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SELECTED CRITICAL WRITINGS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA

VOLUME I

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George Santayana

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SELECTED CRITICAL WRITINGS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA

Volume I

EDITED BY

NORMAN HENFREY

Assistant Professor of English
Laval University

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Historic remains and restorations might well be used as one uses historic knowledge, to serve some living interest and equip the mind for the undertakings of the hour. An artist may visit a museum but only a pedant can live there. Ideas that have long been used may be used still, if they remain ideas and have not been congealed into memories. Incorporated into a design that calls for them, traditional designs cease to be incongruous, as words that still have a felt meaning may be old without being obsolete. All depends on men subserving an actual ideal and having so firm and genuine an appreciation of the past as to distinguish at once what is still serviceable in it from what is already ghostly and dead.

GEORGE SANTAYANA, *Reason in Art*, 1905

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PREFACE

I have sought to bring together as much as possible of Santayana's best work in literary criticism, moral philosophy, and social and cultural history; to this end, most of the writings drawn upon fall between his thirty-second and fifty-seventh years, when he was at the height of his powers. A notable omission is *Three Philosophical Poets*; it is his best-known work and is in paperback; other criticism has accordingly been preferred, though his general position in that book is set out in the excerpts that have been taken from his Introduction and Conclusion to it.

Essays, and selections from books, are given whole wherever possible, but some curtailment was necessary if the choice was not to be unduly restricted; Santayana was a discursive writer. Where elisions have been made it is on the grounds that the material omitted is not vital, or that it has to do with a subject adequately treated elsewhere in the Selection. In some cases, to avoid breaking up the flow of an argument, I have conflated into one paragraph parts of two which were originally removed from each other by some pages. In three places passages from different chapters of a book have been incorporated into the one excerpt so as to represent Santayana's position satisfactorily: in volume I, the initial excerpt from *The Sense of Beauty* is an amalgam of a section from the first part of that book and three sections from the third, and I supply the title; in volume II, 'The Protestant Heritage' is rounded out with extracts from two later chapters in *Egotism in German Philosophy*, and 'The Belief in a Future Life' with an extract from the ensuing chapter in *Reason in Religion*. Four essays have been cut: 'The Elements and Function of Poetry' and 'Penitent Art' (volume I); 'The Intellectual Temper of the Age' and 'The Philosophy of Mr Bertrand Russell' (volume II).

Santayana made three collections of his essays: *Interpreta-*

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tions of Poetry and Religion, 1900; *Winds of Doctrine, Studies in Contemporary Opinion*, 1913; *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies*, 1922.

Justus Buchler and Benjamin Schwartz brought out a further collection, with Santayana's approval: *Obiter Scripta*; Lectures, Essays and Reviews, 1936.

The essays in this Selection are drawn from the following sources:

VOLUME I

Platonic Love in Some Italian Poets: written for the Contemporary Club and read at the meeting of 5 February 1896, under the title 'Platonism in the Italian Poets'. Printed by Paul's Press, Buffalo, 1896, 31 pp. Reprinted with modifications in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900.

The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare: *New World*, December 1896, v, pp. 681–91. Reprinted in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900.

The Elements and Function of Poetry: *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900.

The Poetry of Barbarism: *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900.

Emerson: *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, 1900.

Hamlet: in *The University Press Edition of Shakespeare's Works*, Cambridge, U.S.A., 1908, xxx, pp. ix–xxxiii, under the title 'Introduction to *Hamlet*'. Reprinted with slight modifications in *Life and Letters*, June 1928, I, pp. 17–38, and in *Obiter Scripta*, 1936.

Shelley: or the Poetic Value of Revolutionary Principles: *Winds of Doctrine*, 1913.

Hints of Egotism in Goethe: *New Republic*, 2 January 1915, I, pp. 15–16, under the title 'Goethe and German Egotism'. Reprinted in *Egotism in German Philosophy*, 1916.

Dickens: *Dial*, November 1921, LXXI, pp. 537–49. Reprinted in *Soliloquies in England*, 1922.

A Contrast with Spanish Drama: *Athenaeum*, 11 February

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1921, pp. 146–7. Reprinted in *Soliloquies in England*, 1922.

Tragic Philosophy: *Scrutiny*, March 1936, IV, pp. 365–76.

What is Aesthetics?: *Philosophical Review*, May 1904, VIII, pp. 320–7. Reprinted in *Obiter Scripta*, 1936.

Penitent Art: *Dial*, July 1922, LXXIII, pp. 25–31. Reprinted in *Obiter Scripta*, 1936.

VOLUME II

The Intellectual Temper of the Age: *Winds of Doctrine*, 1913.

Classic Liberty: *New Republic*, 21 August 1915, IV, pp. 65–6. Reprinted in *Soliloquies in England*, 1922.

Liberalism and Culture: *New Republic*, 4 September 1915, IV, pp. 123–5. Reprinted in *Soliloquies in England*, 1922.

The Human Scale: *New Republic*, 29 January 1916, V, pp. 326–8. Reprinted in *Soliloquies in England*, 1922.

The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy: *University of California Chronicle*, October 1911, XIII, pp. 357–80. Reprinted in *Winds of Doctrine*, 1913.

Plotinus and the Nature of Evil: *Journal of Philosophy*, 23 October 1913, X, pp. 589–99, under the title 'Dr Fuller, Plotinus, and the Nature of Evil'. (Review of B. A. G. Fuller, *The Problem of Evil in Plotinus*.) Reprinted with modifications in *Obiter Scripta*, 1936.

The Philosophy of M. Henri Bergson: *Winds of Doctrine*, 1913.

The Philosophy of Mr Bertrand Russell: *Journal of Philosophy*, 3 February 1911, VIII, pp. 57–63; 2 March 1911, VIII, pp. 113–24; 3 August 1911, VIII, pp. 421–32; under the title 'Russell's *Philosophical Essays*'. Reprinted with modifications in *Winds of Doctrine*, 1913: 'Hypostatic Ethics', reprinted in the present Selection, is the fourth and concluding section of the essay.

Where Santayana made or approved modifications in an essay before republication, this later version has been used. Modifications in a title have been similarly retained.

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The Selected Portraits in the first volume come from the following books: the portrait of William James is from *Character and Opinion in the United States*, 1920, and the others are from Santayana's autobiography, *Persons and Places*: the first two from *Background of my Life*, 1944; the next four from *The Middle Span*, 1945; and the two last from *My Host the World*, 1953. The three volumes of the autobiography were written between 1940 and 1944, though Santayana's account of his father and mother may have been drafted as early as 1924: see Santayana's letter to George Sturgis of 29 July 1924 (*The Letters of George Santayana*, ed. Daniel Cory (1955), p. 216).

The selections from *Reason in Common Sense*, *Reason in Society*, *Reason in Religion* and *Reason in Art* are drawn from the first, second, third and fourth volumes of Santayana's five-volume work, *The Life of Reason* (1905–6).

Santayana's footnotes are indicated by asterisks; mine by numerals. In the table of contents and in the Introduction, book-titles are in italics to distinguish them from the essays.

Unless otherwise stated, references to essays by Santayana are to the present Selection.

I should like to express my indebtedness to Dr F. R. Leavis, whose incisive discussions of Santayana's essay on Dickens introduced me to his work. I should also like to thank Dr John Newton for his generous aid in setting this edition on foot, and Mr Daniel Cory, Mr Richard Gooder, Mr Pierre Lefranc and Mr Geoffrey Strickland for help they have given me.

Quebec, Canada N. H.

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