

SANTAYANA AND PARIS: AN UNCONSUMMATED AFFAIR

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Abstract: In this paper I develop a narrative of Santayana's relationship with Paris, from his initial visit (1883) to the last time (1936) he was in the city. Apart from Rome, where unofficially his home was from 1928 onwards, and where he spent the last eleven years of (1941-52, «Old Age in Italy», as he described it in *My Host the World*, the third volume of his autobiographical *Persons and Places*), and apart from Ávila, the medieval-walled city of his childhood, Paris exerted a central, geographical focus on his life. I do not include Cambridge/Boston (USA) and Cambridge/Oxford (UK) as having any comparable emotional momentousness. Rome, in the end, turned out to be Santayana's most endearing geographical *space*, but Paris throughout a fifty-four years span was a highly influential city in Santayana's life.

Keywords: Santayana, Paris, Travel, Biographical.

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1. As Santayana did not step foot in Paris on his initial trip to the United States with his father Agustín in July 1872 at the age of eight, traveling from Ávila to Boston, his first encounter with France, and specifically Paris, took place in 1883, on his first return trip to Ávila to visit his father after a lapse of eleven years. Santayana had just finished his freshman year at Harvard, and was nineteen years of age. With the ocean steamer *Waesland* arriving in Antwerp from New York, Santayana just had enough time in Antwerp «to see the marketplace with the Cathedral spire»¹. With Paris it was even more brief and uneventful: «In Paris I saw nothing, merely driving from one station to other»². That would have been from the Gare du Nord to the Gare d'Orléans (currently Gare d'Austerlitz). That's it. That would have been a horse-drawn omnibus ride or a horse-and-carriage trot with accompanying baggage from north, just crossing the Seine, to eastern Paris. Frankly speaking, not the most memorable *first time*. Santayana goes on to write quite matter-of-factly: «During the next ten years [1883-1893] I repeated this journey many times; the expense was about the same if I went first class without stopping, or second class with two or three stops on the way: a method that avoided long nights in the train, and enabled me, by varying my voyage and landing at Cherbourg or England, or even Gibraltar, to see the principal sights in all France and Spain»³. He also added that «it was only Italy that remained to be explored and lived in when I became relatively independent»⁴. The lure of Italy as a travel destination and place to live would be a constant in Santayana's adult life, and play off against Santayana's possibilities of making Paris (and France) his home.

In those eleven years from 1883 to 1893 we can be certain that Santayana was in Paris during six of those years (1883, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1891, and 1893). We can be certain that he was *not* there during four years (1884, 1885, 1889, and 1892). That leaves one year slightly in doubt. And although he arrived at Liverpool from New York aboard the *Majestic* in June 1890, it cannot be confirmed that he passed through, or stayed for any length of time

¹ G. Santayana, *Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography*, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1986, p. 197.

² *Ibidem*.

³ *Ivi*, p. 198.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

in Paris en route to Ávila where he visited his father Agustín and extended family. There is reason to believe that he did though. Susana, his half-sister in Ávila, had written him in an unpublished letter on 16 June 1890:

Do you intend stopping at Paris? If so would you kindly bring me the skirt of a dress. I mean if you have room in your trunk and if it is not too much trouble: by taking a carriage (wh. you will charge to me) and directing the driver either to the *Magasins du Louvre* or better still, to the *Magasins du Bon Marché* and giving the salesman the enclosed slip I think you will be quits in ten minutes⁵.

If we infer (and we *do* know that he passed through London on the way to Ávila) that he followed the same route as in 1891, then in all probability he did transit Paris in 1890, at the same time fulfilling his sister's personal request. We know about his presence in Paris in 1891 with certainty thanks to another unpublished letter in Columbia University's Butler Library written from Agustín to his son once he had left Ávila to return to the States on 10 September 1891: «...And once in London you got better, and I do not doubt that on board you will recover completely, that is on board the *Cephalonia*, because in the Channel no one can enjoy it. And, why did you obtain provisions for the trip on the way from Paris to Calais?»⁶.

Santayana had inadvertently avoided the Exposition Universelle in Paris of 1889, a world fair during which the Eiffel Tower was showcased and for which it was built in a period of twenty-six months. At this exposition France assumed world leadership not only in architectural construction, but also in electricity and machinery. In short, it had become the international scientific and cultural centerpiece of the then *modern world*. In 1892, having anticipated being able to be in Europe in the summer, Santayana had to forgo going for personal reasons, and sent a letter to one Isabella Stewart Gardner that «I am not going to Venice at all, not even to Paris or Avila, but only to Mr. Davidson's school of philosophy in the Adirondacks. Where else I may go, I hardly care, I am so disappointed at missing the many pleasures of being in Venice with you»⁷. Even at this early stage, Santayana being twenty-eight, one can read in his words that somehow, and for some as yet undisclosed reason, *Italy* (and Rome) were more alluring than *France* (and Paris) – more intellectually and culturally *personal* and attractive.

What was Santayana's experience of Paris during these years, and what has he left us as impressions of and thoughts about, *la Ville Lumière* (the City of Light)? We have precious little content to interpret and aid us. John McCormick in his biography has written that in the summer of 1886 Santayana had, after landing in Cherbourg in July, made a «tour of French and Spanish cathedral towns», and this is confirmed by Santayana's own words earlier quoted. In a letter Santayana writes that «I arrived at Cherbourg alive and in sufficiently good spirits to wander slowly down France and Spain [...]. I stopped at Caen, Le Mans (charming place, by the way, as Fullerton would say) Tours, Bordeaux, and Valladolid»⁸. Each of these cities had a beautiful cathedral or abbey, but all of them were on the same train route. This probably was the real reason for his stopping in each. He rejected Paris as a city in which to study in July 1888 before returning earlier than expected to

⁵ Letter in Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University.

⁶ Letter in Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, translation mine.

⁷ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book One, 1868-1909*, ed. by W.G. Holzberger, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2001, p. 123.

⁸ D. Pinkas (ed.), *Recently Discovered Letters of George Santayana*, Valencia, Biblioteca Javier Coy d'estudis nord-americans, 2021, p. 59.

Harvard and Cambridge on his fellowship, as evidenced in his words to William James that «I had thought of Paris as a possible resting place, but on the whole it seems to offer few advantages for me»⁹.

Paris, let us be honest, was *the* city acting as a magnet and focal point of European civilization during these years, championing *modernity* in all its facets, filled with over 20,000 electric street lamps, and electricity within buildings, and had become «full of the new wonders of the world»¹⁰. Paris even boasted of a *Poste pneumatique*, an underground network of tubing that allowed one to send a message that arrived at its destination in an hour or less within the city of Paris¹¹. Yet none of this, or any academic or cultural competence, seems to have impressed Santayana that much, and he preferred to settle back in Cambridge and Harvard to finish his Ph.D. dissertation, returning in July 1888. Afterwards in 1893 (the year of his father's death), after not being in Paris in 1889 and 1892, Santayana passed through Paris in early August en route to Liverpool to sail back to New York from Southampton. In 1894 he remained stateside, and did not travel to Europe.

2. The year 1895 was, in many ways, a remarkable year for Santayana. As an Instructor of Philosophy at Harvard and with a book of poems (*Sonnets and Other Verses*) published in 1894, and the manuscript of *The Sense of Beauty* completed, he travelled aboard the *Werra* leaving New York City and landed at Gibraltar in June. He made his way up to Ávila where his sister Susana, with her husband Celedonio Sastre, were. There, after roughly a month, he wrote a letter to his Harvard classmate Charles A. Loeser on 13 July that he was «free to go a little more afield from my usual path»¹². Loeser was in Stuttgart. What then unfolded for Santayana was that he suggested to Loeser in a letter of 20 July that they could meet in Milan, with Santayana reminding him that he has «never been in Italy, and this is all virgin ground to me»¹³. He let Loeser know that he had to be «in Paris by the 22nd or 23rd»¹⁴. He added in another letter four days later that «I shall turn up, then at the Hotel Manin on August 3rd when I expect to have the real pleasure of seeing you»¹⁵. Santayana did not make it back to Paris until 31 August, a week later than planned. They must have travelled together some, for Santayana wrote to Charles Augustus Strong later on 10 November that «afterwards with Loeser in Italy and Switzerland»¹⁶. However, no mention is made of Rome, either in Santayana's communications with Loeser or anyone else. Yet, many years

⁹ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book One, 1868-1909*, cit., p. 95.

¹⁰ A. Horne, *Seven Ages of Paris*, London, MacMillan, 2002, p. 326.

¹¹ In an enlightening passage, the literary historian Joan DeJean captures this Parisian quality of *modernity* by extending it even further back in time, and counterposes it with Rome, which is even more relevant to the case of Santayana: «What makes a city great? Prior to the seventeenth century, the most celebrated European city was one famous for its past. Visitors made pilgrimages to Rome to tour its ancient monuments or its historic churches; they were seeking artistic inspiration and indulgences rather than novelty and excitement. Then, in the seventeenth century, a new model for urban space and urban life was invented, a blueprint for all great cities to come [...]. The modern city was oriented to the future rather than the past: speed and movement were its hallmarks. And, as many Europeans quickly recognized, only one city was truly modern: Paris» (J. DeJean, *How Paris Became Paris: The Invention of the Modern City*, New York, Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 1).

¹² D. Pinkas (ed.), *Recently Discovered Letters of George Santayana*, cit., p. 114.

¹³ Ivi, p. 116.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ Ivi, p. 118. The hotel still exists today, even though heavily rebuilt in 1948 after being destroyed in August 1943 in a British air raid. It was purchased in 1904 by the Colombo family, and is now a four-star hotel with a picturesque garden.

¹⁶ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book One, 1868-1909*, cit., p. 147.

later he would write in *The Middle Span*, vol. II of *Persons and Places*: «In 1897 we arranged to make a trip to Italy together; and Mrs. Potter secretly took Italian lessons, so as to be able to rescue us helpless men in all our linguistic difficulties. I had been in Italy two years earlier; and this second journey with the Potters, partly over the same ground, showed me how important the human element is in our supposedly abstract interests»¹⁷.

What is deeply confusing is the following sentence: «I saw Venice and Rome, and the pictures everywhere, in a new light»¹⁸. Santayana does not state that he *experienced* Rome and Venice again, but rather than saw them «in a new light» of his understanding, with that alteration having occurred prior to being there. We have no airtight written fragment by Santayana clarifying that he definitely was in Rome in 1895, but we can state in all confidence that he was in Italy¹⁹. Even Loeser's personal diaries in Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center of Italian Renaissance Studies, are of no help, for they are for the years 1909-1913, 1922, and 1923. But we have one last piece of evidence (a vestige of written testimony, or lack of, if you like) that nudges us to believe that he was *not* in Rome in 1895. On a Stanford's «New Map of the Greater Part of Europe» gifted to William Holzberger by the Sastre family (Santayana's sister Susana married one Celedonio Sastre), detailing his transatlantic voyages and European travels, Santayana had written in his own hand on the «Italy» part next to Rome «1897; 1904». Interestingly enough, next to Venice is written «Aug., 1895; May 1897». One would think that one would recall with precision, given Rome's historical weightiness and cultural significance, the first time one's eyes took in the Eternal City. This Stanford map is convincing, ocular proof.

In the seventeen-year stretch from 1895 to 1911 Santayana made the roundtrip voyage from the US to Europe a total of thirteen times, crossing the Atlantic on twenty-six separate occasions, either going or coming. During this period he was in Paris on thirteen occasions, and quite possibly on a fourteenth: 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1910, and 1911, all years in which we can locate him there with certainty. In 1901, a year during which we know in fact that he was not in Paris, it was most definitely on his mind during July and August when he was in Oxford, where he did not even travel to Ávila, writing to Susana that «I may go in August to Paris, and in that case I should like very much to run on to see you»²⁰. Three weeks later on 13 August he wrote again to her that «I have given up all idea of going even to Paris this year»²¹. In 1902, about which it is difficult to be precise, he arrived on the *Grosser Kurfurst* at Southampton in June and by 3 July he was in Ávila – he might have passed through Paris on his way there. In 1903, like in 1901, he remained in Oxford throughout July and August, probably very occupied (and preoccupied) with *The Life of Reason*.

The years 1904-1906 are singular in Santayana's relationship to Paris in that this is the first instance that Santayana had a full-time Parisian address: at the Hôtel Foyot, rue de Tournon, just north of the Jardin du Luxembourg, from September 1905 to June 1906. The hotel would later be demolished in 1937. This was his lodgings and base as an official

¹⁷ G. Santayana, *Persons and Places*, cit., p. 380.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ See my *Santayana's Relationship to Rome*, in M. Flamm, G. Patella, and J.A. Rea, eds., *George Santayana at 150: International Interpretations*, Lanham, Lexington, 2014, pp. 249-68, for an in-depth discussion of Santayana and Rome.

²⁰ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book One, 1868-1909*, cit., p. 232.

²¹ *Ivi*, p. 235.

representative of Harvard serving as the Hyde Lecturer in Paris²². He officially was on sabbatical during the academic year 1904-05, later officially becoming Hyde Lecturer from November 1905 to June 1906. In late November and December 1904 he had met up with Loeser in Rome, and it is at this very moment in his life that he genuinely opens up to Rome and *discovers* it in a way that only through the facilitation of a native Roman, or a knowledgeable, discerning guide (Loeser), could help bring about. It is here when, towards the closing of the year in 1904 that Santayana, as I understand it, both intellectually and emotionally, fell in love with Rome, with its history and culture and rhythms; in short, with its way of life. In a letter of 3 December 1904 he wrote:

I am enjoying myself hugely and reading a good deal more than usual. Friends of mine turn up at regular intervals, and the sun shines, and humanity smiles about me almost without hypocrisy. I feel at home²³.

All of this by way of counterpoising the contrast that though he was both personally and professionally immersed in Paris (and France) during these years, he had, contemporaneously experienced an *emplacement* where he sensed himself *a part of*, while in unison *apart* from, his immediate surroundings. In other words, where he could *be* himself without losing his *self* in the material mass and circumscribing community of others. It appears that this was *Rome*. Obviously, Paris at this time was not the topographical *place*, nor would it be in the future for Santayana, in which to give up one's very being to.

Perhaps it was a combination of formal commitment, of being held to an imposed schedule not of his own creation, and the privation of a relative liberty to move about at will. For after five inspiring weeks in Rome with Loeser, Santayana had sailed for Egypt via Naples and Sicily, visited the Levant, then came back to Europe via the Danube, and by September in Paris he immediately found his physical movements and intellectual attentions curtailed. Slipping away from Paris to visit loved ones in Ávila, he was soon having books sent to his Paris Hôtel Foyot address in his absence. Paris had become his geographical *home*, even though that was coupled beginning in late March throughout June traveling throughout France giving lectures at regional universities in Nancy, Caen, Lille, Lyons, Grenoble, Montpellier, Toulouse, and Bordeaux. He became very intimate with both Paris and France on the whole during these eight months. In Paris, after his responsibilities tied to being the Hyde Lecturer were carried out and finished, and before returning to the US and Harvard after an absence of twenty-seven months, he shared some private preferences with Albert W. von Westenholz, like Loeser an undergraduate ex-classmate, who was back in his native Germany. On the question of whether an English university would consider hiring him as a professor, he affirms some private preferences and gives us a glimpse of what course his life would take in the future (and it did play out very much as he wrote, except his eventual choice of where to die!), and this writing in 1906, at the age of forty-two:

²² Santayana describes it best with the following from *Persons and Places* (cit., pp. 411-12): «My academic career also had an unexpected extension to Paris. At Harvard, during my last years, there was a rich and isolated student named Caleb Hyde, interested in French literature. On graduating he founded an exchange professorship between Harvard and the Sorbonne, lectures to be in English in Paris, and in French at Cambridge. Barrett Wendall was the first appointed at Paris; and when I was in the East, during 1905, I received an invitation to be his successor [...]. Yet, after Wendell, I was a sad disappointment to Hyde, and, I suspect, to all the officials concerned. For I avoided seeing anyone [...] and lived in my hotel just as quietly as if I had no academic duties [...]. In spite of my avoidance of contacts, I came involuntarily on various little manifestations of the sham and corruption that prevailed in the official world».

²³ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book One, 1868-1909*, cit., p. 282.

English academic people are no longer very congenial to me. Without being so common or aggressive as the American sort, they are less amiable and generally less admirable. Their minds are dry, narrow, and set: their ways are graceless and punctilious. I should live among them quite as much alone as I live in Boston, or as I live here. In fact, it makes very little difference to me, emotionally, where I am, if food, weather, and independence allow me to retire into my own thoughts. Books are a sufficient stimulus, without people, and nice people a sufficient pleasure, without talk of books [...]. My requirements in the way of clothes, food, bags, hats, gloves, and yellow raincoats will grow less with the years, and at Avila I have a whole house of my own where I can live for nothing. The solution is clear. While my mother lives I shall remain at Harvard; afterwards, I will simply retire from teaching altogether, and if I am still hale and vigorous enough, go about enjoying the right places at the right reasons, composing my *Dialogues in Limbo*, and having my «home» to return to at Avila, which is a place I like, and habitable at all seasons²⁴.

During the next five years, from 1907-1911, Santayana was in Paris for four of them. The exception was 1909. On 3 August 1910 he could write to Strong from Ávila that «I am looking forward with pleasure to being again in Paris, and enjoying the luxury of your apartment»²⁵. Anyone who has stood before the apartment building of 9, Avenue de l'Observatoire in Paris knows that it is a *privileged* place, not only for Paris, but comparably, to anywhere in the world, as an apartment providing an exquisite existence in a large city. From inside the apartment, «nothing but sky and a wall of trees visible from the windows»²⁶, as Santayana described it. Exiting the front door, within a minute one is in the Jardin du Luxembourg, and the surrounding trees and privacy embody a measured steadiness and concord. Yet even an arrangement like this was not enough to win him over to make his permanent residence in Paris in the long haul. On 22 August 1911, anticipating his final departure from the US, in the *forever* sense of leaving (a final good-bye, a departure that allows for no return) writing to Strong from California that he might want to move all his books – again to Paris. But he held out the possibility also of soon making either Ávila or Madrid his legal residence:

If I feel I can establish myself permanently with my friend Mercedes, I can unpack and arrange my books in my rooms at her house, and make that my legal residence. If I don't like Madrid, my books and useless baggage can remain at my sister's in Avila, until I have decided where I shall live. Possibly – wouldn't this be amusing? – I might take an apartment of my own in Paris, and it might very well be a large one – a sort of studio in some remote place – where if you liked you might deposit your books, and come and stay when you passed through Paris, if you were living ordinarily somewhere else²⁷.

This last quote was written five months before Santayana boarded the *Olympic* on 24 January and sailed from Boston to Plymouth (England) never to return to the US. It gives evidence as to a certain uncertainty, both of his concrete plans and his tendencies. Things were undecided, especially as to where he was going to live once he severed, emotionally and physically, his ties with the United States. This was helped along with the death of his mother, Josefina Borrás y Carbonell, on 5 January in Boston, about which he received a telegram in England, notifying him of her death. What remained in the US for him to go back to?

²⁴ D. Pinkas (ed.), *Recently Discovered Letters of George Santayana*, cit., pp. 198-199.

²⁵ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book Two, 1910-1920*, ed. W.G. Holzberger, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2002, p. 18.

²⁶ G. Santayana, *Persons and Places*, cit., p. 377.

²⁷ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book Two, 1910-1920*, cit., p. 48.

3. From 1912 to 1936, the latter being the last year Santayana was in Paris, twenty-five years elapsed. Santayana was in Paris in fourteen (1912, 1913, 1914, 1919, 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1936) of these years for various periods of time. For example, in 1919 he resided in Paris from July to the end of November, for five months. The Paris Peace Conference²⁸, or anything concerning the restoration of a non-warring state of affairs in the world, was never mentioned in his correspondence of 1919-1920 – but he was able to express on 9 October 1920 to Westenholz that as «to politics and the aftermath of the war, I entirely agree with you that the trouble has not been due to selfishness (which is not a bad thing, if long-sighted) but to moral materialism, to an absurd esteem for the size, number, elaboration and momentum of our possessions and affairs [...] its best side was its human and humane, its Dickensian side; but all its boasts of electricity and pomps of democracy were cheap and distressing; and mankind can easily do better»²⁹.

One month earlier, it was «concerts in the Tuileries gardens, to which I have been going almost every evening on my way back from dinner, end today, and I expect to get back earlier in future and to do a little pleasant reading before going to bed»³⁰. Eleven days later on 18 September he wrote to his friend and poet Robert Bridges, back in Oxford: «Your letters make me a little homesick for Oxford, although I am having a very nice time (in my own way) here among all my books and papers, and under the stimulous (*sic*) of such delightful scenes as meet one wherever one goes in this place – more normal, more Roman and human, than what is man-made at Oxford, – because the fields and trees and skies, and that mesh of little streams, are another matter»³¹. Even Paris made him think of Rome and a *classical* pace of life, after nearly five years of historically imposed confinement in Oxford and England, and allowed him to *sense* himself a good European, and even, as Giuseppe Patella has written, to help him eventually chose to live out a *Mediterranean aesthetics*, «a good part of his existence on the shores of that sea, in the midst of many lands, of that *Mare Nostrum*, cradle of an old civilization, and where he was to die in the city of which it was a symbol»³².

In 1921 Santayana spent seven months in Paris, and in 1922 roughly six months. In 1924, a year without being in Paris, we find him writing from Rome on 16 January: «Here in Rome, for instance, the world is pleasing; it seems always to have cared for things worth having; it is congenitally beautiful, born to enjoy itself humanly [...] I walk about, knowing no one and speaking to nobody, and I feel that everybody understands me»³³. And even though he wrote once again to Robert Graves in August that 9, Avenue de l'Observatoire was still, along with his sister's home in Ávila, «his other permanent address»³⁴, it was

²⁸ Margaret MacMillan, in her authoritative *Paris 1919*, writes: «For six months in 1919, Paris was the capital of the world. The Peace Conference was the world's most important business, the peacemakers its most powerful people. They met day after day. They argued, debated, quarreled and made it up again. They created new countries and new organizations [...]. Officially, the Peace Conference lasted into 1920, but those first six months are the ones that count, when the key decisions were taken and the crucial chains of events set in moment. The world has never seen anything quite like it and never will again». (M. MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*, New York, Random House, 2001, p. xxv).

²⁹ D. Pinkas, ed., *Recently Discovered Letters of George Santayana*, cit., p. 292.

³⁰ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book Two, 1910-1920*, cit., p. 362.

³¹ Ivi, p. 364.

³² G. Patella, *Belleza, Arte y Vida: La estética mediterránea de George Santayana*, Valencia, PUV, 2010, p. 31, translation mine.

³³ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book Three, 1921-1927*, ed. by W.G. Holzberger, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2002, p. 179.

³⁴ Ivi, p. 212.

becoming clearer that Rome was luring Santayana away from anywhere further north (Paris, Oxford), and most definitely from across the Atlantic. By 1925 it seems that the final emotional decision was made by Santayana in February when he wrote to his nephew George Sturgis that life in Rome proceeds «so agreeably that I am seriously inclined to make some permanent arrangement by which I should have a little establishment of my own in this hotel or some other like it»³⁵, while in the same letter mentioning that trips to Paris were becoming more challenging with the years, i.e., the back and forth between Paris and Rome. Things were made easier for Santayana when in 1928 Strong sold the 9, Avenue de l'Observatoire Paris apartment, despite Santayana's persistent avoidance of calling it for what it was.

Another happening that forced Santayana's leave-taking of Paris once and for all took place on his very last visit ever to *la Ville Lumière*, in 1936. Santayana was seventy-two years of age. On 3 May 1936 the *Front populaire* (Popular Front), a composite coalition of leftist political parties won the general election, and constant strikes and work sit-ins plagued Paris and greater France. Santayana arrived in Paris in early June and had witnessed the shift to Socialist policies and novel economic and social implementations. By 12 August he was comfortably ensconced at the stately, elegant Victoria Hotel in Glion sur Montreux, Switzerland, half of a kilometer from the waters of Lake Geneva, after «having decided to leave Paris for various little reasons and also on account of a certain political strain that made one feel insecure. Here, on neutral ground, I hope to be safe from revolutions, strikes, brandished fists, hammers and sickles, and being tapped on the head by a youth on a bicycle (not very hard) because I had on a Panama hat, which I suppose marked me for a capitalist»³⁶. Santayana was never ever in Paris again.

4. As a contemporary Spanish writer, Antonio Muñoz Molina, writing about another city (Córdoba) in particular, but also in a general sense, has written: «We begin to know a city when we live it as a habit, not out of tediousness, but of out passion»³⁷. (Muñoz Molina, 2006, 16, translation mine). The essential drawback with Paris for Santayana, as I understand it, was that it never seized him as a *passion*, intellectual *or* emotional, but often was the embodiment of that very tediousness that Muñoz Molina mentions. Paris, from the initial encounters that Santayana as a young man, had maintained an element of the scuttle and scurry in the social tensions of human life, from the necessity of securing transportation to move in the city on time (1883), to having to deal with the French university system's bureaucracy (1905-06), to mention just two. Moreover, there were other factors, more philosophical and cultural, which also influenced the dynamic of Santayana and Paris. Rome, on the contrary, began as an indiscriminate fondness and continued on in that manner up till 1924, when he realized how complete and whole he sensed himself when he was there, and amidst which, he was entirely at home.

In the chapter «Old Age in Italy», in the third volume of *Persons and Places, My Host the World*³⁸, Santayana tells us:

³⁵ Ivi, p. 236.

³⁶ G. Santayana, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book Five, 1933-1936*, ed. by W.G. Holzberger, Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2003, p. 363.

³⁷ A. Muñoz Molina, *Córdoba de los omeyas*, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 2006, p. 16, translation mine.

³⁸ This third volume was published for the first time in 1953, in the year following Santayana's death. But the manuscript had been completed by June 1945, at which time he was eighty-one. Santayana wanted the title of the third

My nominal headquarters, as well as my books, remained for some time at Strong's in the Avenue de l'Observatoire, and my passport was periodically renewed by the Spanish Consulate in Paris [...]. There was evidently no finality, no sense of home, in such a *pied-à-terre*. Nor was Paris a place where, even if I had been younger and richer, I should have cared to live. It did very well for an occasional season of cosmopolitan pleasures, but even its intellectual and artistic movements, though they greatly attracted and rewarded attention, were episodes, fashions, and extravagances with which no one would wish to be identified [...]. I have never had a French friend. In the most charming of them I felt something false, as if an evil spell bound them to some secret and sinister cause, and they were feigning all their amiability for an ulterior reason. They could never be disinterested, never detached. They had in their hearts a sort of covert intensity and stubborn nearsightedness that I could not endure³⁹.

Is Santayana being fair, and even more to the point, *honest*? That is a question that demands more time than I can dedicate here, but suffice it to say that all other things being equal, Santayana spent many years of his life in Paris and enjoyed it, benefited from it, and at least legally, it was the *place* where he lived. Yet Paris, as he writes above, was never *home*. Rome was, even from 1904 when he claimed it himself in a letter. And after 1928, it became his physical, emotional, and intellectual grounding of this life on earth. One beautiful, historical city had been replaced by another, more ancient beautiful city. Paris, the European center of science and the avant-garde and *modern* revolution, with all its electricity and light, gave way to the ancient, more spiritual, more *urbs ruri*, where once the secular Roman Empire tolerated in many periods all religions and sects, and Rome was, despite its Catholic *dogma* and intolerance, blended into some kind of convivial whole, where «the City exists in her citizens, wandering as strangers through the world of time [...]. The City is a spiritual goal, to be attained in eternity, but also an ideal to be striven after day by day»⁴⁰. As Ramón J. Sender has written, «Santayana liked Catholicism for its pagan background»⁴¹. And in that Rome, let us be clear, Santayana was not a *citizen*, but a stranger, a stranger in that ancient sense of a *foreigner*, without property, unmarried, childless, and at liberty to the extent that he broke no laws. And it is here, in this city, which he never left after 1941, that he died on 26 September 1952, 1105 kilometers from Paris.

volume of *Persons and Places* to be *Seeking Places for a Chosen Life*, but John Hall Wheelock at Scribner's insisted on *My Host the World*. This betrays the fact that Santayana's choices as to where he lived, were deliberate.

³⁹ G. Santayana, *Persons and Places*, cit., pp. 525-526.

⁴⁰ L. Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Roman Thought: From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth*, London, Hollis & Carter, 1970, p. 276.

⁴¹ J. Ramón Sender, *Unamuno, Valle Inclán, Baroja y Santayana*, México, Ediciones de Andrea, 1955, p. 150, translation mine.