

its and collusion with a union that, once headed by John L. Lewis, has been taken over by thieves and assassins.

The book is a mine of relevant information about the industry, but its real value is to those interested in forcing a halt to these practices. For decades people have either organized against the encroachment of the corporations and fought them through the courts and the political process or with guns and dynamite without making very much headway. The prevailing ideology is still predominantly in the hands of the corporate élites, despite a massive effort of revolutionaries and reformers to promote the cause of justice, reason and democracy. But division has a way of overcoming community, while the war between the Luddites and purveyors of "industrial revolution" is still with us. Only now not only people are fighting for their lives: the land is fighting for its life as well. The handwriting is on the wall and the mountain people are responding with sabotage even though the companies own the police, the courts, the legislature and the President. They have learned the lesson of good laws with no one willing to enforce them, showpieces for an administration that wants to cover all its bases while it steals your home. But it is the companies that have declared the war.

Caudill still believes that the mining companies should be regulated properly. But for that to happen, as he himself demonstrates elsewhere in his book, would require a change of consciousness profound and lasting and a determination on the part of those in power to effect systemic change, neither of which is at this time in the offing.

My Land Is Dying is not a hopeful book. It does not detail ways in which the interest of the public and the earth can come to prevail, though it certainly points to last-resort approaches to the solution before the entire country is despoiled. The U.S. has created another Carthage out of Vietnam. Now the corporations are doing the same thing to America.

Poems of George Santayana selected by Robert Hutchinson

(Dover Publications; 182 pp.; \$2.00 [paper])

Andrew Bongiorno

"My friends advised me to stop writing such old-fashioned stuff," George Santayana confessed to Bruno Lind the year before his death; and he immediately added, "Oh, yes, the verse was a mistake." Earlier in the conversation he had regretted ever having written *A Hermit of Carmel* and having included too many of his old pieces in the "collected poems," referring, no doubt, to the 1923 volume of *Poems*, a selection (except for "Minuet") from *Sonnets and Other Verses* (1896) and *A Hermit of Carmel and Other Poems* (1901). Yet in the same conversation he informed Lind that Daniel Cory had in his possession a collection of "last poems" with instructions to see them published under the title of *Posthumous Poems*. (They appeared in 1953 as *The Poet's Testament: Poems and Two Plays*. The earliest piece in this collection may be "Good Friday Hymn" dated 1888, and the latest the undated title poem, surely one of Santayana's finest. The two plays are *The Marriage of Venus*, written in 1896 and rewritten in 1946, and *Philosophers at Court*, written in the years 1897-1901.)

Despite misgivings, then, Santayana would not let his published poetry remain out of print nor the unpublished remain unknown, and in fact he continued to versify and to translate well into his later years. The last of his poetic efforts, left unfinished and never published, was a translation of Lorenzo de' Medici's *Ambra*, "a sort of pastoral elegy" which he undertook to transform into "a real tragedy." The chances are, then, that he would have been pleased rather than displeased by this Dover paperback, a reprint of the complete sonnet sequence which first made his name as poet and containing, in addition to a selection from all the poetry hitherto published in

book form, "a group of early poems and dramatic interludes first published in the *Harvard Monthly* between 1895-1903 but never included in later volumes of Santayana's verses."

The volume may find some readers among the students of *Realms of Being* and many among those who know Santayana best from *The Last Puritan* and the autobiographies. But its most enthusiastic readers will come from among those who have long known and prized the *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, the *Soliloquies in England*, and other writings that are philosophical without being technical philosophy. For these are philosophical poems (even the "Athletic Ode" is penetrated by philosophy), and they make their strongest appeal to such as would share the poet's feeling for and understanding of the world. But for their philosophical substance they might have lost their readers long before this.

Santayana's friends have proved to be sound critics; technically his poems are indeed old-fashioned—perhaps *dated* would be the better word. Some were written during the poet's undergraduate years, many before the year of Tennyson's death, and almost all of them before the start of the modern movement (to which, in any case, he would have paid no heed. "For heaven's sake, dear Cory," he cried in 1937, "do stop Ezra Pound from sending me his book. Tell him that I have no sense for true poetry, admire (and wretchedly imitate) only the putrid Petrarch and the miserable Milton..."). The sonnet, the quatrain, the couplet, and other traditional forms serve most of his metrical needs; the diction and the idiom are indeed Petrarchan and are never, as Yeats would have them, "as natural as

spoken words." (The natural spoken word he avoided even in his prose. "Remember to say 'purchase' and not 'buy,'" he wrote to Daniel Cory, "'attend' and not 'go to'; it takes away from the commonness of things, and makes even the calls of nature seem moral and genteel.")

The ideas, to be sure, are regularly transmuted into things, but the things seldom shine before the mind's eye in all the splendor of their natural being. Sonnet XXV paints the vivid image, "As gossips whisper of a trinket's worth / Spied by the death-bed's flickering candle-gloom," but the image in the preceding lines is the typically pallid, "As in the midst of battle there is room / For thoughts of love, and in foul sin for mirth." And though the rhythms in this sonnet and elsewhere are pleasing, they never surprise the ear with music never heard before.

Yet in his half-apologetic preface to the 1923 volume—half-apologetic because he frankly acknowledges there his deficiencies as a poet—Santayana makes what can only be accepted as a just case for his poems: that for all their shortcomings they constitute "a confession of an actual spiritual experience," and that those curious to know his philosophy will find it there "in the making" and "with its most authentic personal note." The personal note is indeed there; the philosophy was not excogitated in a disembodied intellect but gestated in a youth whose whole being had opened itself to the realities embodied in the poems. To go to these philosophical poems is to make the acquaintance of their philosopher-poet. It is to know the naturalist ("The soul is not on earth an alien thing . . . / It is a parcel of the sacred air") the materialist ("The perfect body is itself the soul"); the atheist who reserves his ultimate love for a material and impersonal being ("Love but the formless and eternal Whole . . ."); the naturalist, materialist and atheist who feels no vocation for Lucretian denunciations of superstition, but contemplates with sympathy and even a certain piety the religions that men have constructed to shield themselves from

intolerable realities ("To me the faiths of old are daily bread . . . / And my deep heart still meaneth what they said"); the non-Christian poet who will compose a "Good Friday Hymn" and make frequent use of Catholic imagery; the transplanted Spaniard; the spiritual exile from all countries and all contemporary cultures; the solitary whose finest poetry vindicates John Stuart Mill's dictum that poetry, unlike eloquence, is not heard but overheard, that it is essentially soliloquy.

It is precisely Santayana's passion for solitude and his consequent isolation that make him a unique figure in the intellectual history of his time. His poems—and therefore his philosophy—were conceived, as he informs us in the 1923 preface, in isolation; for though in his Cambridge days he enjoyed the society of Harvard men and Cambridge and Beacon Hill ladies, he remained spiritually an alien, and socially, as Horace Kallen, a former student, attests, "basically an outsider." When he left Harvard at the age of forty-nine he severed the only tie that had ever bound him to an institution, and in his remaining forty years he never forged another. "My exile made me free," he was to write in "The Poet's Testament," "From world to world, from all worlds carried me." His exile, as the autobiographical volumes make clear, began for him in his childhood; departure from Harvard did not mark the beginning of his peculiar kind of freedom, it only increased it, for it cut him loose from the "academic crowd," and more specifically from the philosophers in the academy, whom he had never found congenial.

Cory wrote of him that in his later years "he rarely subscribed to any periodical devoted exclusively to the trade," and Santayana himself told Bruno Lind that he never attended philosophical meetings ("Even here in Rome I don't go. . . . I sent a paper [to one of them] but I didn't want to"). He professed indifference to the critical reception of his books, and is reported to have habitually thrown into the wastepaper basket all reviews of them sent to him by his publishers; and Cory said of him

that "he liked to have other people understand his doctrine if possible," yet "was never especially anxious to convince them of its truth." But his isolation was not simply professional. "I can't be an American," he once told Herbert Schneider, "and I can't be a Spaniard. . . . So the best I can do . . . is to go down as an Englishman." An Englishman he never became, but he was a lifelong Anglophile, and the only political designation he ever assumed was the English one of Tory. But his national and political, like his religious (and specifically Catholic) attachments, originated and endured only in his imagination.

Of religions he held all through life that they can be "better or worse, never true or false," that they were "imaginative substitutes for science." There are no religious truths, only religious fictions or poems; the body of what Christians call Christian truth he could only call the "Christian Epic," though he never denounced the Christian or any other epic as a fiction but interpreted all of them "as subtle creations of hope, tenderness, and ignorance," and even valued them as "vistas for the imagination." Religions provided him with objects for an unbelieving piety; he contemplated, studied, enjoyed them as imaginative constructs, taking little or no interest in those for whom they were truly "daily bread." "I am resigned to being a mind," he wrote in his maturity, and to be truly a mind (and an imagination) he felt obliged to deny his social nature. He enjoyed the society of friends and even of strangers, but he could also write, "My friends haven't turned up yet this year—not that I mind that. . . ." Detachment "from things and persons" he found not only endurable but was grateful; he also found it necessary, for it was "simply what the ancients called philosophy." The Chinese philosopher he most admired was Lao-Tse; "he was a real philosopher," he told Lind, "that is, a hermit. . . ." And a hermit is what H. L. Matthews of the *New York Times* found in Rome in June, 1944. "I live in the eternal," Santayana said to him. "So," Herbert relates, "I had to

tell him about Italy, Fascism, Russia and the war, in which he seemed only mildly interested." There was more concern for human things in the hermit quoted by Helen Waddell in *Desert Fathers*: "Tell me, I pray thee, how fares the human race: if new roofs have risen in the ancient cities: whose empire is it that now sways the world?"

But Santayana was not piloted toward isolation by philosophy alone. He was a solitary before he submitted to its authority, and he was made one, as the autobiographies attest, by the peculiar domestic and social circumstances in which he matured and no less—it must not be ignored—by a native fastidiousness (akin to that of a Walter Pater, a Henry James, or a Henry Adams) which shrank from the touch of common things and which he was enabled to indulge by a legacy that purchased him a retreat that he could rightly describe as a "little garden of Epicurus." Yet, however varied the factors that gave its peculiar character to his life, Santayana came to regard his isolation as the only asceticism that could discipline his mind and heart for the pursuit and the acceptance of the truth. And this total detachment "from things and persons" had, in his view, to be complemented by detachment from the self, by the stern denial of the elemental human need for assurance that the Whole within which man must live is not hostile or even indifferent to his aspirations. To indulge this need is to repeat the sin, first committed by Socrates, of projecting "the economy of the human mind into the universe," of making nature "hold the mirror up to man." It is to shrink from the truth that "the spirit . . . altogether, at every instant and in every particular . . . is in the hands of some alien and inscrutable power" only to invent gods of the kind which men normally fashion "in their own image, to be servants of their interests."

To avoid this madness—a "normal madness"—the philosopher must abstain, as Spinoza abstained, "from all easy faith"; "ultimate religion" (the subject, and the title, of a lecture

Santayana read at the Spinoza House in Amsterdam on the third centenary of his birth) is the prize only of those who follow the moral example of Spinoza, who "by overwhelming all human weaknesses, even when they seemed kindly or noble, and by honoring power and truth, even if they should slay him . . . entered the sanctuary of an unruffled superhuman wisdom. . . ." The only wisdom worth attaining, then, is *superhuman* wisdom, and it is reserved for the heroic Spinoza and his intellectual

and moral disciples; the mass of men are doomed to live by fables of their own invention, to enjoy only such intellectual and moral satisfactions as their delusions can supply. To be wise one must first rise above the human state. Santayana has said that his poetry was inspired by an "actual spiritual experience." Could that experience have been the experience of *hubris*? And were the "faiths of old" really his "daily bread," or only the objects of his aristocratic condescension?

French Colonialism in Tropical Africa, 1900-1945

by Suret-Canale

(Pica Press; 521 pp.; \$17.50)

Eboué

by Brian Weinstein

(Oxford University Press; 350 pp.; \$8.95)

Isebill V. Gruhn

Enlightened re-examinations of European colonialism in Africa ought to be taken seriously, especially since the literature abounds with silly, self-serving, ideological tracts which either defend or condemn policies and their consequences. In 1972 neither the exploited nor their exploiters are aided by superficial or selective commentaries on the evils of colonialism. It hardly seems necessary to affirm that whatever the motives of and benefits to the colonizers, merely condemning the past has limited utility. Seeking to understand the past and its impact on the present and future is an urgent task which demands the best minds regardless of racial or national origin.

In America in particular, self-confident social scientists forged ahead in the 1950's and '60's with academic scalpels and chisels to dissect the history, politics, economics and other social processes of African

states and peoples. Armed with generous financial support, Parsonian analysts and Behavioral analysts, among others, approached and carried out their work with an unabashed and strong disposition toward American and European democratic political forms. Americans found it quite natural, whether they were academics or technical aid officials, to approach the so-called "Dark Continent" with the national predisposition toward hard work, pragmatic programs, a little money and much optimism, offering these as tools for the quick transformation of African states into coherent political units with respectable economic growth rates. Africans and Americans tended to share the euphoric belief that much of the colonial inheritance could be ignored by a continent reborn through political independence. The naiveté of these assumptions is all too visible in 1972.