The contents of this book and their chapter divisions offer a well rounded though not fully developed picture of Thoreau's life, personality, convictions, and writings. Much of this is centered, and justifiable so, around his life in his beloved Concord. There is brief, but sympathetic, attention to his ideas and doctrines. There is a real effort to reach toward objectivity. Basically, Salt sees two sides to Thoreau's character and philosophy (loose as this term may be used here, noting Thoreau's abhorrence for philosophical "systems"), the one mystical and transcendental, the other practical and terrestrial. The former faced the boundless possibilities of the future, the latter the realities of the past and present. (p. 102). Salt recognizes a successful combination of common sense with transcendental sense. (Frankly, I think that more attention needs to be paid to the term "transcendental," to the extent that such precision can be reached.) There is a brief but unfinished attempt to deal with the structure of Thoreau's Ethics, which in the end are seen to rest on the solid foundation of purified love.

Thoreau treasured his own individuality as well as that of others. He insisted that each should find and pursue his or her own way. This is why he considered that the best hope for society lay in the progress and gradual perfecting of the individual person by his or her own personal effort. (p. 105). It is in light of such contentions and convictions that Salt asserts that "Never has there lived a more determined and unalterable individualist." (p. 105).

How does one ultimately characterize Thoreau? That is not an easy task. But this miniature elegant portrait eases the effort. In the end, Thoreau is a poet-naturalist, in contrast to being a scientist-naturalist, who maintains intense moral and political positions. There is to be sure a certain eccentricity about him, but this in no way detracts from his authenticity and sincerity. This is as true of his style of writing as of his style of living. To be authentic means to be true to oneself. As Thoreau had the first word, let him have the last. It addresses a primary concern of this authentic individual. "The one great rule of composition -- and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this -- is to speak the truth. This first, this second, this third." (p. 115).

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Towards the end of World War II, after Rome had been liberated, Santayana told some journalists that he knew nothing of war, since he lived in the eternal. Of course, he was not entirely serious; had he not, as he said ironically, seen the devastation of Rome three times by armies calling themselves
liberators? Was it not he who had said, in attacking the illusions of liberalism, that "only the dead have seen the end of war"? It is nevertheless a fact about his philosophy, especially his later philosophy, that living in the eternal is an ideal attractive to him. Even in earlier days, when writing Three Philosophical Poets, he had set it forth clearly: "If, like Lucretius and every philosophical poet, we range over all time and all existence, we shall forget our own persons, as he did, and even wish them to be forgotten, if only the things we care for may subsist or arise." This doctrine would only differ, in his later years, in that he would no longer insist that the things we care for must arise. For spirit, at least, it is enough that we are steadfast in our worship of those things we love. More and more did he shape his life towards this ideal, however much he insisted that his character did not permit him to maintain such an allegiance consistently or uniquely.

By referring to this allegiance in the title of his splendid study, Anthony Woodward signals that he is concerned to explore this and other large facts about Santayana's thought, and to obtain an overall picture of that philosopher's deepest views and motivations. The chief components he discovers are "a materialism akin to some of the pre-Socratic philosophers of ancient Greece; a spirituality blending the self-sufficiency of a Hellenistic sage with Eastern ideals of gnosis and liberation; and an individualism rooted in the contemptus mundi outlook of Spanish Catholic tradition" (53). Woodward discusses moral, political, religious, and esthetic ideals associated with Santayana, calling upon an impressive knowledge of a variety of philosophers and literary figures who have espoused them. After a general and partially anecdotal introduction, he devotes one chapter to the early doctrines centered about The Life of Reason, and one to the later thought of Realms of Being and other late works. Of special interest is a fourth chapter, entitled "Orientations," in which his focus is upon "Santayana's greatest book," The Realm of Spirit, and on other books and articles where the standpoint is that of spirit, and where Western and Indian religions come under scrutiny. In the final "Epilogue," he carries these investigations further, and also speculates upon Santayana's character and motivations, as reflected in his philosophical novel, The Last Puritan.

Some twenty years ago, Timothy Sprigge's Santayana: An Examination of his Philosophy, in the series entitled "The Arguments of the Philosophers", pointed to the neglect of Santayana's later ontology and analyzed the four realms in the light of modern techniques. Living in the Eternal is an excellent complement to the earlier study, which further laments the continuing neglect of the mature philosophy of this major thinker, but which concerns itself more with Santayana's themes than with his techniques. Woodward argues that Santayana should not be remembered solely for The Life of Reason, "a monument of serene humanism." In the later books, there is much more: "scepticism, materialism, and ambiguously mitigated irrationalism," without any "disintegrating mode of twentieth century anguish" (Preface). It
should be stressed here that Santayana's irrationalism is a
metaphysical thesis, grounded in his naturalism, to the effect
that the world is founded on physical rather than moral laws,
which are fairly uniform but nevertheless contingent. The human
reaction to irrational nature which he favours is entirely a
rational one, however, both in his early and his late philosophy.
He recognizes that people usually have other priorities; but
nobody is more scathing about the irrationally of liberal illu­sions and false idealist enthusiasms.

Woodward deals with more technical aspects of Santayana's
philosophy too, including the later ontology. On some of these
points, I would offer different readings. The discussion of the
realms of being gives a fair picture, but he is not comfortable
with certain aspects of this ontology, and doubts that these
aspects are contributing to the tenor of his thought. Woodward
finds (and he is not alone) a serious tension in Santayana's mind
and philosophy, between spirituality and materialism:

Steady retention of a naturalistic base reminds us that
Santayana managed in his later writings to sustain by
poetical phrasing, and at times by virtual self-contra­
diction, an intensely felt paradox: redemptive spiritu­
ality within the framework of an intransigently monis­
tic materialism. All real causal efficacy lies in the
realm of matter, and spirit is an epiphenomenon of
matter at the mercy of external relations. (112)

We must bear in mind Santayana's account of psyche in tandem with
that of spirit. Here, spirit is indeed epiphenomenal, but the
material psyche must be included under the external relations, in
the sense that it is embedded in matter, making the term 'exter­
nal' somewhat misleading here. Psychic freedom and intelligent
psychic agency are granted by Santayana. I do not find any
reason to doubt him, when he says that materialism, far from
being an obstacle to his account of spirit, is in fact the major
source of his sober and profound treatment of spirit and spiritu­
ality. In stripping spirit of causal powers, he explicitly gives
these over to the psyche, a material organization which is acces­sible to us, but subject always to the restricted, indirect,
symbolic way in which all material things can be known. This is
not an easy position for us to grasp, insofar as the accepted
notion of self is a mix of Santayana's psyche and his spirit.
However, with the notion of matter and psyche presented by Santa­
yana, and its relation to spirit, one finds an adequate response
to these criticisms.

I doubt whether Woodward's phrase "intensely felt paradox"
catches Santayana's mood as well as that on the next page: "the
dark and awesome fatality of existence" (113). Certainly, Santa­
yana thought of himself as uprooted from his cultural tradition,
a stranger in the world. Moreover, he comes to feel that the
spirit itself is always a stranger to the world. Whether he
feels this strangeness as a paradox, however, is doubtful; would
he not rather describe this alienated situation of spirit as
quite natural, just as spirit itself is entirely natural? Spirit is alienated because its aspirations run so far beyond its capabilities. Of course, we must not read 'natural' in the sense used widely by today's philosophers, where we naturalize something by reducing it to empirical data.

Woodward has some doubts about Santayana's essences as well; here also, there are many who share these doubts. Finding in the doctrine of essences a "curious nominalistic brand of Platonism" (60), he argues that they may be useful as a guide to scepticism and liberation, but that his long discussions of essence are less interesting, and could be seen as philosophical concept-spinning. Again, I would differ, and would plead that Santayana is working out an unfamiliar conceptual scheme in which essences have a crucial part to play, not merely as a path to sceptism, but (for instance) as important to his understanding of matter. He argues that modern thought, with its idealist heritage, retains a serious confusion of ideas and things; and the essence-existence dichotomy noted by Woodward serves in part to re-establish a more sound appreciation for the ontological status of external realities. The full understanding of Santayana's matter seems to rest upon seeing essence as its antipode, on pushing the two apart; and an understanding of psyche depends in its turn upon the understanding of matter.

Although these are not trivial differences, they do not at all mar this excellent study, which I have read with relish and with profit, as have others interested in Santayana's life and writings.

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Philosophers nowadays (at least since Russell's death) seldom make it into the news. On p. 56 of the April 25, 1988 issue of "U.S. News and World Report" there is an article, "Bringing Philosophy Back to Life," featuring Hilary Putnam as the "restorer" of Philosophy. (Might this not be more miraculous than the Resurrection of Christ, who was only dead for three days?) This may seem an odd (quixotic?) quest for the Walter Beverly Pearson Professor of Modern Mathematics and Mathematical Logic at Harvard University. Professor Putnam was an "analytic" philosopher, "radicalized" by the Protests of the 70s (but finding "Marxism" also inadequate). He sought to make Philosophy "relevant" again, bringing back questions of "meaning" and "value", but not abandoning "analytic" philosophy entirely. There are not many mathematical symbols, but much serious thought, in his three recent volumes.

(1) Renewing Philosophy (1992) is based on Putnam's 1991 Gifford Lectures. He seeks to steer a middle course between