains to Barnes about Santayana's tendency towards attributing a subject's feeling to an object.

This subject seems to be of vital importance since in a letter dated March 28, 1934, when his work had already been published, Dewey continues to debate with Barnes about Santayana's theory of expression. His tone at the end of the correspondence seems to indicate his discomfort in the face of the problem. Dewey ended the letter with the following paragraph: "Santayana says 'objectified pleasure' doesn't he, not objectified emotion?? I know what he means in the latter case, but emotion-of-and-objects is different from objectified emotion". (Corresp. II, 1934.03.28, N.04334)

On the same day, Barnes answers his friend's question, stating that Dewey laments the absence of one word for the combined



phenomena of artistic and aesthetic "... may be the cause of my difficulty and what seems to me is your ambiguity that might be used as pretty good prop for Santayana's 'emotion objectified'". (Corresp. II, 1934.03.28, N. 04332). Each letter seems a unique indication of how Dewey and Barnes were reading and trying to understand and interpret Santayana's works even when his main theories had already been written and published.

An alternative way of mentioning Santayana in the correspondence was exemplified by the letter dated January 5, 1940, where Barnes recites a whole phrase from the book *The Reason in Art* to use the Spanish philosopher's definition of sentimentalist. This quoting of his words in a more informal context, his theory was not being dealt with, seems to be a signal of how deeply acquainted Barnes was with Santayana's works.

Again, more than fifteen years later Santayana still appears in their correspondence. On June 9, 1949, when writing to Dewey, Barnes refers to Santayana's theories, paying particular attention to chapter one of the book *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, which seems to indicate a continuous reading of Santayana's works.

In the end, these quotations are now sufficient to establish a reasonable basis for the hypothesis defended here. That is, despite the amount of works that have been dedicated to tracing the links between Dewey and Barnes' theories, Santayana's impact is no less remarkable in the formulation of the aesthetic thinking of the two men. In fact, it is possibly that Barnes is an important link to understand how Dewey comes to read and interpret Santayana's works. But this is a subject for another research.

#### SANTAYANA'S INFLUENCE ON THE AESTHETIC THEORIES OF THE BARNES FOUNDATION

Up to this point, it is clear that Santayana was a vital part of the Barnes Foundation's theoretical intellectual landscape in at least two ways. The first one, and which has already been pointed out

previously by Barnes' correspondence with Dewey, is that Santayana's books were part of the aesthetic reading seminars organized by the foundation for a general public. Second, and more significant for this research, is that these readings seem to have been an essential tool for Barnes to develop his own critical theory of art. It is to these more precise developments that this section is addressed.

Now, it is time to begin dealing with Barnes as a central figure. According to Bahr: "Barnes learned to feel from studying Santayana's *The Sense of Beauty*" [Bahr (1999), p. 323]. That is, the critic seems to have taken from Santayana his naturalist idea that beauty is a perception, and that the pleasure we feel in contact with beauty had a materialistic point of origin. Santayana's struggles to combine objective and subjective perceptions in the context of the aesthetic experience of beauty helped seems responsible to have helped Barnes to develop his own method on criticism of works of art.

In a certain sense, long before Dewey began to explore further into the field of aesthetics, it is from Santayana's works that Barnes is departing to think about the nature of the aesthetic experience. As noted by Bahr the ambitious way he adapts these abstract theories to understand works of art that were on display in his private collection, both paintings and sculptures, is a remarkable outspread [cf. Bahr (1999), p. 330]. To such a degree, it is no exaggeration to say, as Bahr does, that in the end of the day, was Santayana who "taught Barnes to be a critic and an aesthete" [Ibid.].

Bahr even goes further and defends the hypothesis that it is not possible to understand Barnes' critical theory without first having a good knowledge of Santayana's works, particularly his first book from 1896 about beauty. This occurs because the entire logic of the foundation's educational aesthetics practices, from how the objects were arranged and displayed to how one should think and judge them, is permeated by Santayana's influence [Ibid.].

An example that illustrates the consequence of this reception is that the theory of transferred values<sup>9</sup> developed by Barnes and Violette de Mazia in the 1930s has its roots in Santayana's

psychological aesthetics in addition, of course, to Dewey's educational and aesthetic theories. Essentially, this theory argues that all works of art, or even more broadly, any form of creative and imaginative enterprise involves the so-called transferred values. These are types of qualities or attributes that are present in everyday objects and that are transferred by the artist to works of art, thus granting them a kind of unitary aesthetic experience.<sup>10</sup>

Another possible example of significant influence is, as shown by Aichele [cf. (2016)], the idea that Barnes expands Santayana's original conception that aesthetics deals with the perception of values. In this case, Barnes will try to go even further in his application to show how human values are incorporated and manifested in the plastic values in the case of works of art.

Now, in addition to the figure of Barnes, as Santayana's aesthetic theories were part of the reading material used in the educational projects, they ended up influencing other intellectuals involved in the project. This seems to be the case of Buermeyer<sup>11</sup>, whose book entitled *An Aesthetics Experience* was published in 1924 by the foundation's own publishing house.

It is a peculiar fact that Buermeyer's book was a first attempt in the context of the foundation to summarize the aesthetics theories of Dewey and Santayana, and this project is so evident that the author himself wrote in the preface to his work "my chief obligations are to Dewey and to Santayana, as will be apparent to everyone familiar with their writings" [Buermeyer (1924), p. 1].

This work developed by Buermeyer was particularly dense since it was intended to deal in depth with aesthetics, producing theoretical material intended for university readers. In fact, his book, together with other publications of the Barnes Foundation, has been used as a textbook in aesthetics courses in at least 35 universities in the years following the publication as shown by Ueno [cf. (2016)].

Any reader familiar with Santayana's aesthetics theories will find in Buermeyer's (1924) work several significant reverberations. For example, his conceptions that the aesthetic experience is related to

the domains of human activity in a more naturalistic base and that art is related to intelligence are reminiscent of Santayana's treatment of art. And it is still worth mentioning that it is with a quotation from *Reason in Art* that the discussion on expression in works of art is opened in Buermeyer's book.

Last, but not least, Santayana's reverberations on Dewey's aesthetic theory must be mentioned. As demonstrated above, Barnes and Dewey had been reading and discussing the works of the Spanish philosopher for decades. Possibly, this more substantial contact with Santayana's aesthetic was due to the context of the Barnes Foundation, which would explain certain similarities in their philosophies of art, despite their significant differences in philosophical projects.

Certainly, the connection between Dewey's and Santayana's aesthetics is still a topic that has not been fully explored as noted by Moreno who seems to be right when arguing that "Dewey has Santayana extremely present" [Moreno (2018), p. 154] when he writes his famous book on aesthetics in the 1930's decade. In fact, Santayana is mentioned in at least three different chapters of *Art as Experience*, which is in itself an indicative of this link since very few aesthetes are mentioned by Dewey in his book.

Therefore, it is possible that there are connections between the two thinkers which are stronger than it has been ascertained so far by the pragmatist interpreters of Dewey's aesthetics. An attentive reading of *Reason in Art* and *Art as Experience* reveals a series of ways to think about art that were familiar to both thinkers. The most obvious are the projects of naturalization of the arts (although they developed different modes of naturalization). Also rejection of the dominant theory of fine art is another common trait, and so it is their way of connecting art with experience, intelligence, and the ordinary man's life.

An example of how close the aesthetic theories of Santayana and Dewey are, can be seen in how both analyze contemporary museums of their time, which they see as similar to mausoleums,

where works of art are separated/ isolated from life, becoming a kind of “dead art” in the words of the former or a kind of “anemic art” in the words of the latter.

Why art, the most vital and generative of activities, should produce a set of abstract images, monuments to lost institutions, is a curious mystery. ... What we call museums—mausoleums, rather, in which a dead art heaps up its remains—are those the places where the Muses intended to dwell? We do not keep in show-cases the coins current in the world. A living art does not produce curiosities to be collected but spiritual necessities to be diffused [Santayana, (2015), p. 127].

Dewey seems to share Santayana's idea that the contemporary museum appears like a mausoleum, since it tries to separate art from life. Going even further, Dewey seeks the historical reasons for this separation and points out some of the consequences of this compartmentalization as it can be seen below:

For, when what he knows as art is relegated to the museum and gallery, the unconquerable impulse towards experiences enjoyable in themselves finds such outlet as the daily environment provides. ... When, because of their remoteness, the objects acknowledged by the cultivated to be works of fine arts seem anemic to the mass of people, esthetic hunger is likely to seek the cheap and the vulgar [Dewey (1934), p. 12].

Unfortunately, a deeper exposition of the proximities between the aesthetics theories of Dewey's and Santayana's is yet to be made. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that there are clear resonances among the two thinkers, and that this proximity seem to be a legacy of the time Dewey spent at the Barnes Foundation reading Santayana and discussing these readings with Barnes.

## CONCLUSION

In the end, the historical evidence gathered from texts published in *The Journal of the Barnes Foundation*, from books edited by the foundation and from letters between Dewey and Barnes seems to be enough evidence of the strong links between Santayana's aesthetic theories and the theories that were developed at the Barnes Foundation.

These connections are in some cases clearer and more evident, as in the case of Dewey, or less clear, although still present as in the cases of Barnes and Buermeyer. Nonetheless, in both cases the difference appears to be merely one of degree, as there is no doubt about the reverberation of Santayana's psychological and naturalistic theories of art and aesthetic.

As it should be evident to the reader at this point, it is still necessary to tread an arduous path of deeper investigation in order to better find out similarities between aesthetic theories, especially from a detailed comparison of texts between Santayana and Barnes, Dewey and Buermeyer. Thus, perhaps, the best conclusion for this work would be to clarify that this article is indeed part of an investigative work still in progress.

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## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> In 2012, the Barnes Foundation's art collection was moved to another location, more specifically to Benjamin Franklin Parkway avenue in the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Lawrence (2015) commented on the construction process of the new building, which was in charge of the New York firm Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, who designed the new space that currently houses the collection. He also referred to the historical and legal issues that the change of headquarters of the foundation involved.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Albert C. Barnes' educational efforts and interest in the visual arts began long before his Foundation was settled. As Mullen showed in 1925, the first attempts to offer aesthetic education took place in Barnes' chemical factories which produced argyrols, a drug which was his main source of income at that time. In this first attempt both men and women took part, most of whom had not enjoyed a formal or academic education and worked in the factory. The intention was that two out of eight hours of work were devoted to study, thus giving these people a new perspective.

<sup>4</sup> By 1925 the institution had already published three books which were important for its history, *An Approach to Art* by Mary Mullen in 1923; *The Aesthetic Experience* by Laurence Buermeyer in 1924, and the first version of *The Art in Painting* by Albert C. Barnes in 1925. "Primitive Negro Sculpture" by Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro would be added to the list of publications in 1926; *Art and Education* by Dewey, Barnes, Buermeyer, Mullen and de Mazia in 1929; *The French Primitives and Their Forms* by Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia in 1931; *The Art of Henry-Matisse* by Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia in 1933; *The Art of Renoir* by Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia in 1935; *The Art of Cézanne* by Albert C. Barnes and Violette de Mazia in 1939.

<sup>5</sup> It is also worth noticing, as Mullen did that the institution still had works by other classical artists such as El Greco, Claude Lorrain, Daumier, Delacroix, and Courbet, as well as a collection of Greek and Egyptian figures and notable negro sculptures. Conjointly the institution housed a park that contained a collection of rare and exemplary trees that were developed in the Arboretum under the direction of Joseph Lapsley Wilson and a department of floriculture coordinated by Laura L. Barnes and John W. Prince who did research on new flower specimens [cf. Mullen (1925)].

<sup>6</sup> In a letter sent on December 13, 1928, Santayana thanks Thomas Munro—student of John Dewey and member of the Barnes Foundation—for sending him his book to read and makes a few comments. This is an unusual letter because

it seems to be the only one where Barnes and his Foundation are mentioned. Unfortunately, Santayana does not appear to approve the institution as it can be seen from his words addressed to Munro and quoted here: “But now analysis and psychology seem to stand alone: there is no spiritual interest, no spiritual need. The mind, in this direction, has been desiccated: art has become an abstract object in itself, to be studied scientifically as a *caput mortuum*: and the living side of the subject — the tabulation of people’s feelings and comments — is no less dead. You are yourself enormously intelligent and appreciative, and so is Dr. Barnes, but like a conservator of the fine arts, as if everything had been made to be placed and studied in a museum. And in your theory of taste — do you mention taste? — you (like Dewey) seem to me to confuse the liberty and variability of human nature, which the naturalist must allow, with absence of integration in each man or age or society” [(Santayana (2003), p. 85].

<sup>7</sup> It is important to make a brief clarification on this point. Santayana is a significant mark on the history of American aesthetics, since in the words of Rice: “To say that aesthetic theory in America reached maturity with ‘The Sense of Beauty’ is in no way an overstatement” [Rice (1955), p. ix]. This, however, does not mean that there was not an ongoing aesthetic tradition previously, as shown by Haubert, Campeotto and Viale [cf. (2022)]. The tradition prior to Santayana is marked by a fragmentary, discontinuous production that found its many sources among artists, politicians, rhetoricians, writers, or those interested in aesthetics in general. This phase, still scarcely studied, already presents some of the characteristics that would later appear in the works of Emerson, Santayana, and Dewey.

<sup>8</sup> Once again, it is important to explain the context of Santayana’s aesthetic production to understand its immediate success and his peculiarity. Regarding the academic medium, as Ashmore noted: “There were so many followers of Hegel, who, when building abstractions, valued a work of art for the spirit it infused into it, like psychologists who showed pieces of paper divided in two and asked their students if the division seemed beautiful or not. Neither group had a very extensive knowledge of works of art. They accepted the judgment of current critical books with the result that the new movement in poetry, painting, dance, and architecture that ushered in the twentieth century had neither the support nor the understanding of the universities. These scholars spoke of eternal beauty until their students — among whom the author of this essay was one — began to wonder if their speech was not simply an excuse to reject temporary beauties. Reading one of Santayana’s books at the time was like listening to a man of the world who knew by knowledge what others simply knew by description. The style in which these works were written had a kind of distinction that, if it seems a bit Brahmin now, then it seemed sensible and correct” [Ashmore (2010), pp. 299-300].



<sup>9</sup> In Barnes' own words, the transferred values are presented in this way: "The content of a work of plastic art includes two sets of qualities— those which evoke feelings of the same general kind as the emotions of everyday life, and which may be termed "human values," and those which are common to all perceived things (colors, lights and shadows, contours, spatial intervals) which constitute plastic values. Esthetic unity requires the presence of both decoration and expression . . . Intermediate between expression and decoration stand what may be called transferred values. These are values which do not belong to an object in its intrinsic nature but serve to enrich and diversify the perception of it" [Barnes (1937), p. 20]

<sup>10</sup> On this subject, further research is still being conducted to try to understand how exactly Santayana's theory leads Barnes and de Mazia to their concept of transferred values.

<sup>11</sup> As the inquiry made by Robins [cf. (2025)] demonstrates, Buermeyer was part of the first generation of professors employed by Barnes to handle the foundation's daily activities and the aesthetics seminars. Curiously, the first time Buermeyer was employed by Barnes, he was a doctoral student of philosophy at Princeton University and should give Barnes private lessons on the works of James' psychology and John Dewey's books on education and democracy. Unfortunately, at the present moment few details have been clarified about this relationship and how Buermeyer's aesthetic theory is marked by this foundational context. Robins suggests, for example, that Buermeyer helped Barnes in the elaboration of the book *The Art in Painting* and it is not always easy to differentiate Barnes' and Buermeyer's work, as it is possible to make comparisons with Dewey's theories. Once again, more detailed research in this regard is yet to be done.

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DANIEL PINKAS, ED.

RECENTLY DISCOVERED LETTERS  
OF GEORGE SANTAYANA  
CARTAS RECIÉN DESCUBIERTAS  
DE GEORGE SANTAYANA

Dudson, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 1886.

Dear Oscar -

I have often felt like writing  
to you this summer, but I was not  
lucky 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 somewhat  
nasty. By some dishonesty or other  
they put me in a room with five (!)  
other wretches, whom I had bargained  
only for three companions - nevertheless  
I arrived at last very sleepily and  
insufficiently good spirits to wander  
slowly down France and Spain to the  
paternal abode of my father - I  
stopped at ...  
place, by the ... collector would say

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