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Santayana's «Literary Ethology», *Animal Pragmatism*, and the Moral Status of Animals

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ABSTRACT

Starting from Cora Diamond's critique of currently dominant approaches to animal ethics, this article discusses pragmatist and Santayanian alternatives, or supplements, to these approaches. The primordial role of sympathy and imagination, legitimized by Darwinian «continuism», is the main point of affinity between Peirce's, James' and Santayana's attitudes towards non-human animals. On this topic, Dewey constitutes a perplexing exception. The last section dwells on Santayana's «literary ethology», the art of imagining how animals feel and think. The practice of this art might reinforce the sense that there is something truly tragic about our dealings with the animal world.

Key words: animal ethics, pragmatism, Santayana, Darwinian continuism, literary psychology.

RESUMEN

Tomando como punto de partida la crítica de Cora Diamond a los enfoques actuales sobre ética animal, este artículo discute las aportaciones, alternativas o complementarias, del pragmatismo y de Santayana a dichos enfoques. El papel primordial de la empatía y de la imaginación, legitimado por el «continuismo» darwiniano, es el principal punto de afinidad entre las actitudes de Peirce, James y Santayana hacia los animales

no-humanos. A este respecto, Dewey representa una desconcertante excepción. La última sección versa sobre la «etología literaria» de Santayana: el arte de imaginar cómo sienten y piensan los animales. La práctica de este arte podría reforzar la idea de que existe algo verdaderamente trágico en nuestro trato con el mundo animal.

Palabras clave: ética animal, pragmatismo, Santayana, continuismo darwiniano, psicología literaria.

«The suasion of sanity is physical: if you cut your animal traces, you run mad». [Santayana (1923), p. 283]

I

For several decades now, thinking about the moral status of animals and «animal rights», has been dominated by the two largely convergent, yet opposed, approaches of Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Strictly speaking, Peter Singer doesn't attribute rights to non-human animals [Singer (1990)]. He argues that *sentience*, more specifically the capacity for suffering and enjoyment, is a necessary and sufficient reason for saying that a being has interests. Singer upholds utilitarianism's axiom that in seeking to maximize the satisfaction of interests, we must grant equal consideration to the interests of all sentient beings. Only «speciesist» bias, analogous to prejudices people may have in regard to members of other races¹, makes us blind to the fact that we constantly and massively satisfy relatively secondary human interests by sacrificing the primary interests of animals - «at an absolute minimum, an interest in not suffering» [Singer (1990) p. 8]. Talk of animal rights better matches Tom Regan's non-consequentialist, deontological approach, which is based on the idea that some animals, being «subjects of a life», have intrinsic ethical value and thus the right to be treated as ends in themselves and not simply as means to our own ends [Regan (1983)]. The criterion of being a subject of a life specifies a set of psycholog-

ical capacities (for example, the capacities to desire, remember, act intentionally, and feel emotions) as jointly sufficient for such values [Reagan (2001), p.17].

While divided on central issues of ethical theory, Singer and Reagan share a theoretical starting point and a practical conclusion. The common starting point is the commitment to a reason-based outlook that seeks to provide a rational, argumentative, framework for debates on the moral status of animals. That Singer's and Reagan's arguments tend to dismiss the role of emotions and to base our obligations towards animals on purely rational grounds seems to be, in the first place, a tactical choice to steer clear of the accusation of sentimentalism that animal activists often incur. The shared practical conclusion is that we must stop killing animals for food and must drastically reduce experimenting on animals (this conclusion is upheld more flexibly in Singer's utilitarian approach, which tries to *weigh* conflicting interests, than in Reagan's Kant-inspired one, which dictates that the rights of «subjects of a life» must be respected *regardless* of consequences).

We may bring out the fundamental point of agreement of the two main modern positions on the moral status of animals by remarking that they both rely on what Phillip McReynolds calls *the extension model of moral standing*. This model assumes that there is some essential trait that a being must have in order to have moral standing and then tries to identify the distinctively moral trait. The model starts from the following schema: «trait T is the essential trait for moral standing. If being B possesses T (in sufficient amounts or degrees), B has moral standing. If being B lacks T, B lacks moral standing» [McReynolds (2004), pp. 63-64]. What could possibly be wrong with such a model and schema? Are there any alternatives to extension model arguments for the moral considerability of nonhuman animals?

In several challenging papers, Cora Diamond responds to arguments that fall under the extension model by questioning the «desire for a “because”» that they share [Diamond (2008), p. 71]. It is

not that Diamond denies an important role to “because” arguments in moral thinking. She is rather suggesting that «we look with serious puzzlement at attempts to establish moral community, or to show it to be absent, through attention to “marks and features”» [Diamond (2008), p. 86]. Diamond finds «obtuse» and «shallow» argumentative discourse that appeals to the “marks and features” of beings to explain what differences in treatment are justified, [Diamond (1995), p. 322]. The obtuseness and shallowness come from trying to show something to be «morally wrong» in cases where this expression not only somehow rings hollow but occurs, as Diamond says, «in the wrong dimension»: «it is not “morally wrong” to eat our pets; people who ate their pets would not have pets in the same sense of that term» [Diamond (1995), p. 323]. Similarly, having duties to human beings or (at least certain) animals is not a consequence of the «marks and features» of humanity and/or certain animal species but is one of the things that determine what sort of concept «human being» is. For Diamond, reasoning from traits and capacities to justification of the way we treat human and nonhuman animals, undermines the foundation of our moral responses; it does so by intellectualizing troubling and wounding aspects of our relations to our fellow-creatures. Unwittingly perhaps, the abstract appeal to a principle of action such as the equal considerability of the interests of all sentient beings distorts and diminishes our awareness of what it is to be a living animal, exposed «to the bodily sense of vulnerability to death, sheer animal vulnerability, the vulnerability we share with [other animals]» [Diamond (2008), p. 74]. The emphasis on traits, interests and rights in the extension model of moral standing constitutes, according to Diamond, a *deflection*² of the philosopher’s understanding, «from the appreciation, or attempt at appreciation, of a difficulty of reality³ to a philosophical or moral problem apparently in the vicinity» [Diamond (2008), p. 57]. In pondering philosophical arguments linking the capacities of animals to their putative rights, we are thinking in the apparent vicinity of truly tor-

menting thoughts that are actually kept at a safe distance, circumventing pity and thwarting the painful exercise of imagination and sympathy. According to Diamond, such arguments tend to *deflect* the «awful and unshakeable callousness and unrelentingness with which we most often confront the nonhuman world» [Diamond (1995), p. 334].

II

An alternative, or supplement, to the extension model may be sought in the pages of *Animal Pragmatism: rethinking human-non-human relationships*, a volume of essays published in 2004, «at the intersection of pragmatist philosophy and animal welfare» [McKenna & Light (2004)]. Most of the essays suggest that there could be something like a specifically pragmatist stance on the question of the moral standing of animals. Historically, the founders of American pragmatism, Peirce, Chauncey Wright and James, were among the first to realize that, in Dewey's words, «the "Origin of Species" introduced a mode of thinking that in the end was bound to transform the logic of knowledge, and hence the treatment of morals, politics and religion» [Dewey (1910), p. 2]. One of the significant effects of Darwinian ideas upon philosophy is that they establish a strong presumption in favor of a «continuist» position regarding human and nonhuman organisms. Having «conquered the phenomena of life for the principle of transition» [Dewey (1910), p. 8], these ideas inevitably extend to the realm of the mind: reason and knowledge are conceptualized as instruments evolved from animal cunning. Common ancestry and gradualism argue in favor of the continuity of the characteristics, mental and non-mental, of humans and nonhumans. Ethics also falls within the scope of an evolutionary outlook: «The naturalization of knowledge and the naturalization of value are of one piece: both must be situated in the life cycle of animals making their way in a difficult, sometimes hostile, environment» [Lachs (2003), p. 160].

Extracting a unified and distinctive «pragmatic stance» on animal welfare from the essays in *Animal Pragmatism* would be an exceedingly difficult, and perhaps futile, task that I will not attempt here. However, two significant and well-known differences between pragmatism and utilitarian and Kantian approaches deserve mention at this point: first, pragmatism maintains that any moral theory that disregards consequences (as Kantian ethics does) or that focuses exclusively on them (as utilitarianism tends to) is bound to ignore the actual relation that connects intentions and consequences in experience; secondly, pragmatism emphasizes the triggering, structuring and decisive role of the emotions and the imagination in the moral life. Thus, from a pragmatic perspective, reinforced by the line of influence that proceeds from Emerson and Thoreau, it is only to be expected that our relatedness to nonhuman animals should elicit a broadly sympathetic attitude towards them. And such is indeed the case for Peirce and James, even though neither thinker explicitly explores pragmatism's consequences for the moral status of animals.

Although Peirce's semeiotic theory makes provision for interspecies communication, his intellectual conviction that there are no obstacles in principle to *semeiosis* between humans and other animals, is sustained by personal experience and «instinctive confidence»:

I know very well that my dog's musical feelings are quite similar to mine though they agitate him more than they do me. He has the same emotions of affection as I, though they are far more moving in his case. You would never persuade me that my horse and I do not sympathize, or that the canary bird that takes such delight in joking with me does not feel with me and I with him; and this instinctive confidence of mine that it is so, is to my mind evidence that it really is so [Peirce (1961) vol.1, p.314].

The sentimental, musical and humorous bond that Peirce reports between himself and his dog, horse and canary, may sound like the

wildest sort of anthropomorphizing. He apparently also believes that his dog can partake with him in what Wittgenstein would have called a «primitive language game»:

I speak to the dog. I mention the book. I do these things together. The dog fetches the book. He does it as a consequence of what I did. That is not the whole story. I not only simultaneously spoke to the dog and mentioned the book to the dog; that is, I caused him to think of the book and to bring it. [...] The dog's relation to the book was more prominently dualistic; yet the whole significance and intention of his fetching it was to obey me [Peirce (1961) vol.2, p.86].⁴

Passages such as these suggest the particular slant that a Peircean philosophy might take regarding our interactions with other animals. William James's occasional thoughts on animals point in the same general direction. James concludes the chapter on «The Stream of Thought» in *Principles of Psychology* by noting the perspectival nature of every creature's world: «Other minds, other worlds from the same monotonous and inexpressive chaos! My world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who abstract them. How different must be the worlds in the consciousness of ant, cuttle-fish, or crab!». [James (1977), p. 74]. In the essay titled «On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings», James criticizes the «blindness with which we are all afflicted in regard to the feelings of creatures and people different from ourselves» [James (1977), p. 629]:

We are practical beings, each of us with limited functions and duties to perform. Each is bound to feel intensely the importance of his own duties and the significance of the situations that call these forth. [...]. Hence the stupidity and injustice of our opinions, so far as they deal with the significance of alien lives [...].

Take our dogs and ourselves, connected as we are by a tie more intimate than most ties in this world; and yet, outside of that tie of friend-

ly fondness, how insensible, each of us, to all that makes life significant for the other! —we to the rapture of bones under hedges, or smells of trees and lamp-posts, they to the delights of literature and art. As you sit reading the most moving romance you ever fell upon, what sort of judge is your fox-terrier of your behavior? With all his good will toward you, the nature of your conduct is absolutely excluded from his comprehension. To sit there like a senseless statue when you might be taking him to walk and throwing sticks to him to catch! What queer disease is this that comes over you every day, of holding things and staring at them like that for hours together, paralyzed of motion and vacant of all conscious life? [James (1977), pp. 629-630]

Although «On a Certain Blindness» does not tackle further the subject of our duties to animals, the conclusions of the essay could clearly be relevant to this question. An awareness of our blindness, says James, «absolutely forbids us to be forward in pronouncing on the meaninglessness of forms of existence other than our own; and it commands us to tolerate, respect, and indulge those whom we see harmlessly interested and happy in their own ways, however unintelligible these may be to us. Hands off: neither the whole of truth nor the whole of good is revealed to any single observer» [James (1977), p. 645].

The above-quoted passages suggest the drift of a Peircean or Jamesean animal ethics, based on the full-blown realization that humans are animals and that commonalities between human and non-human animals should be taken as a given. How about Dewey? As Steven Fesmire observes, «the phrase [“Deweyan animal ethics”] appears oxymoronic, given Dewey’s characterization of animals» [Fesmire, (2004), p.48]. Indeed, considering Dewey’s anti-cartesian stance in general, his philosophical treatment of animal mentality remains surprisingly Cartesian. According to the «ground-map of the province of criticism» drawn in *Experience and Nature*, only humans inhabit the «plane» or «plateau» where actual thought, communication and emotion occur.⁵ At the «lower» «Animal

Plane», there is no thought (for language/speech is a prerequisite for thought⁶), no communication (only cause-effect relationships with no awareness of meanings⁷) and no emotion (just «brute feelings», for animals lack the imaginative perception of past and future requisite for emotional experience, so that what we take for pain, grief or loving attachment are just reflex responses). Considering all that ethology and primatology have taught us about animal minds during the last thirty years, «it is difficult to distinguish Dewey's view from a philosophical orthodoxy that may be empirically as obsolete as Ptolemaic Astronomy or Aristotelian biology, insofar as his is a Darwinian landscape with Cartesian blotches on the horizon» [Fesmire (2004), pp. 48-49]⁸.

«The Ethics of Animal Experimentation» is Dewey's best known incursion into animal welfare issues, a piece written in 1926 in which he callously opposes attempts to strengthen regulations dealing with animal experimentation and dismisses offhand the very idea that there could be something problematic about experiments using animals under «current» (i.e. 1926) anti-cruelty laws: the «moral suffering» of humans has no counterpart in «the life of animals whose joys and sufferings remain upon a physical plane». [...]. No one who has faced this issue can be in doubt as to where the moral wrong and right lie» [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 2, pp. 99-100]. Dewey comes to question the real motives of animal advocates: «Agitation for new laws is not so much intended to prevent specific instances of cruelty to animals as to subject scientific inquiry to hampering restrictions» [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 2, p. 101]. Thus, the point at issue boils down, fallaciously, to a choice between pro-science and anti-science stands: «In principle it involves the revival of the animosity to discovery and to the application to life of the fruits of discovery which, upon the whole, has been the chief foe of human progress. It behooves every thoughtful individual to be constantly on the alert against every revival of this spirit, in whatever guise it presents itself» [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 2, p. 101].

However one addresses the complex issue of Santayana's relation to pragmatism⁹, there is no doubt that on the topics under discussion, Santayana is much closer to Peirce and James than to Dewey's «uncritical perpetuation of prejudices» [Fesmire (2004), p. 49]. As we know, Santayana sums up his criticism of Dewey's metaphysics with the phrase «the dominance of the foreground». In the present context, I would suggest, «dominance of the foreground» should be read as implying «neglect or forgetfulness of our animal background». Santayana's typecasting of Dewey as a «half-hearted naturalist» seems in any case particularly apt with regard to his view of animals¹⁰.

III

A fully naturalistic and evolutionary view of human beings is to be found at the heart of Santayana's philosophy. He is thus committed to a strongly «continuist» position, as he repeatedly claims: «I believe profoundly in the animality of mind» [Santayana (1940), p. 601]. «The seat and starting-point of every mental survey is a brief animal life» [Santayana (1906), p. 146]. «That all this life of expression grows up in animals living in the material world is the deliverance of reason itself, in our lucid moments» [Santayana (1922), p. 251].

Santayana is equally committed to a full-blooded realism about animal mental states emerging amidst a common world of mid-sized objects: «Nothing is more natural or more congruous with all the analogies of experience than that animals should think and feel» [Santayana (1905), p. 205]. «I for one (though other philosophers are less fortunate) can perceive clearly that when animals react upon things in certain ways these things appear to them in certain forms; and the fact that they appear does not seem to me (so simple am I) to militate against their substantial existence» [Santayana (1923), p. 211].

At this point, it is well worth noting that Santayana's category of spirit is not the prerogative of the inhabitants of some «hu-

man plateau»: «The spirit that actually breathes in man is an animal spirit, transitive like the material endeavors which it expresses; it has a material station and accidental point of view, and a fevered preference for an alternative issue over another» [Santayana (1923), p. 125]. «Incarnation is no anomaly, and the spirit is no intruder. It is as much at home in any animal as in any heaven» [Santayana (1923), p. 278]. Furthermore, «the organs of spirit are structures; they are mechanisms instituted in nature to keep doing certain things, roughly appropriate to the environment, itself roughly constant» [Santayana (1923) p. 282].

For Santayana, mental traits and capacities sometimes uniquely ascribed to human beings, derive from the transitory and precarious character of animal life: «[Spirit] thirsts for news; and this curiosity [...] it borrows of course from the insecurity and instinctive anxiety of the animal whose spirit it is» [Santayana (1923), p. 125]. Attention itself is fundamentally animal: «When he watches, an animal thinks that what he watches is watching him with the same intensity and variability of attention which he is exerting; for attention is fundamentally an animal uneasiness» [Santayana (1923), p.113]. Also, «the whole life of imagination and knowledge comes from within, from the restlessness, eagerness, curiosity, and terror of the animal bent on hunting, feeding and breeding» [Santayana (1923) p. 185].

Although Santayana doesn't devote any extended texts to non-human animals or our duties to them, his corpus is dotted with notations that add up to a «literary ethology» of sorts, sometimes humorous and ironic, sometimes drafted in darker tones. There is one longer passage in «Hypostatic Ethics», however, that outlines quite explicitly Santayana's thoughts on the goods embodied in animal lives, on the duties that recognition of these goods entails, and on the role of imagination and sympathy in that recognition:

If two goods are somehow rightly pronounced to be equally good, no circumstance can render one better than the other. And if the locus in which the good is to arise is somehow pronounced to be indifferent, it

will certainly be indifferent whether that good arises in me or in you. But how shall these two pronouncements be made? In practice, values cannot be compared save as represented or enacted in the private imagination of somebody: for we could not conceive that an alien good *was* a good (as Mr. Russell cannot conceive that the life of an ecstatic oyster is a good) unless we could sympathise with it in some way in our own persons; and on the warmth which we felt in so representing the alien good would hang our conviction that it was truly valuable, and had worth in comparison with our own good. The voice of reason, bidding us prefer the greater good, no matter who is to enjoy it, is also nothing but the force of sympathy, bringing a remote existence before us vividly *sub specie boni*. Capacity for such sympathy measures the capacity to recognise duty and therefore, in a moral sense, to have it. Doubtless it is conceivable that all wills should become co-operative, and that nature should be ruled magically by an exact and universal sympathy; but this situation must be actually attained in part, before it can be conceived or judged to be an authoritative ideal. The tigers cannot regard it as such, for it would suppress the tragic good called ferocity, which makes, in their eyes, the chief glory of the universe. Therefore the inertia of nature, the ferocity of beasts, the optimism of mystics, and the selfishness of men and nations must all be accepted as conditions for the peculiar goods, essentially incommensurable, which they can generate severally. It is misplaced vehemence to call them intrinsically detestable, because they do not (as they cannot) generate or recognise the goods we prize [Santayana (1913), pp. 149-150].

In a memorable passage from *Reason in Science*, Santayana evokes the «positive emotions of materialism», namely, delight in the complexity of the natural world, sympathy for living creatures and laughter as a defense against the conceits of human egotism:

But a thorough materialist, one born of the faith and not half plunged into it by an unexpected christening in cold water, will be like the superb Democritus, a laughing philosopher. His delight in a mechanism

that can fall into so many marvellous and beautiful shapes, and can generate so many exciting passions, should be of the same intellectual quality as that which the visitor feels in a museum of natural history, where he views the myriad butterflies in their cases, the flamingoes and shell-fish, the mammoths and gorillas. Doubtless there were pangs in that incalculable life, but they were soon over; and how splendid meantime was the pageant, how infinitely interesting the universal interplay, and how foolish and inevitable those absolute little passions [...].

To the genuine sufferings of living creatures the ethics that accompanies materialism has never been insensible; on the contrary, like other merciful systems, it has trembled too much at pain and tended to withdraw ascetically, lest the will should be defeated. Contempt for mortal sorrows is reserved for those who drive with hosannas the Juggernaut car of absolute optimism. But against evils born of pure vanity and self-deception, against the verbiage by which man persuades himself that he is the goal and acme of the universe, laughter is the proper defence. Laughter also has this subtle advantage, that it needs not remain without an overtone of sympathy and brotherly understanding [Santayana (1906), pp. 90-91].

Perhaps my previous statement about the absence of extended texts on nonhuman animals in Santayana's works is not quite correct. For not only is *Scepticism and Animal Faith* one of the very few important philosophical books carrying the word «animal» in the title (Aristotle's biological treatises *History of Animals*, *Generation of Animals and Parts of Animals* and Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* come to mind) but the word occurs constantly, both as noun and adjective, in the main text (81 substantival occurrences and 176 adjectival, of which «animal faith» 53 times, and «animal life» 33 times, to be precise). It stands to reason that the passages on animal faith and its «tenets», in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* or in *The Realms of Being*, must be understood as covering both human and nonhuman animals. For example, centering on the belief

in substance: «I am talking of what I believe in my active moments, as a living animal, when I am really believing something» [Santayana (1923), p. 305]; «Animal watchfulness carries the category of substance with it» [Santayana (1923), p. 190]; «Belief in substance [...] is the most irrational, animal, and primitive of beliefs: it is the voice of hunger» [Santayana (1923), p. 191]. «The hungry dog *must* believe that the bone before him is a substance, not an essence; and when he is snapping at it or gnawing it, that belief rises into conviction, and he would be a very dishonest dog if, at that moment, he denied it» [Santayana (1923), p. 233].

The scope of literary psychology, defined as «the art of imagining how animals feel and think» [Santayana (1923), p. 252], obviously also encompasses both humans and nonhumans. Although it is a poetic interpretation of natural things and events, «it has the dignity of virtual truth, because there are really intuitions in men and animals, varying with their fortunes, often grander and sweeter than any that could occur to me» [Santayana (1923), p. 259]. Santayana's practice of literary psychology (or ethology) is quite free and intuitive, asserting many common spatial, temporal and moral categories in human and animal experience: «Far more primitive [than the categories of colour, sound, touch, and smell] in animal experience are such dichotomies as good and bad, near and far, coming and going, fast and slow, just now and very soon» [Santayana (1923), p. 189]. «The notion that there is and can be but one time, and that half of it is always intrinsically past and the other half always intrinsically future, belongs to the normal pathology of an animal mind» [Santayana (1942), p. 253].

Nevertheless, Santayana is well aware of the dangers of unconstrained anthropomorphizing :

If only the animals had a language, or some other fixed symbols to develop in thought, I should be inclined to believe them the greatest of dialecticians and the greatest of poets. But as they seem not to speak, and there is no ground for supposing that they rehearse their feelings

reflectively in discourse, I will suppose them to be very empty-headed when they are not very busy; but I may be doing them an injustice [Santayana (1923), p. 263].

Thus, however committed to the *reality* of true animal beliefs, his approach to the question of the attribution of content to these beliefs remains prudent:

Certainly truth is there, if the thing pursued is such as the animal presumes it to be; and in searching for it in the right quarter and finding it, he enacts a true belief and a true perception, even if he does not realise them spiritually. What he realises spiritually, I suppose, is the pressure of the situation in which he finds himself, and the changes in his object; but that his belief from moment to moment was right or wrong he probably never notices [Santayana (1923), p. 264].

Clearly, literary psychology is no scientific endeavor («In these matters, the alternative to imagination is not science but sophistry» [Santayana (1906), p. 129]; «This subject is not open to science, but only to discernment and imagination» [Santayana (1942), p. 592]), but its non-scientific character doesn't diminish its moral import:

All we need do, therefore, in order to discover the distribution of spirit it is to study life, to rehearse its movements as sympathetically as possible, putting ourselves in every creature's place, and seeing if spirit in us is thereby really enlarged, or whether we are merely attributing our trite humanity to nature in moral fables. [...] Moral affinity must be felt morally [Santayana (1942), p. 592].

In a more fanciful vein, a whole bestiary can be assembled from remarks and short essays scattered throughout Santayana's writing. There are philosophical beasts in this compendium, starting with the mystical protoplasm, whose happiness consists in «primeval peace [and] seminal slumber» [Santayana (1922), p. 122]. Certain

forms of life may incline towards solipsism of the present moment: «it may be the [normal and invincible attitude] of many animals. [...] a creature whose whole existence was passed under a hard shell, or was spent in a free flight, might find nothing paradoxical or acrobatic in solipsism» [Santayana (1923), p. 17]. Others have unmistakable pre-socratic affinities: «The gnat may begin with a sense of flux, like Heraclitus, and only diffidently and sceptically ask himself *what* it is that is rushing by; and the barnacle may begin, like Parmenides, with a sense of the unshakable foundations of being» [Santayana (1922), p. 29]. Young animals tend towards absolutism and dogmatism: «Every young animal thinks himself absolute, and that dogmatism in the thinker is only the speculative side of greed and courage in the brute» [Santayana (1905), p. 192]. And some animals in Zoos exhibit an almost Sartrean *sentiment d'étrangeté*: «A visit to the Zoo may convince anybody that [inner conflict and strain imposed by a complex biological organization] is no prerogative of man, much less a miraculous inroad of spirit into nature. All these odd animals are seen straining under the burden of their oddity. Many of them are already almost extinct; many others were extinct long ago» [Santayana (1942), p. 614]¹¹. In addition to the aforementioned animals, the skylark symbolizes spirit in its free state [Santayana (1922), pp. 107-113] and the stork has «pragmatically valid views about space» [Santayana (1942), p. 250], etc.

Where do the preceding remarks and quotations leave us in regard to the interrogations about the moral status of animals from which we started? Santayana's thoughts clearly show affinities with the (barely adumbrated) emotivist Peircean/Jamesian alternative to the Singer-Reagan type theories that follow the extension model of moral standing. In a chapter of *Dominations and Powers* where the concept of slavery is applied indiscriminately to animals and persons, Santayana remarks that «it is difficult to establish, from the animal's point of view, the balance of benefit and injury, degradation and sleekness, involved in his servitude. The cattle in our fields and barns do not seem to suffer, or to resent their captivity;

and the eventual hard labour and slaughter that awaits them may be regarded as no worse than the wounds, famines, battles and lingering death that might have overtaken them in the wild state» [Santayana (1951), p. 74]. What would have been his attitude to the current situation, where «fields and barns» have given way to the handling of «meat» in factory farms? Is there any evidence that he would have been sympathetic to contemporary animal welfare movements? Hardly, considering Santayana's occasional outbursts of frankly chilling callousness.¹² Still, a strongly continuist stance such as Peirce's, James' or Santayana's cannot but reinforce the feeling that there is something truly tragic about the way we use animals, who are creatures with valid goods, to fulfill our needs and desires. The importance of holding on, at the very least, to this sense of a tragic conflict of interests in our dealings with the nonhuman world is the very point conveyed by the Talmudic story with which I wish to end this paper:

Rabbi Judah was sitting at a café in a small town when a wagon came by carrying a calf to the slaughterhouse. The calf cried out to Rabbi Judah for mercy, but the rabbi replied: «Go, for this you were created.» For his callousness, God punished Rabbi Judah with a painful illness lasting seventeen years. Then one day, seeing his housekeeper about to sweep a weasel from the house, Rabbi Judah told the woman to treat the animal gently, and his illness ended [Lovenheim (2002), p. 236].

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NOTES

¹ «Racists violate the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of their own race when there is a clash between their interests and the interests of those of another race. Sexists violate the principle

of equality by favoring the interests of their own sex. Similarly, specieists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species. The pattern is identical in each case.» [Singer (1990), p. 9]

² See [Diamond (2008), pp. 56-60] for an elaboration of this concept.

³ What Diamond calls «the difficulty of reality» is something like the «the experience of the mind not being able to encompass something which it encounters» [Diamond (2008), p. 44].

⁴ See [Hearne (2007)], especially chapters 3 and 4, for a defense of the idea that the commands the trainer issues and the dog obeys («Sit!», «Fetch!») constitute a dog-human language-game within a broader context of a shared canine-human form of life.

⁵ See [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 1, p. 308].

⁶ See [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 1, p. 198].

⁷ See [Dewey (1981-1990), *LW* 1, p. 198].

⁸ For an ethologically informed critique of the behavioristic view of nonhuman animals as passive reflex devices, see [Griffin (2000)].

⁹ See [Lachs (2003)] and [Levinson (1992)].

¹⁰ See [Santayana (1936), p. 225]. For an examination of Santayana's «foreground-privileging» criticism of Dewey, see [Dilworth (2003)] and [Flamm (2009)].

¹¹ Santayana adds the following arresting description and diagnostic of the particular kind of nightmarish oddity from which the human animal suffers: «Perhaps the oddity of man- that interest of his in things not edible which issues in art and intelligence- may also prove fatal; and if so far, on the whole, the experiment has proved physically useful, it has been at the price of terrible inner conflicts, reaching war and organized tyranny in the race and madness in the individual. In no other creature, probably, is the natural soul so much distracted. In no other has the margin of life encroached so much upon the text; no clean clear margin, such as we may suppose sleep and the placid stretches of contented idleness to be for other animals, but a margin crowded with comments and contradictions and caricatures and cross-references, demanding that we attend to everything at once and live not bravely forward, as other animals do, but continually looking backward, or far ahead, or suspiciously, greedily, impertinently, and frivolously in every direction» [Santayana (1942), pp. 614-615].

¹² One example among many: in a letter to Bertrand Russell from December 1917, he writes: «As for deaths and loss of capital, I don't much care. The young men killed would grow older if they lived, and then they would be good for nothing; and after being good for nothing for a number of years they would die of catarrh or a bad kidney or the halter of old age - and would that be less horrible?» [Santayana (2002), p. 303]

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