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
"scientism" and "relativism" avoiding their common errors. As a "neo-pragmatist" he stresses "practice" over "theory."

(2) Realism With a Human Face (1990), also edited by James Conant, consists of 29 essays from the 80's. He attacks "Realism with a capital 'R'", the notion of Truth as "correspondence" and "analytic" philosophy. He claims to be a friend of "common sense realism." Putnam renounced "metaphysical realism" in 1976, yet his "internal realism" seems clearer to Putnam than to others. He himself here admits that he himself is still struggling towards clarity on this issue. The three parts of this book deal with: (a) Metaphysics, (b) Ethics and (c) American Philosophy.

(3) Words and Life (1994) contains a 65 page Introduction by the editor James Conant, and 29 essays by Putnam, mostly written between 1989 and 1993, mostly published elsewhere. (Two are written with his wife, and one with Martha Nussbaum.) The sections are: I. The Return of Aristotle, II. The Legacy of Logical Positivism, III. The Inheritance of Pragmatism, IV. Essays after Wittgenstein, V. Truth and Reference, VI. Mind and Language and VII. The Diversity of the Sciences. As can be seen, these essays range widely over diverse philosophical (and non-philosophical) topics, and these 500 plus pages can hardly be adequately assessed in a brief review. They are, for the most part, clearly written, and quite interesting. The general, programmatic theses may well be of less interest than the detailed discussions. Putnam himself admits that he is giving not so much "theories" or "positions" as "pictures." (Thus the book must be read, not "summarized.")

The audience is unclear—as the essays range from the (near) technical to the (near) popular. #29 discusses Pope's Essay on Man. (I do not know if there are enough "Putnam-groupies" to justify such a volume.) We can here only make a few brief observations on this book. (1) Although Putnam usually writes quite clearly, I found his "Preface" rather opaque in places, especially part 5. On p. lxii Conant in giving the "overarching theme in this volume" also seems rather opaque. It is closely tied to Wittgenstein's notion that our "concepts" must be embedded in human "practices." This is doubtless "Pragmatism" of some sort or other, but the precise sort is difficult to pin down. (2) Putnam adds much of interest to the current debate between "Realism" is true on MWF; "Relativism" is warranted asserted on TTHS—and on Sunday the issue rests. (3) Putnam is perhaps best in his "polemics," but he seems to fall into the common trap of demanding more consistency from his opponents than he demands from himself. Conant notes (p.xii) that like Baudelaire Putnam does not wish to lock himself rigidly into a "system." Thus he give us "pictures" not "positions." "Flexibility" is doubtless often a good thing, but "Pragmatists" tend to see "rigidity" as the only vice. We must rather learn the lesson of Goldilocks and avoid both excessive "flexibility" and excessive "rigidity." (4) He sees himself as challenging prevailing "orthodoxies." One feels that those who are really critical of the philosophical status quo, do not get their work published. (5) Putnam does
criticize Rorty (especially in #17), but Rorty seems to think that he has much in common with Putnam (cf. *Journal of Philosophy*. Sept. 1993, Rorty's, "Putnam and the Relativist Menace"). If so, then Putnam can not be wholly good. (6) Since Putnam is most interesting in "detail," a real critique of him would require a tome larger than *Words and Life* itself.

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The society to which we belong was severed from England and shaped for 220 years by a document that gives preeminence to the notion of "inalienable Rights." The concept of rights was incorporated into our Constitution and has dominated our jurisprudence. We talk about "rights" when we debate every leading legal, political, and even moral controversy. It is only natural that we should seek a formal understanding of what rights are.

Americans enter this philosophical conversation at a late stage of the more general ontological question posed by the Greeks, whether right is right by nature, or be enactment and convention. Our own contribution to this question has been to loosen considerably that knot that has tended to tie this controversy into an unyielding dichotomy. Pragmatism, by emphasizing the relation between meaning and practical bearing, lets us see clearly that there may be no substantial difference between "nature" and "enactment and convention," as the latter are simply part of the process of all that is natural. In short, we ourselves are not only the observers, but simultaneously also part of the process of creation of "right" and "rights."

Despite this insight, debate over rights continues in America to be skewed by traces of the ancient dichotomy, which still leads appeal to the putative transcendental nature of fundamental rights. Insofar as this happens, the debate falls away from the pragmatic insight, which would de-privilege all such assertions. Insofar as rights are fundamental, they gain that quality in and through their operation in human institutions. We understand rights not as an ontological but also as an operative matter. That requires us to avoid purely Platonic or Cartesian speculation and to investigate the social origin and consequences of so-called "fundamental rights."

Here lies perhaps the most fertile yet-unplowed ground for pragmatic philosophy—and it is the subject of Beth Singer's recent book *Operative Rights*. Here rights are depicted as an interactive relationship among individuals and between the individual and the community; by this analysis communities themselves may also have rights. Singer's approach succeeds George Herbert Mead and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Eschewing the strong individual-