

Via S. Stefano Rotondo, 6  
Rome. July 8, 1952

Dear Miss Calvert<sup>1</sup>

The reported saying which is the subject of your letter was a joke which I think Prof. Ed[man]<sup>2</sup> understood, although first framed for the benefit of these sister, with whom I have now been living for ten years, and who understand me. But you seem never to have read anything of mine (as the Sisters of course haven't) except in the newspapers (which they have wisely avoided. I have written a whole book, recently reissued by Scribner, with the original British pages reproduced exactly or well imitated in the three Dialogues that are added, although written long ago, at about the same time as the others.<sup>3</sup> I think it my best book; if you should care to look into it, don't begin with the first Dialogue (which is also a joke) but turn to the one entitled "Normal Madness" which is easy reading and not a joke at all. If you take it seriously, I think all your surprise at my other real or supposed jokes will have vanished.

Your sincerely  
G. SANTAYANA

#### NOTAS

<sup>1</sup> Janeth Calver Aldrich (1924-2007), en ese momento profesora en Sacramento, California, trasladada, como se puede apreciar en el sobrescrito del sobre, a Berkeley.

<sup>2</sup> En la autorizada opinión de Charles Padrón el apellido de difícil lectura sería Edman. La intención, no obstante, de Santayana parece ser la de tachar ese apellido, como si la memoria le hubiera jugado una mala pasada. Es posible que Santayana quisiera escribir Edmund, que correspondería a Edmund Wil-

son (1895-1972), crítico literario y colaborador en ese momento de la revista *The New Yorker* —en su número del 8 de enero de 1944, por cierto, había publicado una pequeña reseña del tomo I de *Persons and Places*. Es posible entonces que la broma a la que alude Santayana sea un comentario, de un humor algo negro seguramente a oídos de la joven profesora Aldrich, que Edmund Wilson incluyó en su artículo sobre su visita a Santayana publicado en *The New Yorker*, en su número del 6 de abril de 1946 («Santayana at the Convent of the Blue Nuns», pp. 59-67): «He believed that the war has prolonged his life by forcing him to come to the convent. Before that, he had growing fat, and his friends had been rather disapproving of what they considered his too comfortable life, which they felt was doing damage to his spiritual side—they thought his condition was becoming «quite vicious». But now the diet had made him thinner. He had little to eat but the vegetables that were raised by the nuns in their garden—with, usually, an egg for dinner. Even the colds he had used to have had disappeared since he has been eating less. And if it hadn't been for the war, he would certainly have travelled and worn himself out sooner—«Not that it matters now», he added. He had had something like a stroke the winter before. He had used to walk all over Rome, but he had to be careful now» (p. 62). Limbo agradece a Martin C. Coleman el acceso al artículo de Edmund Wilson.

<sup>3</sup> Santayana se refiere naturalmente a *Dialogues in Limbo* (1925), libro ampliado en 1948 con «The Libertine», «The Hidden Soul» y «The Vortex of Dialectic». Cf. *Diálogos en el limbo. Con tres nuevos diálogos*, trad. de Carmen García Trevijano, y Daniel Moreno para las adiciones de 1948, Los Esenciales de la Filosofía, Tecnos, Madrid, 2014.