

Overheard in Seville

*Bulletin of the
Santayana
Society*

No. 33
Fall 2015



Bulletin of the George Santayana Society

No. 33 FALL 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Announcement of 2015 Annual Meeting, *page 2*
- Note from the President, *page 3*
- Recent Books, *page 84*
- Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works, *page 86*
- *Overheard in Seville* Submission Guidelines, *page 87*
- *Overheard in Seville* Publication Information, *page 88*

Edward W. Lovely	5	Considering Santayana's Anti-Modernism—Two Tales of Conflict
William Gahan	16	Santayana, Shakespeare, and Dramatizing Doubt in <i>Hamlet</i>
Griffin Trotter	32	Is Healthcare Hazardous to Life? An American Transcendentalist Perspective
Michael Brodrick	45	Healthcare for Unique Individuals: What We Can Learn from Santayana
Katarzyna Krempleska	56	The Authorship of Life: Narrative and Dramatic Strategies of Sustaining Self-Integrity in Santayana with Reference to Paul Ricoeur
Aili Bresnahan	68	Review of <i>Art and Morality: Essays in the Spirit of George Santayana</i>
Martin Coleman	72	Review of <i>Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life</i>
Luis Manuel Valdés Villanueva	76	Manuel Garrido Jiménez (1925–2015)
Tim Madigan	78	Irving Singer (1925–2015)
Kristine W. Frost	80	Bibliographical Checklist: Thirty-first Update

Overheard in Seville, which appears annually, is formatted and composed for typesetting by the Santayana Edition and is published by Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis. The Santayana Edition is on the web at <http://santayana.iupui.edu>. The IUPUI University Library maintains a free electronic archive of the Bulletin at <http://ulib.iupui.edu/digitalscholarship/collections/Santayana>.

Copyright ©2015

The George Santayana Society

2015

ANNUAL MEETING

The Society's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the December meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division) at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, D.C.

Speakers

Jay Bregman

University of Maine

“Santayana and Neoplatonism”

Timothy Madigan

St. John Fisher College

“Literary Philosophers: Irving Singer and George Santayana”

Daniel Pinkas

Geneva University of Art and Design

“Santayana's Criticism of Bergson”

Chair

Matthew Caleb Flamm

Rockford University

5:15 P.M. – 7:15 P.M., Thursday, January 7th

George Santayana Society

News and Activities

Most of the essays included in this issue of *Overheard in Seville* (OiS) have been developed by the authors from papers presented at the George Santayana Society (GSS) meetings held at the Central APA the past two years. The first convened in Chicago, Illinois, February 2014, and the second in February, 2015 in St. Louis, Missouri. We trust that the essays included in this edition of OiS reflect the efforts we have made to keep Santayana's light burning for up-and-coming scholars and for those working in groundbreaking fields, all the while remaining appreciative of the attraction of Santayana's thinking to a wide range of scholars across a wide range of disciplines.

The GSS, as of this writing, has been invited to organize a reserved session for the annual Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP) meeting, which will be held March 3-5, 2016 in Portland, Oregon (sponsored by U. of O. and OSU but meeting in central Portland at the historic Benson Hotel). We plan to use the opportunity to link up Santayana studies with the work of neighboring scholars affiliated with the other major editions and publishing centers of classical figures such as Royce, Dewey, and James. The GSS has an ongoing arrangement with SAAP organizers to expect a session invitation every two or three years.

The speakers and session for the forthcoming Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association (APA) are established and advertised elsewhere in this edition of the OiS. The meeting will be held between January 6 and 9, 2016, in Washington D.C. The line-up at this year's APA once again testifies to the richness of interest in Santayana's thought and includes both veteran and first-time Santayana scholars.

Two important books on Santayana have recently been published. Jessica Wahman's *Narrative Naturalism: An Alternative Framework for Philosophy of Mind*, Lexington Books, 2015 is praised by reviewer John Lachs as contributing to a "great revival of Santayana's thought." The book is a study of Santayana's naturalism that insightfully demonstrates its continuing relevance to central questions in contemporary philosophy of mind. Michael Brodrick's *The Ethics of Detachment in Santayana's Philosophy*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2015, is an original analysis of the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Santayana's thinking. Brodrick defends Santayana's "ethics of detachment" against certain well-known criticisms. Similar to Wahman, Brodrick engages contemporary ethical questions in a way that opens exciting possibilities of scholarly engagement.

Finally, we are pleased to include notice here of the Angus Kerr-Lawson Prize. The announcement for this prize was released some time ago, but there is still time for interested and qualified scholars to apply. Sponsored by the GSS, and made available by a generous donation from the surviving family of cherished GSS founder and long-time scholar Angus Kerr-Lawson, the prize solicits essays on Santayana's thought from any scholar "not more than five years out of graduate school" and promises a \$300 award with an invitation to deliver the paper at the 2017

APA meeting. The deadline for solicited essays is November 30, 2015. Submissions should be electronically delivered in Word format to mflamm@rockford.edu.

Looking further ahead, we continue to formalize and fine-tune aspects of the proceedings of the GSS, and to work with the Santayana Edition to produce these issues of *OiS*. Readers of this annual bulletin are invited to send all suggestions and queries to mflamm@rockford.edu. We welcome, in particular, under-represented scholars not only to consider contributing to Santayana studies but also to help the GSS move Santayana studies in a direction amenable to newer trends in higher education, trends that reflect practices of inclusion and attentiveness to living problems and challenges.

MATTHEW CALEB FLAMM
President of the George Santayana Society

Rockford University

Considering Santayana's Anti-Modernism — Two Tales of Conflict¹

Contrast, conflict, drama excite thought and fill it with the most interesting themes, but they ruin and torment thought when they work surreptitiously at its foundations, break up its rhythms, swamp it in contradiction and oblivion, and defeat its life without extinguishing it.

George Santayana, *Realms of Being*²

In a posthumously published essay, “An Idler and His Works,” Santayana expressed a hope that parts of his philosophy would be revived in more favorable circumstances.³ Given Santayana’s prescient views on modernism and progress in American culture, today’s environment seems to me as favorable as ever for such a revival. A particular ironical contrast with today’s cultural milieu, as well as with Santayana’s own era, that somehow caught my attention in a special way, was his exclamation in his essay “Americanism,” written late in his life, that in an ironic concession to modernism and new technology, in order to assert its ancient wisdom, “the city of the Vatican installed . . . two conspicuous poles for radio-telegraphy, almost as high as the cross of St. Peter.”⁴ The modern world has, indeed, continued to develop *ad extremis* on a trajectory predicted by Santayana, and his rationale for admonition regarding material progress, in my view, should still hold our attention.

A number of authors, e.g., James Ballowe, James Seaton, John Lachs, John McCormick, and Anthony Woodward, to name only a few, have made it clear that Santayana had a critical view of the phenomenon of modernism and its materialistic concept of “progress.” We find this same critical view offered in one context or another in Santayana’s writings extending over more than fifty years in *The Life of Reason*, *The Genteel Tradition*, *Realms of Being*, *Character and Opinion in the United States*, *Winds of Doctrine*, and *Dominations and Power*.⁵ To begin, I will offer some background on Santayana’s views on material progress and then explore, through the medium of an anecdote and an allegory from Santayana’s own pen, some elements of the philosophical basis for his anti-modernistic bent.

First of all, anti-modernism and modernism can be catch-all terms, but I will focus in on some specific facets with some support from T. Jackson Lears and his

¹ This paper was presented to the Santayana Society at its annual meeting in Philadelphia, PA, on December 29, 2014.

² George Santayana, *Realms of Being* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942), 696.

³ George Santayana, “The Idler and His Works,” in *The Idler and His Works*, ed. Daniel Cory (Freeport, NY, Books for Libraries Press, 1969).

⁴ *Ibid.*, “Americanism,” 36.

⁵ In his essay “Intellectual Temper of the Age” Santayana’s attitude toward the dangers of the modern age is summarily reflected: “A chief characteristic of the situation is that moral confusion is not limited to the world at large, always the scene of profound conflicts, but that it has penetrated the mind and heart of the average individual.” George Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1957), 3.

classic book, *No Place of Grace* (1981), in which he defined anti-modernism at the forward turn of the nineteenth century as “the recoil from an ‘over-civilized’ modern existence to more intense forms of physical or spiritual existence.”⁶ There were many aspects to this response to modernism and progress: e.g., the craftsman movement, the therapeutic movement, the response of fundamentalist and evangelical Christian denominations and especially, and most officially, the response of the Roman Catholic Church: e.g., the sixty-five “errors” of modernism in the *Lamenta Sane* of Pope Pius X. In the case of contemporary evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, and more militant forms of Islam, it is a defense of traditional values against unsettling change running unchecked. It is also a large subject in relation to Santayana’s response, but I will deal especially with modernism and the tension between scientific knowledge and spiritual life, and the resultant perception of technological, commercial and material advancement as real progress. This interpretation of progress, in the most general sense, is related to Santayana’s moral philosophy regarding the threat of modernism upon the life of the imagination and freedom of the Spirit. This, in turn, can be an incursion upon freedom of spiritual life as well as upon the individual moral disposition of which spirit is “a personal and moral focus of life.”⁷ Santayana suggests that implicit in this spiritual freedom is a limited “dynamic continuity,” awareness in the flux of various essences differentiated by the Spirit into past and future, associated with familiar physical objects and in the process, he proposes, “the Spirit enjoys existing and defies extinction.”⁸ Such continuity is disadvantaged by interruptions of conflict, disharmony, distractions, impositions, and incongruence between intuition, expectations in thought, and the reality of the world. In the totality of spiritual life Santayana means “the entire conscious fruition of existence in perception, feeling and thought (and) . . . the seat and judge of all values.”⁹

T. J. Lears depicts intellectuals of the late Victorian period, particularly Boston intellectuals, seeking spiritual recourse and solace in medieval culture, in the Roman Catholic Church, in the Anglo-Catholic movement, and in Asian cultures, philosophy, and religion. Both Lears and Santayana find the culprit of the age to be the deficiency of compromised liberal Protestantism and its inability to provide the spiritual and moral balance against the surge of Positivistic philosophy and scientific progress which, in turn, this same liberal Protestantism had accommodated and even facilitated. According to Lears, liberal Protestantism of the period, increasingly bereft of spiritual meaning and solace and compromised to accommodate the rush of science and material progress, left many in the educated and intellectual classes of New England and in Western Europe in a spiritual and moral milieu of “weightlessness” that, indeed, Nietzsche had predicted would characterize the movement toward secularization.¹⁰ Lears suggests that for many there was, at the turn of the nineteenth century, a non-deliberate and half-conscious and sentimental

⁶ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), xv.

⁷ Santayana, *Realms of Being*, 550.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 621–23.

⁹ Santayana, “Americanism,” from *The Idler and His Works*, 44.

¹⁰ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 32.

seeking, driven by an urge for a stable and, especially, an authentic spiritual source of meaning. There was a sense of over-civilization and a revulsion against the scientifically generated culture of rationalization and materialistic reduction.¹¹ Even Santayana commented that in his “youthful pessimism, [he] was hardly more foolish than so many amateur medievalists and religious aesthetes of [his] generation.”¹² Both Lears, and Santayana much earlier, recognized the bipolar character of the Victorian age in the pull toward the scientific and engineering wonders and the consequent frantic culture of material progress and, at the same time, the draw of the imagination to the spiritual security of a time gone by. Santayana reflected this view in *Winds of Doctrine*:

Everywhere in the nineteenth century we find a double preoccupation with the past and with the future, a longing to know what all experience might have been hereto, and, on the other hand, to hasten to some wholly different experience to be contrived immediately with a beating heart and flying banner.¹³

There is a nexus between the population that Lears describes and Santayana himself, in that Santayana, a self-proclaimed Victorian—indeed, the “last Victorian,” “a man who was born out of season,” as he depicted himself—decried the consequences of modernism and its focus on material progress and increasing mechanistic (or “metallic”) and sterile character. This critique is offered by a self-proclaimed devoted materialist and non-theistic naturalist.¹⁴ Lears’s study, after all, concerned Bostonians of Santayana’s generation. Of significance, however, is that Santayana himself, unlike the intellectual community in the Eastern United States that Lears addressed, was not fleeing from a feeling of spiritual vacuity and lack of meaning, but rather was describing and critiquing the phenomenon and its negative consequences upon the spiritual harmony of humans. His own spiritual condition seemed safely settled in a well-considered *disillusion*. We can think of Lears as retrospectively describing the response to Modernism, and thereby providing the data to support Santayana’s observations and predictions made during the same historical period. At the same time, Lears referenced and quoted Santayana as a significant player in the anti-modernist movement. For example, Lears referred to Santayana’s opposition to the liberalization of Roman Catholic dogma, e.g., of Hell, in Santayana’s essay “The Poetry of Christian Dogma,” due to its symbolic harmony with moral truths. In such a liberalizing trend, Santayana saw only disharmony wrought by the attempted reconciliation of liberal theology to science and the culture of business and a rejection of meaningful symbols of the past.¹⁵

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹² George Santayana, “A General Confession,” from *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, Paul Arthur Schilpp, ed. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 1940), 8.

¹³ George Santayana, *Winds of Doctrine* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 8.

¹⁴ Santayana uses metaphors such as “metallic,” “the souls of machines,” and “taut wire” to characterize the Faustian desire to control substance and the thrill and excitement with the newness of a technological age. In his reference to “controlling the unimaginable souls of machines,” he innocently and presciently augurs the anthropomorphisms of the computer age. (See “Americanism” in *The Idler and His Works*, Daniel Cory ed.), 28–29.

¹⁵ Lears, 45–46. In Santayana’s essay he proposes that “the harshness of the doctrine of eternal

We recognize without question that Santayana's perspective and vision was derived singularly from the past ("a lover of antiquity"), especially from the Greeks, and indeed anti-modernism is, essentially, a harkening to the past. It also becomes evident in Santayana's writing over the years that there is, ironically, a certain hybrid "disposition" derived from a conservative Platonic Republicanism and classical liberal notions, i.e., the liberal characteristic of a declared distaste for the world of business and the "vulgar materialism" of the business culture. Santayana's critique of business and commerce, although he does recognize its potential value in society, can be severe and this is evident intermittently in his work. In *Dominations and Powers*, he proposes that "the effects of commerce and industry have been . . . unintended, profound and morally fatal," and that "under commercial domination useful arts become mechanical, and fine arts a chaos of whims and fashions."¹⁶ In the same vein, regarding advertising, he declares: "the process is like that of a lottery, catering to human weakness and popular delusions for the benefit of partial interests themselves probably hollow and deceptive."¹⁷ Referring to "mechanical art and abstract science" as forms of "Big Business," Santayana suggests in *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* that they are "instinctive undertakings, in which ambition, cooperation and rivalry keep the snowball rolling and getting bigger and bigger."¹⁸ In *Three Philosophical Poets*, Santayana expressed preference for the Middle-Ages viewpoint on seeing things as they are rather than resorting to the "cheap fictions" of Protestant adaptation to culture. In the same vein, he viewed Dante as dealing with the pitfalls of human life in a more satisfactory way than liberal Protestants did in what Lears called the "evasively banal" modern culture of the time.¹⁹

One comprehensive measure of Santayana's viewpoint on modernism can be found in his essay "Americanism," written between 1935 and 1940, where he responded at length to a paragraph by his friend and contemporary, Jacques Maritain, the neo-Thomist philosopher (who incidentally first used the term "anti-modernism" in print in 1922):

The Modern World is founded on two principles contrary to nature: that money is prolific, and that the useful is the good. This system multiplies without limits the needs and the servitude of the people; destroys all leisure for the soul; . . . imposes on man the breathless rhythm of the machine and the acceleration proper to precipitated matter; applies an inhuman measure to human action, and gives it a truly diabolical

punishment is therefore a consequence of its symbolic truth. . . . Thus the finality of our activity in this world, together with the eternity of its ideal meaning, was admirably rendered by the Christian dogma of a final judgment." George Santayana, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1969), 94–98.

¹⁶ George Santayana, *Dominations and Powers* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 263–65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁸ George Santayana, *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 19.

¹⁹ Lears, 156–57.

direction: because the end of all this delirium is to prevent man from remembering God.²⁰

Santayana suggested that this quotation from Maritain “may sound strange and archaic to most ears but for a few, may seem to be full of concentrated wisdom.”²¹ And indeed it seemed to be full of wisdom for Santayana. The meaning is clear at the outset that Maritain mourns the imposition of material progress, money and commercialism on the spiritual and religious life. The life of the soul, one could say, is “squeezed out” by the hegemony of scientific progress and its consequences in the rush of secularism and, importantly, this is judged by Maritain as a phenomenon “contrary to nature.” And America was purported to be the ultimate example of such a culture, and indeed, an infectious one then, over one hundred years ago, as one with a certain perspective could say it is now. Santayana’s response to the secular, materialistic phenomenon epitomized in America was extensive and, in general, consistently in agreement with Maritain’s position. Santayana speculates, on a conditional note, that “The contribution of experimental science and industrial invention would be useful if it were incorporated in a life of reason adequate to the whole powers of the soul: It would be fatal if it succeeded in monopolizing reason, and substituted blind work for free imagination.”²² Despite his own *disillusion* regarding religion and the supernatural, he foresaw, especially in America, that “as the ethos of Christianity fades more and more completely from the world, we may expect invention, competition, and organization in labor and in sport, to grow always more keen, and to become more and more frankly their excuse for being.”²³ His prediction seems to have been realized, likely beyond his most extreme expectations!

An Anecdote from Paestum

A striking example of Santayana’s attitude toward modernism and material progress can be found in his autobiographical *Persons and Places* in an anecdote he related about his travels in Italy around the turn of the century (1905). This anecdote has had a particular fascination for me as it reflects a Santayana uncharacteristically moved by a rather commonplace event resulting in an unreflective spontaneous reaction from deep within, a “gut” reaction. Many are likely familiar with this anecdote and Anthony Woodward has made use of it as revealing of Santayana’s views on material progress and their similarity to those conservative views at the time of literary figures Paul Valery and Robert Musil, i.e. “revulsion against the secularism that the Enlightenment had bred.”²⁴ Santayana informs us that while on his Italian travels his focus was on the moral rather than the scientific. Allow me to briefly summarize the anecdote because it is a rare incidence of Santayana,

²⁰ Santayana, “Americanism,” *An Idler and His Works*, Daniel Cory, ed., 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

²² *Ibid.*, 53.

²³ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁴ Anthony Woodward, *Living in The Eternal* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1988), 105.

emotional and angry, feeling the sting of modernism in a vulgar attack on a child's innocent illusion.

He describes an experience in the railway station in Paestum, Southern Italy, which he considered to be on the "opposite extreme on the moral scale" to the benchmark of "manly purity" he had found in the Doric ruins at Paestum. He assures us that this experience may seem a small matter, but to him it had "the most serious, the most horrible significance." In three paragraphs, Santayana vehemently describes his reaction to an overheard exchange between a man and his young daughter in which the girl's persistent inquiries regarding the railway lines ultimately aggravates the father (a cigar smoking fat man, and, as Santayana surmises, "probably a Free Mason") into an abrupt response to the little girl's questioning. "And where does this line go?" asks the little girl. "To Naples," responds her father. "And does it end there?" "No, it never ends. It goes on forever," her father responds. "Did God make it," asks the girl. "No," responds the father, "God didn't make it. It was made by the hand of man." And he puffed his cigar (observes Santayana) with a defiant resentful self-satisfaction as if he were addressing a meeting of conspirators.²⁵ From the man's response, Santayana captures his bitter inference that "God might have made the stars and the deserts and all other useless things, but everything good and progressive was the work of man." This event "shocked" Santayana, who exclaimed, "I saw the claw of Satan strike that child's soul and try to kill the idea of God in it." For Santayana, clearly a violation of an inviolate principle was involved here. His passionate reaction to the event, his outrage, his anger, was not characteristic of his normally removed position as a detached observer and describer of humanity. I will return later to this event in which Santayana extracts "the brutal expression of . . . the mood of impatience, conceit, low-minded ambition, mechanical inflation, worship of material comforts," and reflects on the mistaken notion of value in "progress" and the modern hatred of religion and the idea of God.²⁶

The uniqueness of Santayana's response at Paestum motivated me to further explore the reason for his emotion and to determine if there was a philosophical consistency in his response or whether something was sacrificed in his apparent minimally reflective outrage. However, at the same time, I had a sense that I had once come across another similar tale or anecdote in Santayana's project that revealed directly or indirectly his attitude on the domination of modernism on the freedom of the human imagination.

An Allegory

In the process of pondering this question, I came upon what I thought to be the object of my recollection. There is an interesting and meaningful parallel to the anecdote at Paestum in Santayana's satirical work *Dialogues in Limbo* (1926), written more than twenty years later. I refer to a parable or allegory in the chapter "Normal Madness."²⁷ Indeed, this was also referenced in Stephen C. Pepper's essay

²⁵ George Santayana, *Persons and Places*, William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr., ed. (Cambridge MA and London: The MIT Press, 1986), 452.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 452–53.

²⁷ George Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 51–54.

of more than seventy years ago, "Santayana's Theory of Value," with Professor Pepper suggesting, unfortunately with no analysis to follow, that the parable seemed to contain "the essence of Santayana's value system."²⁸ His efforts were rewarded by Santayana's response in his *Apologia de Mente Sua* that he, Santayana, was not aware that he *had* a value system, (rather here, moral philosophy might have been more appropriate terminology from Santayana's viewpoint) and furthermore, he barely knew what Pepper was talking about.²⁹ Professor Pepper's tortuous essay did elicit some helpful remarks in relation to "the good, the object of desire" from Santayana, to which I will return later.

You may recall that the character of the "Stranger" in *Dialogues in Limbo* is an earthly inquisitor, safely presumed, based on Santayana's admission, to be the *doppelgänger* of Santayana himself. The Stranger tells a story to Democritus and Alcibiades following a lengthy discourse by Democritus on "Normal Madness." The "Stranger" suggests that the story (which has the character of an allegory since it is moral in tone) would confirm everything that Democritus has said in his discourse about Normal Madness, i.e., the inability of humans to relate their opinions to reality.³⁰ I will summarize the tale which begins, "Once upon a time . . . the whole world was a garden in which a tender fair-haired child . . . whose name was Autologus, played and babbled alone." At night a surly old woman who was a goddess came out of a cave in the garden and pruned flowers and leaves from the indigenous shrubbery and trees. The boy sorely missed the foliage when he awoke especially because he had given names to the plants and flowers, e.g., for jasmine, Pleasure; for a rose, Beauty; and thought of these names as the souls of the plants. One day the boy was brooding on why he had given these names when a man in a black gown came into the garden. He was a botanist and suggested to the boy that "It matters little what names you give to flowers because they already have scientific names which indicate their genus and species; the rose is only a rose and is neither Beauty nor Love. . . . They are flowers and plants merely, and they have no souls." The boy begins to cry, and the botanist, annoyed, suggests to him that he can call the plants as he wishes and think that they also have souls but that in the end, the soul only does what the flower would do in any case. The boy says to the botanist "If I cannot give beautiful names to the plants and flowers which shall be really their souls, and if I cannot tell myself true tales about them, I will not play in the garden any more. You may have it all to yourself and botanize in it, but I hate you." That night, the old woman came out of her cave and decapitated the boy with her pruning knife while he was sleeping. Furthermore, the botanist, without the child in the garden, had no one to teach the right names of the flowers and no one to care for the flowers, so he ultimately shriveled up and died.³¹

"There it is," was my presumptive initial thought. Science is corrupting the flight of the child's imagination resulting in a catastrophic death of the Spirit in a

²⁸ George Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua," from *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, Paul Arthur Schilpp ed. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1940), 577.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, 46.

³¹ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, 51–54.

poetic soul in a happy harmless illusionary state. Scientific modernism strikes again just as in the anecdote from Paestum! Taken out of context, that's one seemingly uncomplicated and obvious take-away, but interpreting allegories can be tricky. For example, the allegory or parable of the talents according to Matthew in the New Testament is not conveying what seems at first to be the obvious message, that Jesus is promoting capitalism! The Stranger identifies the other characters in the Allegory, which can initially pose some puzzlement. The old lady represents the goddess, Dike, Greek goddess of justice, or who Democritus refers to in his dialogue as "Punishment," and the botanist represents Nomos, the god of the law, or who Democritus called "Agreement." The child-god Autologos represents "Illusion."

In *Dialogues in Limbo*, we know that Santayana, through the figure of the "stranger," ultimately defects from Democritus, who idealizes reality, and while retaining Democritus's scientific view on "substance and the origin of things," adheres to Socratic or Platonic views on the inner life of the Spirit, "the beautiful and the good."³² Since both the anecdote and the allegory with similar elements came from the same pen, one tale from Santayana's experience at Paestum and the other from Santayana's imaginative myth-making in *Dialogues in Limbo*, I thought I could reasonably mine them both, myth and anecdote, and compare them for a reflection of philosophical consistency in Santayana's attitude on the implications of science, modernism and progress. I then read again the chapter on "Normal Madness" and found my own preemptive interpretation of the allegory overly simplistic and off the mark. It seems that rereading *Dialogues in Limbo* to assure oneself of its meaning is a scholarly habit, e.g., at least one Santayana scholar thought such a rereading only proved his own madness!³³ Santayana's own brief interpretation of the allegory from his essay "A General Confession" is as follows:

The human mind is a faculty of dreaming awake, and its dreams [i.e., those of Autologos who is illusion] are kept relevant to its environment and to its fate only by the external control exercised over them by Punishment [the old woman], when the accompanying conduct brings ruin, or by Agreement [the botanist], when it brings prosperity. In the latter case, it is possible to establish correspondences between one part of a dream and another, or between dreams of separate minds, and so create the world of literature, or the life of reason.³⁴

There is no outrage as in Paestum here but instead an unemotional and reflective expression of a moral principle that goes beyond the Spirit to action carried out by the Psyche. Indeed, in both tales, science is bearing down on illusion and the life of the Spirit and in both tales there are aspects of ruthlessness and brutality. At Paestum, we see ruin in the child's forceful disillusionment. In the allegory we also see ruin, but not before the critical option to escape it is proffered by the botanist, who, it turns out, based on the teaching of the allegory, is not to be considered all that bad. It seems clear from Santayana's explanation of the allegory that when dreams diverge

³² Letter to Sterling Power Lamprecht, November 15, 1933, *The Letters of George Santayana, Book V*, William G. Holzberger and Herman J. Saatkamp Jr., eds. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1986), 61.

³³ Sterling P. Lamprecht, "Naturalism and Agnosticism in Santayana," from *Animal Faith and Spiritual Life*, John Lachs, ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), 161

³⁴ Santayana, "A General Confession," Schilpp, 14–15.

from a coherent relationship to reality, disaster (i.e., punishment) is impending. If a parable or allegory is said to have only one meaning then this seems to be it. For, indeed, Autologos exemplifies Normal Madness to its extreme. But Santayana gives us more detail, somewhat cryptic though it may be. Apparently some compromise or "Agreement" should be reached between illusion and science (the botanist) which will result in "prosperity." Since the illusionary Autologos won't come around to the botanist's compromise and accept a relationship between his dream and reality, ruin (death) results, not only to Autologos, but to the botanist as well who seems to be no longer in a natural commune with a full life of the Spirit. Both Autologos and the botanist fall into ruin. The botanist's ruination is particularly significant and the cause of it is less obvious in the allegory. In any case, Santayana's interpretation suggests that a mutual agreement between the botanist and Autologos would be consistent with the life of reason. The spiritual life of Autologos, living in fantasy and in the moment is recognizably remote from the life of reason. The botanist, on the other hand, is so focused on technology and the material world that his spiritual life seems minimized and his idealization of reality excessive.

Returning to the anecdote at Paestum, ruin may be impending, but has only begun to be worked through. The little girl's illusion is denigrated, disrespected and destroyed in a vulgar fashion by her modernist father. There is no agreement there and the spirit of material progress has forced out the life of the imagination (of religion). The downward spiral of spiritual life due to the domination of science and progress has begun.

Original Sins, Congenital Vices and Modernism

In *Persons and Places*, Santayana identifies that for him, there are two "original sins of the spirit" or "congenital vices." These are, in summary, 1) to mistake imagination for reality, i.e., illusion, Normal Madness or the *pathetic fallacy* and 2) to be intoxicated with reality and idealize it.³⁵ These two vices and their consequences are reflected in the allegory from *Dialogues in Limbo*, i.e., Democritus and the botanist are guilty of the latter in *Dialogues*, i.e., worship of reality, and Autologos, of the former, mistaking imagination for reality. In the anecdote in Paestum, the man and his daughter respectively reflect the same vices. But it seems to me that the culpability lies heaviest on the man and on the botanist, who have intruded upon imagination and religious feeling, and in the anecdote, this intrusion is what enrages Santayana. And it is this intrusion, this "domination," that reflects the dangers that Santayana perceives in modernism and material progress and is reflected in the above paragraph from Maritain. I believe that this parallel is implicit in the allegory, but then I may be misconstruing Santayana's symbolic interpretation. It seems, then, that consequences of this disharmony, wherein two opinions cannot be reconciled in the parable, results, as Santayana states, in ruin. However, there is a bit more to it, and we should understand what Santayana means by harmony and also consider the moral implications in the encounters he depicts.

In the earlier quoted Maritain paragraph, the factors interfering with religious piety were obviously "distractions" from a natural balance of reality and the free use of the imagination and religious feeling in human beings. We can recall that

³⁵ Santayana, *Persons and Places*, 418–21.

Santayana's chapter on "Distraction" and its dangers to the life of the Spirit was the longest chapter in the *Realm of the Spirit*. By distraction he means "the Alien force that drags the spirit away from the spontaneous exercise of its liberty, and drags it down to the rack of care, doubt, pain, hatred and vice."³⁶ And further, Santayana evokes a Satanic influence as he did from the man's treatment of the girl, conceiving of distraction as the devil, a "civilized tempter . . . rendering impossible any harmony within a man or between man and nature."³⁷ The harmony, then, to which Santayana refers in his explanation of the subject allegory, is not necessarily one only between the views of Autologos and the botanist. What is symbolized by these two figures is a need for harmony within the individual life of the Spirit and a "natural" life-enhancing harmony of the sentient agent with nature. What the botanist is proposing to Autologos is *disillusionment*, or a mitigation of Normal Madness in a bipolarity of spirit where science is the base of knowledge of the material world and illusion, still to be enjoyed, is the world of the imagination and of religion. If this internal harmony cannot be achieved I return to summarize the only positive alternative, which is contained in a more favorable and helpful aspect of Santayana's response to Professor Pepper in *Apologia Mente Sua*.

To summarize, when "a soul" is caught up in a passionate view, "if it survives, [it] will in turn condemn reflection and the desire for harmony as tyrants and enemies of 'life.'" However, these intense values are "evils" to those with other views. "To harmonize them is simply impossible; all that interest in harmony can aspire to do is to separate, to alternate, or partially sacrifice all the passions, or some of them, so that they may collide as little as possible and that each may not fanatically call evil, that which another finds good."³⁸

It is the harmony between the individual spirit and the reality of the substantial world that is most critical for the preservation of the human happiness most natural to humans. Both the myth and the anecdote examined depict the consequences of passion intruding on the life of reason. One's personal "good" may result in happiness until it encounters another's conflicting "good" in the world. However, Santayana makes clear that, "the value of harmony and rationality, in my philosophy, can therefore only be a natural and relative value. . . . We may prefer discord, if none of our passions consents to surrender anything; or we may love harmony, and prefer that our natural hopes should enter halt and blind into the kingdom of heaven rather than that they should, all but one, perish in mortal combat."³⁹ It is the pluralistic forbearance, not necessarily the adoption of other individual or group opinions that permits the full, the natural satisfaction of human life. Modernism, as Santayana sees it, disables the potential harmony between spirit and the world. This is the harmony that can potentially mitigate Santayana's "congenital vices" and result in a "natural" balance between the life of the imagination, of the essences, and of the moral life and its manifestation in the real world. The limited harmony of passionate

³⁶ Santayana, *Realms of Being*, 673.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 720.

³⁸ George Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua," Schilpp, 577.

³⁹ George Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua," Schilpp, 578.

beliefs mentioned above in Santayana's response to Pepper can only be achieved by separation, compromise, tolerance and lack of domination by either side.

In *The Genteel Tradition at Bay*, in a reflection that is analogous to the Socratic chariot allegory, Santayana summarizes what constitutes the moral life. "In the moral life, reason is the harmony of the passions, a harmony which perceptions and impulses may compose insofar as they grow sensitive to one another, and begin to move with mutual deference and a total grace."⁴⁰ This same "harmony in non-interference" was proposed by the Stranger in an earlier chapter in *Dialogues in Limbo*.⁴¹ A disruption in or distraction from these balances I believe is reflected well in the above anecdote and allegory and reflects a consistent philosophical ground for Santayana's views on modernism, science, and the life of the Spirit. At its base are balance and harmony between reality and the life of the spirit; between substance and the time to dream. It also offers a broader understanding of Santayana's position than simply the profile of the more reactive, impulsive, and unconscious anti-modernist seen by T. J. Lears. Santayana's purported anti-modernism must be seen in the context of a dynamic process of individual and societal flux with philosophically consistent parameters drawn for success and failure of individual humans as they tend toward or away from a harmony necessary for their natural spiritual perfection.

Conclusions

The event observed by Santayana at Pasteum and the mythical tale of his invention in *Dialogues* depicting the consequences due to unresolved conflict and disharmony, I interpret as an authentic reflection of his moral philosophy as well as his anti-modernistic view. We would likely agree that Santayana's views on negative aspects of modernism are obviously and especially pertinent today and hopefully we can find ways to bring his thought forward into the tumult of electronic busyness and distraction, or as he, Santayana, might say, to not allow "the World, the Flesh and the Devil" to distract us away from the natural harmony of the human spirit.

EDWARD W. LOVELY

Independent Scholar

⁴⁰ Santayana, *The Genteel Tradition at Bay*, 60.

⁴¹ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo*, 25.

Santayana, Shakespeare, and Dramatizing Doubt in *Hamlet*¹

In his early writings, George Santayana reserved his highest respect for artists whose work comprised a total cosmic network. He placed Shakespeare's art beneath that of Dante's or Homer's because, in his analysis, Shakespeare's plays do not evince a consistent theory of the cosmos, as Irving Singer notes.² By 1936 Santayana seems to have altered his assessment of Shakespeare, but it "is not clear whether the later Santayana finds Shakespeare's secularism adequate for the needs of great poetry."³ Also, he never revised his earlier writings to conform to his new views.⁴ John Major adds that although Santayana became more sympathetic to Shakespeare's contributions near the end of his life, Santayana's preference for the classical over the "barbarous" spirit of the northern countries, as he termed them, remained.⁵ In his 1900 essay, "The Poetry of Barbarism," Santayana writes that the best works achieve a "total vision"⁶ for humanity within the cosmos. He notes in "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare" that the work should provide an encompassing argument or lesson.⁷

As literature professors will attest, a majority of modern readers continue to seek such nuggets of wisdom from the texts they study.⁸ One such nugget can be seen in Laurence Olivier's 1948 Freudian treatment of *Hamlet*. A voice-over at the onset warns about the pitfalls of indecision: "This is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind."⁹ It would be inaccurate to say that Santayana sought a work that only offered prescribed lessons without subtlety. Neither did he ignore the potential for propagandistic misuse when art enacts a totalizing world picture.

¹ A briefer version of this essay was presented to the George Santayana Society during a meeting at the American Philosophical Association (Central Division) in Chicago, Illinois, February 27th, 2014.

² Irving Singer, ed., *Essays in Literary Criticism of George Santayana* by George Santayana (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), xx.

³ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, xxviii.

⁵ J.M. Major, "Santayana on Shakespeare," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 10, 1959, 479.

⁶ Santayana, *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 150. The present essay specifically draws from Santayana's observations in "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare" (1896), "The Poetry of Barbarism" (1900), "Emerson" (1900), "Hamlet" (1907), "Three Philosophical Poets" (1910), "Tragic Philosophy" (1936), and a discussion of *Hamlet* in *The Last Puritan* (1935). Unless otherwise indicated, Singer's edition is used for the essays.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁸ Throughout, I refer to interpreters of Shakespeare's plays interchangeably as readers, audience members, viewers, and playgoers, even though each activity, admittedly, provides a potentially different experience of the text.

⁹ Laurence Olivier, dir., *Hamlet*, DVD (1948; Irvington, N.Y.: Criterion Collection, 2000).

Rather, he wanted the artist, through the characters in his plays, to achieve some sort of philosophical transcendence.

Shakespeare's tragedy does not generally propose harmonious ideological totalities; rather, it explores the very ideologies and conventions used to piece stories together. The works need not construct new philosophies; instead, they often "murder and create" with the conventions and societal maxims of the day, drawing attention to the fact that this is what thinking humans will always do. The plays perform the processes themselves; viewers are challenged to become conscious of the possibilities and limitations of various ideologies, assumptions, and realities within which they live. Shakespearean comedy puts on display its own contingent construction, an order that is constantly threatened even while its tenuous creation is celebrated, and tragedy can provide a study of its destruction. In the comedy *The Merchant of Venice*, a "harmony" of sorts is conjured at the end through Neoplatonic musical metaphors whose cadences are only enjoyed by the privileged; harmonious resolutions are constructed at a cost, and this price is often impossible to forget.

The reader may have considered these points before; they are observations more focused on how a work of art might continue to challenge and fascinate—rather than on how its study might build upon knowledge within a particular intellectual discipline. Santayana expects literature to expound a philosophy, and he evaluates it accordingly. Assessments about the relative value of various works of art are contingent, and absolute agreement will always remain elusive.

Santayana notices that Shakespeare's plays, if studied well, do not provide unequivocal "lessons" or overarching views of the universe, and he saw this as a flaw. In examining some differences between Santayana and John Dewey, Richard Rubin quotes from Dewey's disagreement regarding Shakespeare: "In spite of the scope and dignity of the great historic philosophic systems, an artist may be instinctively repelled by the constraint imposed by acceptance of any system. If the important thing is 'not this or that system but some system', why not accept, with Shakespeare, the free and varied system of nature itself as that works and moves in experience in many and diverse organizations of value?"¹⁰

One way the plays do this is by conjuring meaning in the audience on a variety of levels. The very tensions and contradictions are performed, leaving the playgoers with a sense that they have not only been entertained, but challenged. Much of the lasting interest in the plays depends upon this challenge. In his essay on *Hamlet*, Santayana wants a character who gains "mastery" over himself and "over things."¹¹ Were *Hamlet* to achieve this, the play would likely lose its persistent and animating expression of doubts that lend it intrigue. Let us agree with Santayana that these doubts are formulated from vigorous vestiges of past, crude conventions, or, as he puts it, "a historical junk-shop."¹² But this tension between an active, vaunting mind in the face of societal and ideological constraints makes its hero's angst recognizable to anyone who has had difficulty finding meaningful expression and action in the

¹⁰ Richard Rubin, "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare: Dewey and Santayana on Shakespeare and Religion." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 21, Fall 2003, 9. Rubin quotes from Dewey's 1934 *Art as Experience*, 321.

¹¹ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 122.

¹² *Ibid*, 122.

world.¹³ That Shakespeare can turn old maxims and conventions into “the temple of a new spirit,” as Santayana puts it, is arguably one of the most attractive aspects of the play.¹⁴ One wonders why, as Irving Singer does, Santayana declines to admit that this, in itself, is a sufficiently worthy achievement.¹⁵

In light of Santayana’s observations, this article illustrates how some of Shakespeare’s plays test belief systems by presenting various possible ideologies that entertain and challenge; *Hamlet* is discussed next in a similar manner. Many of Santayana’s ideas serve as foils to help show in relief what stands in Hamlet’s way toward a successful philosophical pilgrimage. The dramatic presentation of these obstacles is precisely what lends lasting power to the play. The doubts in *Hamlet* evoke the tensions between differing views regarding humanity’s place in the universe, but the play does not unequivocally condone any single, unified system of belief.

Most of Shakespeare’s plays do not, however, tend to leave viewers completely confused: playgoers are often convinced they have been satisfied in piecing a whole picture together. The way the questions are put forth allows for various satisfactory interpretations, while still leaving room for doubt and future growth on the part of the thoughtful playgoer or reader. For example, some critics see the national histories as propaganda for the powerful, and others see them as intentional critiques of the dangers of propaganda and the misuse of power.

Perhaps, were some of Shakespeare’s best histories to form a hermetic, “totalizing” cosmos, they themselves might well devolve, over time, into a woven fabric of historical conventions and maxims that work together under a static, even propagandistic, picture. Such plays would lack the dynamism necessary to endure historical changes in audience’s expectations.

One way Shakespearean ambiguity nevertheless accommodates itself to diverse readers is this: characters continually appropriate ideologies opportunistically. They do this to lend new meaning to present actions, even if, as Santayana points out regarding *Hamlet*, they do not transcend inherited ideas to mint new, successful philosophies. An example of how Shakespearean characters make use of ideologies for their own desires is Henry V’s famous “Saint Crispin’s Day” speech.¹⁶ It does not merely draw on traditional war cries and ideas of honor; it also uses conventions and belief systems at hand to forge new identities and purposes for action. Here, as James Shapiro points out, an entire religious system of belief, made manifest through the liturgical calendar, is transformed through performance.¹⁷ The play secularizes the meaning of the “Holy Day” to commemorate war heroes and consecrate them into

¹³ This is not to say that one must personally identify with Hamlet’s character or with the ways he confronts his dramatically-circumscribed problems. Rather, pondering the construction of a complex character invites ideas about the ways meaning is conjured in life and in art.

¹⁴ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 122.

¹⁵ Singer, ed., *Essays in Literary Criticism*, xx.

¹⁶ William Shakespeare, “The Life of Henry V,” in *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), 4.3.18–67.

¹⁷ James Shapiro, 1599: *One Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 164–65.

official national history. Crispin and Crispianus, the two Catholic brothers the feast originally honored, remain in name only. A non-religious feast day was unheard of in the historical King Henry's day—this could only have happened in post-Reformation England.¹⁸ (Queen Elizabeth's Accession Day, according to Shapiro, "was probably the first political holiday in modern Europe.")¹⁹

Were Shakespeare's drama to consistently re-appropriate ideologies to form a new unified world view, then perhaps it would achieve a poetic transcendence pleasing to Santayana. However, what sense we make of such rhetorical appropriations of beliefs for present use varies in Shakespeare. Few would see them as achieving transcendence except for the most immediate purposes. Shakespeare's drama is often just ambiguous enough to resist absolute interpretation, but poetically and dramatically powerful enough to leave many viewers sure of what the meaning is: whether positively or negatively, some see a paean to English patriotism (Olivier's 1944 film version was used specifically to rally the British during World War II);²⁰ others see a conscious indictment of the misuse of art and propaganda by the powerful; and there are other interpretations. But the play provides a structure from which diverse meanings find a place and from which various ideologies can be evoked.

In his essay on *Hamlet*, Santayana notes that characters in Shakespeare's plays struggle with "how to act in the world."²¹ A major concern in many of the playwright's histories and tragedies centers on the degree to which a person has power to wield his or her will within given social, historical, political, and ideological constraints. Creative action entails the ability to imagine braver worlds outside the apparently taut necessities of circumstance.

Santayana wants creativity to work within a single harmonious system; in his essay on Emerson, Santayana criticizes him for conjuring new worlds as if the cosmos had not already been created. He compares Emerson to a young god who daily tries his hand at creation; when he botches things, he starts anew from the beginning, enjoying a world wherein nothing need be settled upon.²² What Santayana expects from Emerson—and from Shakespeare—is a philosophical system consistent within itself; a world in which the protagonist's actions are understood and evaluated according to a cosmic purpose.

Shakespeare's *Richard II* provides an example of how possible worlds are evoked and created. In Act 5, the now-deposed king languishes in a prison cell awaiting his fate. Now all circumstances comprising his former identity have evaporated, and he imaginatively makes new worlds. Like a pagan god, he fathoms an identity *ex nihilo* before settling upon ideas consistent with *vanitas* conventions:

I have been studying how I may compare
This prison where I live unto the world:

¹⁸ Ibid, 164.

¹⁹ Ibid, 165.

²⁰ The film was "dedicated to the Commandos and Airborne Troops of Great Britain—the spirits of whose ancestors it has humbly attempted to recapture." Andrew Gurr, ed., *King Henry V*, by William Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 52.

²¹ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 129.

²² *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 225.

And for because the world is populous
 And here is not a creature but myself,
 I cannot do it; yet I'll hammer it out.²³

This man-for-the-gallows turned Vulcan blacksmith then comments on the very contradictions inherent within thought-systems meant to lend purpose to their believers:

For no thought is contented. The better sort,
 As thoughts of things divine, are intermix'd
 With scruples and do set the word itself
 Against the word:
 As thus, 'Come, little ones,' and then again,
 'It is as hard to come as for a camel
 To thread the postern of a small needle's eye.'²⁴

 And straight am nothing: but whate'er I be,
 Nor I nor any man that but man is
 With nothing shall be pleased, till he be eased
 With being nothing²⁵

Richard muses about the meaninglessness of all human endeavors. Yet ultimately, characters usually find ways to infuse, or at least cobble together, meaning for their actions from the ideologies they have at hand. Not long after he “hammers out” an imaginary world in his prison cell, the heartbroken king-turned-poet, once stripped of everything that made up his identity, recovers a sense of purpose as a true king. He now fights like one in the face of certain death. How did he again seize upon the notion that he was a true king? How did he allow himself to doubt this earlier?

Beliefs about kingly legitimacy—whether its source derived directly from God at birth, from the will of God as expressed by the powerful, or from some other source—were very much alive in Elizabethan England. Shakespeare's play about Richard II's deposition does not settle questions of legitimacy: it performs the warring ideologies in battle, and it is ambiguous enough for various views to find support. A 2012 rendition of this play on film, included in the BBC series *The Hollow Crown*, begins with a high-to-low camera movement at the beginning, suggesting the right of kingship imagined as “top-down.”²⁶ By the end, with the usurping Bolingbroke lamenting his deed, the camera starts from very low and pans up, as if aesthetically to emphasize that legitimacy is garnered from the bottom up and subject to human ambitions. Again, the drama is strong enough to accommodate divergent interpretations.

Its ambiguity notwithstanding, *Richard II* was seen as subversive at the time of its performance. The deposition scene could not be staged during Queen Elizabeth's

²³ William Shakespeare, “The Tragedy of Richard II,” in *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), 5.5.1–5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.5.11–17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.5.38–41.

²⁶ Rupert Goold, dir., *The Hollow Crown: William Shakespeare's Richard II* DVD (U.K.: Universal, 2012).

reign, and the queen probably believed it was targeted at her.²⁷ This interpretation obviously saw the play as an attack on the divine right of kings. However, the play suggests arguments in favor of it, not least through the parallels made between the suffering kingship and Christ. The king compares his deposition to Christ's passion, which could draw attention to the ways he, as a man, is not comparable to Christ.²⁸ But the comparisons come from other characters as well, including the Bishop of Carlisle.²⁹ The play contains both arguments for and against the divine right of kings, and the "two bodies of the king" are rent asunder in the drama.³⁰

Examples of how belief systems are pitched against each other can be seen in Richard II's confrontation with Bolingbroke. The "two bodies of the king" become a liability for Richard, who must project the divinity of his office and blind his enemies from seeing his frail humanity hiding beneath his resplendent armor. When usurper Bolingbroke first approaches King Richard, he beholds the king decked in regal array, looking like "the sun."³¹ Bolingbroke's actions toward seizing the throne are not condoned at this point: they are described by his own supporters as "envious clouds" trying to overshadow the sun.³²

The testing of belief systems is also evident in Richard II's deposition scene. The king's backward recitation of his anointment as king, then seen as akin to a sanctioned sacrament not to be undone save by God, may well have been a studied means toward galvanizing supporters. To recite an anointment in reverse order to "undo" a binding, spiritual consecration could very well have conjured the idea of witchcraft in the audience.³³ Likewise, the characters in the play, shocked by this performance, would come to his aid and fight for the legitimate monarch. If this was his plan, it almost worked.³⁴

As evident in *Richard II*, the reactions of Shakespearean characters to their circumstances often fail to inspire heroic examples for emulation. In "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare," Santayana supposes that Macbeth speaks for Shakespeare himself when he laments the meaninglessness of existence in his "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" speech.³⁵ In context, Macbeth makes this observation after he perceives that all is lost for him. Along the course of the play, Macbeth had

²⁷ Queen Elizabeth I is believed to have made the following oft-quoted remark to William Lombarde in 1601: "I am Richard II. Know ye not that?" Charles Forker, ed., "Introduction" in *King Richard II* (London: Athlone Press, 2002), 5.

²⁸ For example, *Richard II*, 4.1.229–232, in which he calls his enemies "Pilates."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.1.133–35.

³⁰ As Ernst Kantorowicz famously put it, the "body politic" and the "body natural." *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1956).

³¹ *Richard II*, 3.3.62.

³² *Ibid.*, 3.3.64.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.1.197–205.

³⁴ A rebellion by Aumerle and others ensues against the new king, but York reveals his son's designs to Henry, who pardons Aumerle but executes the others. *Ibid.*, 4.3.

³⁵ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 142.

sought for meaning to inform his action by consulting with witches about the secrets of future events. As had happened with Saul in the Hebrew Scriptures, Macbeth loses his kingship for this transgression, and his murderous actions are symptoms of this moral disinheritance: according to the logic of the play, his deeds fork no lightning nor do they win his progeny a place among a legitimate line of kings, making his march in time feel meaningless. His bid does not ring true in the eyes of others, his partner in crime is crushed by her evil deeds, and although the sound and fury now signify “nothing,” he still finds verve to violently defend himself to the end; in his last words, he finds purpose for action by seeing himself as a tragic anti-hero: “Yet I will try the last. Before my body/ I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff./ And damned be him that first cries, ‘Hold, enough!’”³⁶

In his 1936 essay, “Tragic Philosophy,” Santayana, without entirely retracting his position that Shakespeare believes there is “nothing,” sympathetically relates that Macbeth reacted to his circumstances as they were given to him. He concedes that the character was not necessarily speaking for Shakespeare when he declared that the world signified nothing. Instead, the violent king expresses “sentiments that, for the moment, were suggested to him by [his] predicaments.”³⁷ Macbeth saw his purpose as it had come to be revealed to him by the witches; in addition to that, the Scottish king presupposed it to be the acquisition of power for present enjoyment and future fame; Macbeth fails to become a legitimate king, so he embraces his doomed anti-hero role to the last.

This protagonist’s reactions to given circumstances may not satisfy a need for a unifying “lesson” or even provide a good explicit alternative to those circumstances, as Santayana had wished, but the viewer is prodded to ponder them.³⁸ If the systems of meaning themselves are used as grist for the mill of dramatic action, then does everything, as Macbeth muses, signify nothing? The drama might answer that the sound and fury of action itself, the search itself, the need to calibrate experience with action in order to make life meaningful is not, after all, “nothing.” Human reaction to doubt is continually dramatized and evoked in the audience. If we seek a “lesson,” which is one of the first uses of literary art and storytelling, then we learn that humanity’s search for meaning is ongoing, complex, and contingent. It is full of pitfalls, and cast-iron certainty can be one of its most dangerous enemies. Consider John Shanley’s immensely popular and critically-acclaimed 2005 play, *Doubt: A Parable*. Shanley’s preface to the play makes this thematic point explicit.³⁹ For many, Shakespeare has dramatized humanity’s search for meaning, and this is a feat that Santayana, even in his early writings, sometimes concedes may be enough. In “The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare,” he writes: “The spectacle of life did

³⁶ William Shakespeare, “Macbeth,” in *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), 5.10.32–34.

³⁷ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 268.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

³⁹ Patrick Shanley, *Doubt: A Parable* (New York: Theater Communications Group, 2008), vii–x.

not pass before [Shakespeare's] eyes as mere phantasmagoria. He seized upon its principles; he became wise."⁴⁰

Like Macbeth, Hamlet also tries to comprehend adversities as they arise. As Santayana has done, let us follow Hamlet's path toward seeking meaningful purpose for action. Note I did not say "finding" meaningful purpose within a consistent, all-encompassing framework. Rather, Santayana is correct that while Hamlet attempts to frame myriad questions, he does not answer them absolutely. He believes he finds answers for himself, but these still remain ambiguous to us. What remains, again, are the questions—and the possibilities we believe we see in answering them. In his essay on *Hamlet*, Santayana wonders whether the play truly invites his own perception that the prince is too advanced for the conventions within which he must live. He muses whether he might be a "fond critic," seeing far more than the play warrants.⁴¹ This may be because the play dramatizes the search, not the discovery, even if possible discoveries seem tantalizingly within reach, as many a viewer will attest, including Santayana himself.

In what ways is this search dramatized? In "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare," Santayana writes:

The more cultivated a period has been, the more wholly it has reverted to antiquity for its inspiration. The existence of that completer world has haunted all minds struggling for self-expression, and interfered, perhaps, with the natural development of their genius. The old art which they could not disregard distracted them from the new ideal, and prevented them from embodying this ideal outwardly.⁴²

Whether or not this is true seems unverifiable. Inherited or external limits upon one's view of the world's possibilities are always present, and it is up to each thinker to live within them, enhance them, or transcend them. Sometimes the strictest limitations of form, as evidenced by poetic conventions, for example, help produce exquisite artistic masterpieces. Santayana's preference for a naturalistic source for ideals, the same desire to begin from zero with no superstitions or illusions, may help explain his distaste for ideological allegiances to older conventions. But it seems that Emerson's willingness to contradict the uses of the world and the proscribed lessons of the past should provide the freedom Santayana saw necessary for a fuller development of an advanced, more natural genius. Here, perhaps, Santayana's esteem for classicism over what he termed "romanticism" might also help explain his less enthusiastic esteem for Emerson. As noted in "Three Philosophical Poets," Santayana was wary of the "mystical faith in will and action" that fueled Emerson's youthful "self-trust" and "world-building."⁴³ In his essay on Emerson, Santayana says he was a "Puritan mystic with a poetic fancy" who "saw in the laws of Nature . . . only a more intelligible form of the divinity he had always recognised and adored."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 140.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 129. Unless otherwise indicated, Santayana's references to *Hamlet* are from his essay of the same name.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 144–145.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 232.

Whatever view one takes regarding whether past ideals help or hinder possibilities for future enlightenment, Santayana is perceptive about the ways Hamlet approaches his doubts and frames his questions. For example, as mentioned above, Santayana reminds us about the common tendency to imagine a purer past. This desire to suppose there was once a simpler and more meaningful world is definitely palpable in *Hamlet*. The memory of King Hamlet represents a dream of a more honest and straightforward time of chivalric honor, wherein human action found full, uncomplicated expression within a meaningful role. Hamlet Senior had defeated the threatening Fortinbras Senior in single combat; in contrast, Claudius's new regime is replete with politicking, plotting, and espionage. (This clash between an imagined, simpler past and the ubiquitous surveillance of the modern, centralized state is certainly of immediate interest to contemporary viewers.)

The grieving prince confronts his mother in her bedroom about this contrast between past honor and present corruption, where he is spied upon by Polonius. Hamlet puts his father's portrait up for comparison with the new Danish king, lauding the former and blasting the latter: "This *was* your husband. Look you now, what follows:/ Here *is* your husband . . ." ⁴⁵ In this confrontation, we see one way in which Hamlet's dream of an ideal past floods his hurt and sensitive mind.

The past rushes upon the present most obviously, of course, by the Ghost, who is also present in the aforementioned meeting, although only Hamlet can perceive it. Throughout, the Ghost communicates a confused sense of the meaning of past events at the same time that it remains ambiguous about its own nature. Santayana notices that the Ghost, by being a Christian soul in Purgatory who wants revenge as if it were actually a pagan shade or hellish demon, "unites in a single image various threads of superstition actually tangled in the public mind."⁴⁶ As such, it is a rather natural expression of the doubts of the age regarding an individual's place in the universe. Given that the official religion had already undergone drastic changes from Catholic to Protestant under Henry VIII and back to Catholic again before becoming Protestant under Elizabeth I, it should be of little surprise that these beliefs are portrayed as miscellaneously as they are.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ William Shakespeare, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," in *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), 3.4.63–64.

⁴⁶ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 125

⁴⁷ In "Tragic Philosophy," Santayana says the Elizabethan age did not take religious belief seriously:

[It needed] no mastering living religion, no mastering living philosophy. Life was gayer without them. Philosophy and religion were at best like travels and wars, matters for the adventurer to plunge into, or for the dramatist to describe; never in England or for Shakespeare [were they] central matters even in that capacity, but mere conventions or tricks of fancy or moods in individuals. (*Essays in Literary Criticism*, 269)

Perhaps this seems true in the plays, but certainly not in the society. Puritans and recusant Catholics living in Elizabethan England lived and died for it. Playwright Thomas Kyd (who may have written an earlier version of *Hamlet*) was tortured regarding his alleged atheism.

Given the confusing messages that Hamlet inherits, it seems natural that he should take his time in responding. Still, Santayana has plenty of company in wondering about “the unnecessary precaution and delay.”⁴⁸ He writes that it “is the tragedy of a soul buzzing in the glass prison of a world which it can neither escape nor understand, in which it flutters about without direction, without clear hope, and yet with many a keen pang, many a dire imaginary problem, and much exquisite music.”⁴⁹ Santayana does not see a heroic character with a decisive purpose; the Dane suffers from a “brilliant futility” that, like the sentinel in the opening scene, is “sick at heart.” He sees a “morbid indirection” in Hamlet that “yields the rest of the play.”⁵⁰

This is an eloquent description of the parts of the play that focus on the solipsistic ramblings of a hurt mind bent upon lamenting the meaninglessness of the world. It is true that the prince cannot fathom how his mother so quickly married his uncle, nor how his father’s legitimate rule had so cruelly been usurped. His sense of justice has been harmed, and, as Santayana notices, it is his love for his father that provides the hub for most of his ruminations, especially in the first half of the play: “his deepest sentiment is a great love and admiration for the King, his father. On this natural piety in the young Hamlet, his new tragic life is to be grafted. By striking rudely in this quarter, fate strikes not merely at his filial affection, but at his intellectual peace and at his confidence in justice.”⁵¹ This loss of faith in justice also gives occasion to ponder the mysteries of fortune and history; amid a failure to satisfactory piece it all out, he must still summon a purpose for action.

As part of this endeavor, the prince must verify the nature of the Ghost and the veracity of its message. A run-down of some well-known portions of the drama should illustrate that Shakespeare’s character is not, as Santayana would have it, merely experimenting within an outdated plot and uselessly—albeit brilliantly—weaving arabesques of existential angst to no avail.

Hamlet does not know whether the Ghost is his own fancy, a demon, or actually his father’s spirit. Given his position as court prince, the “observed of all observers” in a modern spy-state, he must walk with care.⁵² Hamlet’s madness can easily be seen as a tactic to buy time. It is not merely, as Santayana sees, a dramatic given that happens to be expressive of Hamlet’s incapacities. In Santayana’s novel, *The Last Puritan*, Oliver muses that perhaps Hamlet was trying to save Ophelia from this cruel world (and fairing badly); Jim tells him it is pointless to try and figure it out.⁵³ He may act strangely and feel very confused about the meaning of existence, but he is keenly aware of what he is doing, and he does look out for himself in a

Christopher Marlowe was also a target of this government crackdown, but was killed suspiciously while the investigation was under way.

⁴⁸ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 126.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 127–28.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 124.

⁵² *Hamlet*, 3.1.153.

⁵³ *LP*, 235.

difficult situation while under watch by the king. As he tells Polonius, he'd part with anything gladly . . . except his life.⁵⁴ To secure it, he must be politic, cryptic, and secretive, especially if he is unsure about whether or not Claudius actually murdered his father. To inform any future action, he wants control over the facts.

Whatever his confusion, he still seeks a sensible narrative within which to carve out an active purpose. Hamlet is keenly aware that he is under surveillance. He asks Ophelia, "Are you honest?" and "where is your father?" while Polonius and the king monitor his every move.⁵⁵ When his "excellent good friends" Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive,⁵⁶ he holds forth about his state of mind and the meaningless wonders of the universe, but never so intensely as when he asks whether they were "sent for," pointedly and repeatedly instructing them to answer truthfully.⁵⁷

It is shortly following this meeting that he strikes upon his idea to use the players to ascertain the veracity of the Ghost's message. If before he had lamented a difference between what ought to be and what is; if he had scorned the "uses of the world" for what he saw as a disconnect between appearances and truth, he now learns to use fancy to find truth, employing the players to catch the king through the performance of an invented *Murder of Gonzago*.⁵⁸ Once sure of Claudius's guilt, he prepares to kill him while he prays, but he decides to stay his hand lest a penitent Claudius is taken to heaven. Hamlet later blindly kills Polonius, thinking him to be the king in the act of spying. Upon seeing Hamlet's dispatch of Polonius, Claudius rightly exclaims: "Oh heavy deed!/ It had been so with us, had we been there."⁵⁹ The king then tells Gertrude that Hamlet's liberty threatens them all. He sends Hamlet away to his death on a ship to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet cunningly changes the death warrant while his hapless university chums sleep, he is taken by pirates, befriends them, and is then deposited again on Danish soil.

Such a series of fortuitous events moves him to declare a Providential design wherein "readiness is all."⁶⁰ We will return to this realization later. The prince praises the stoic Horatio, but he learns that he is not like him; he also lauds Laertes, and he likewise learns he is not a stock revenger, which Laertes exemplifies. He agrees to a duel with Laertes, but he tries to talk him out of it. Admittedly, he is unable to administer an antidote for the ills of his Danish prison. Following the final bloodbath,⁶¹ it is hard to disagree with Santayana that "his sense of what is good and

⁵⁴ "You cannot, sir, take from me anything that I will more/ willingly part withal—except my life, my life, my life" (*Hamlet* 2.2.212–13).

⁵⁵ *Hamlet*, 3.1.105; 130.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.2.220.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.2.267–69; 271–74; 276–80; 282–83.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.1.12–13.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.2.160.

⁶¹ His mother drinks of the poisoned cup, Hamlet is struck by Laertes's poisoned tip, and Laertes receives a lethal blow.

ideal is strong enough to raise him above worldliness and a gross optimism, but it is far too negative . . . to inspire . . . better action in the world.”⁶²

Hamlet does not experience an arch from dark folly to totalizing or even tragic enlightenment through the performance of meaningful actions informed by hard-won knowledge. Had he done so, then we might say he contributed to a new way of understanding the world by fashioning, within and through the drama, an “argument” of sorts. The kind of argument about behavior that, if taken up generally, can devolve into yet another conventional maxim of the kind Santayana says actually held Hamlet back.

For example, had Hamlet a more “theoretical” habit of mind, Santayana says the prince might have asked whether the treacherous murder of one innocent man could appropriately be righted by “more treachery and more murder.”⁶³ This is what we feel Hamlet may be considering, but to so state that “two wrongs don’t make a right” may have cheapened the drama by proposing yet another prescriptive maxim. In “Hamlet,” Santayana writes:

Conventional maxims, stock passions, and theological sanctions play very different roles in different people’s lives. In the vulgar they may serve to cloak the absence of genuine principles and of a fixed purpose of any kind. In noble minds they may cheapen the genuine intuitions which they come to clothe, and cause these minds to fall short of that clearness and generosity which they would have shown if they had found free and untrammelled expression.⁶⁴

The conventions found in the revenge tragedy, then, are rudimentary and too small for Hamlet’s mind, but this is what propels the drama and his mind—it does not ultimately hinder it.

Other ways Santayana helps illumine how characters grapple with obstacles is through observations about Hamlet’s dealings with fellow characters. Santayana’s point about Hamlet’s free and clear attitude toward the minor characters and his “dispersion of mind”⁶⁵ when facing the Ghost, Ophelia, and the Queen, prods us to consider that the minor characters are presented as less enabled to transcend their given roles and circumstances; their places are more fixed within these limitations. This is quite clear in the national histories, wherein only elites seriously ponder their place in the universe. When dealing with the minor characters, then, it is as if Hamlet were a creation fully in command of his place within the imagined “Elizabethan world picture” Tillyard ascribed to early modern social ideology;⁶⁶ Hamlet stands on a “home base” from which he launches his conjectural campaigns.

For example, Hamlet unburdens himself to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the form of a joke. In response to Rosencrantz’s quip that the “world’s grown honest,” Hamlet says “doomsday is near.”⁶⁷ He suggests a providentialist purpose for history,

⁶² *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 128.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁶⁶ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (New York: Vintage, 1960).

⁶⁷ *Hamlet*, 2.2.232–34.

even if his precise meaning is elusive; next, they joke that Fortune is a strumpet and that they have come by her “private parts.”⁶⁸ Indeed, these minor characters are the hapless playthings of an inscrutable fortune. All of this is conveyed through the banter of university chums. Hamlet muses that they have been brought to “prison,” claiming that he lives in a prison of the mind.⁶⁹

If, in his put-on stoicism, Hamlet can believe that there is nothing good or bad unless thinking makes it so, then he has the luxury to muse about his limiting circumstances as the endangered “observed of all observers.”⁷⁰ He can wonder about other possibilities. But for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, their choices are quite prescribed as ministers to the monarchs. The drama invites questions about the purpose of action and the roles of humanity in history. Minor characters like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, portrayed simultaneously as innocent children and treacherous fiends, are helplessly snared in a deterministic web. Hamlet knows more about their purpose than they do. As soon as they admit that they had been summoned, Hamlet says, “I will tell you why.”⁷¹ Santayana sees that Hamlet deals with them deftly and at his ease: This is because they are—to Hamlet and to us—predictable, stock characters with no semblance of agency. Tom Stoppard’s famous 1966 *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is a tragicomic paean to a humanity whose deterministic fate is nevertheless absurd and inscrutable.⁷²

Immediately after pigeonholing his chums’ possibilities for action, namely, that they were “sent for,” Hamlet delivers his “What a piece of work is a man” soliloquy; here, he describes in a nutshell the prison where their roles are carried out: he catalogs a “chain of being” stretching from the heavens to below the “paragon of animals”; all of these, true to the prevailing *memento mori* convention, are but dust to him.⁷³ This recitation at once references a limited world view and the actual, physical accoutrements of the Elizabethan stage. It reinforces the claustrophobia felt by a sensitive character whose spirit, as Santayana puts it, outmatches his given circumstances; these, in turn, are purposely presented in the outmoded form of a renaissance revenge tragedy.

Santayana says Ophelia causes Hamlet confusion and doubt, but she is only “incidental” to the drama.⁷⁴ This observation helps make evident that if Hamlet is read as a self-aware character in a play with limited possibilities, then Ophelia’s relative inconsequence makes her possibilities even more constricted. The drama makes clear that not all agents are equally enabled to find meaning for action. Conflicting authorities are constantly directing her actions: her father, her brother, her king, and her prince. Hamlet’s own injunctions to her are all the more confusing—now proclaiming love, now retracting it, asking for prayers, then telling her she is false,

⁶⁸ Ibid, 2.2.229–231.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 2.2.235–245.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 3.1.153

⁷¹ *Hamlet*, 2.2.285.

⁷² Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

⁷³ *Hamlet*, 2.2.290–298.

⁷⁴ *Essays in Literary Criticism*, 130.

demanding she go to a nunnery and at the same time accusing her of being no better than a whore.

Once her lover rejects her and her father is killed, she internalizes the lunacy of her situation; the songs she sings aestheticise the occasion, and their cryptic symbolism more poignantly express the existential mysteries that move the title character.⁷⁵ If to be or not to be is Hamlet's principal question, and if Ophelia intentionally ends her own life, then she is pushed toward a choice Hamlet never dared make.

As if to hammer the point home, this non-choice disinherits her from a full burial service.⁷⁶ Perhaps other possibilities for Ophelia's character can be imagined. Could she have philosophically transcended her circumstances and found actions to assert her will, including going to a nunnery, which was not an option for Elizabethan women? Even if that had been a narrow option for her, the play illustrates her limited power to wield a will in the world, and it highlights the very inadequacies of the conventions Santayana calls confusing and unequal to the characters.

Prince Hamlet is given more freedom for action. Let us return to Hamlet's apparent realization about the workings of a divine providence and his place within it. After his miraculous return to England from the jaws of death, he says to Horatio: "When our dear plots do pall. . . . There's a divinity that shapes our ends,/ Rough-hew them how we will—"⁷⁷ The stoic Horatio suggests Hamlet feign illness to avoid a duel against Laertes. Hamlet refuses to forgo the fight: he has been practicing. He scoffs at human prophesy, and he proclaims that "there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow."⁷⁸ He goes on to say, in essence, that God decides when things are to happen, and that humans have little control over this save to be ready for anything.⁷⁹

Although Hamlet says there is an overarching providence for which characters must be ready, it becomes clear that what this overarching march of history might *be* is beyond Hamlet's ken. Whatever he may claim to have learned, he does not appear to have found any explanation for the confusing mysteries surrounding his life and its connection to anyone else's. Amid his apparent enlightenment, he likens his life to that of a character whose script had already been partially written: Hamlet tells Horatio that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern had already "begun the play" in which he would lose his life before he could "make a prologue."⁸⁰ Hamlet then re-writes the death commission to kill his university friends without possibility of absolution. He writes it in secretary hand. It was highly unusual for a prince to have learned to

⁷⁵ *Hamlet*, 4.5.21–70.

⁷⁶ To the dismay of the priest, ecclesiastical practice is overruled by the court, and Ophelia's body is buried in sanctified ground. Nevertheless, the priest makes sure the ceremony is truncated. *Ibid.*, 5.1.1–5; 208–225.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.1.9–11.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.2.157–58.

⁷⁹ "If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come—the readiness is all. Since no man of aught he leaves knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let be." 5.2.158–161.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.2.30–32.

emulate this sort of writing, and the coincidence comes in handy to save his neck. But for all his deft (but cruel) maneuvers to avoid almost certain death in England, he is killed in the play's concluding bloodbath.

Near death, Hamlet commissions Horatio to conform to traditional conventions of mourning. He instructs: "Absent thee from felicity a while,/ And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain/ To tell my story."⁸¹ He then uses his last breath to give his blessing to the next king, the invading Fortinbras. This is a rather odd settling of affairs, considering that the Norwegian is his enemy, as was Fortinbras Senior to Hamlet Senior, and not even a Dane.

More than a few playgoers are disappointed by Hamlet's actions. This includes many who saw lessons regarding the perils of melancholy and indecision; it also includes others, like Santayana, who wanted Hamlet to transcend his circumstances more absolutely. However, the play poses questions to animate the intellect and the passions toward meaningful action within our own particular circumstances.

Hamlet finds some reasons and purposes in terms of a narrative he tells himself, and he asks Horatio to convey his story: for Hamlet, *homo narrans* wins out. Characters perform as well as possible under the given circumstances, but the rules for that performance can be up for debate along the way. As a character grappling with the movement of history, Hamlet explores the assumptions upon which all expectations of him are based. In his case, the past is mysteriously personified in the form of his own father asking him to set the state aright. We witness his performance, and we ourselves are moved to ponder the questions and challenge assumptions upon which life-narratives are based, as Santayana does.

Santayana famously writes in *The Life of Reason*, "History is always written wrong, and so always needs to be rewritten. The conditions of expression and even of memory dragoon the facts and put a false front on diffuse experience."⁸² For Santayana, there was "no march *of* history, but rather marches *in* history."⁸³ Hamlet professes a desire, as evidenced by his praise of the stoic Horatio and by his love for everything his traditional, chivalric father represents, to act within a march *of* history, but he fails. His actions grasp at a providential, over-arching plan, but it is beyond him. What we see is that there are only marches *in* history, wherein every actor must carve out meaning. Hamlet asks crucial questions and tests out different actions in light of his given sense of possible "plots." He wants his trusted friend to pass on the story of his failure. As a character in a play might be expected to say, the narrative is the strongest experiential constant: it animates our future actions and stories. The rest is silence.

WILLIAM GAHAN

Rockford University

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 5.2.289–291.

⁸² Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (New York, Prometheus Books, 1998), 397.

⁸³ Singer, x.

References

- Dewey, John. 1934. *Art as Experience*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company.
- Forker, Charles R. 2002. "Introduction." In *King Richard II*. London: The Arden Shakespeare.
- The Hollow Crown: William Shakespeare's Richard II*. DVD, directed by Rupert Goold. 2012. Universal City, CA: Universal Studios.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst. 1956. *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Major, John. 1959. "Santayana on Shakespeare." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10 469–79.
- Hamlet*. Directed by Laurence Olivier. 1948. London and Rome: Two Cities Films.
- Henry V*. Directed by Laurence Olivier. 1944. London and Rome: Two Cities Films.
- Rubin, Richard. 2003. "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare: Dewey and Santayana on Shakespeare and Religion." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*: 8–14.
- Santayana, George. 1998. *The Life of Reason*. New York: Prometheus Books.
- . 1935. *The Last Puritan*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Santayana, George, and Irving Singer. 1956. *Essays in Literary Criticism of George Santayana*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Shakespeare, William. 1992. *King Henry V*. Edited by Andrew Gurr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1997. "The Life of Henry V." In *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, edited by et al Stephen Greenblatt, 1454–1523. New York: Norton and Company.
- . 1997. "The Tragedy of King Richard II." In *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 952–1012. New York: Norton and Company.
- . 1997. "The Tragedy of Macbeth." In *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt, 2555–2618. New York: Norton and Company.
- Shanley, Patrick. 2008. *Doubt: A Parable*. New York: Theater Communications Group.
- Shapiro, James. 2005. *1599: One Year in the Life of William Shakespeare*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. 1960. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. New York: Vintage.

Is Healthcare Hazardous to Life? An American Transcendentalist Perspective

For many years my Uncle Maynard (pseudonym) cheated on his taxes. What he did was make a quick estimate of what his total itemized deductions should be. Then he fabricated dollar amounts in various categories and filled them into the tax forms. He kept his receipts and records in a heap, and deducted somewhat less than he thought he could legally deduct if he went painstakingly through them, as the law requires. He kept his deductions low not because he thought he was obliged to pay his “fair share” to a government to which he says he never swore allegiance. He did it so that if he were audited he would be able to come away with money rather than pay it out, and so that he would avoid imprisonment. In this manner, at the cost of a few hundred dollars a year, he saved himself dozens of hours of tedious labor. Instead he spent the time riding motorcycles, visiting his kids, climbing mountains, cuddling his wife, fly fishing, and doing all manner of things that brought beauty into his life.

Uncle Maynard was an avid reader of Henry David Thoreau, the once-imprisoned tax evader. Thoreau believed that the cost of anything is the amount of life we give up to obtain it. If a thing is acquired by spending money that is earned through life-affirming work, then its cost is negligible. But if we endure tedious, ugly and life-subverting labors to acquire goods and services, or to avoid state-sponsored violence, then the cost is high, for we have forfeited a portion of our short and sacred lives. On this reckoning, the time the government expects us to spend in preparing tax forms is potentially a far greater cost than the dollar amount we finally end up paying.

In this essay, I argue that American healthcare poses a threat similar to, and indeed often in cahoots with, the threat from government. It threatens to deprive us of our lives. This threat exists in several dimensions, only one of which includes causing our physical death. Indeed, in this essay I will spend relatively little time considering this latter dimension. Though much of the killing caused by medicine (including most instances of the gut-wrenching “clean kill” that haunt physicians) is tragic because it is preventable, the specter of medical killing is offset to a large degree by the fact that in the net medicine extends the durations of human lives. If healthcare’s hazard to life consisted solely of its penchant for causing death, there would be reason for optimism in reforming it. But I will argue that there is little room for optimism, and that the threat healthcare poses to life is far greater, far more intractable, and far more serious than the threat that it will kill us.

In order to defend the claim that healthcare is hazardous to life, I will need to offer an account of life – hardly a straightforward preliminary step. To some extent this challenge is lessened by the fact that I draw heavily from previous thinkers, especially American transcendentalists Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, but also from George Santayana and others. Much of the preliminary work has been done for

me. In any case, my sketch of life will be necessarily brief and, like all accounts of life or the good life, irremediably question-begging.

Spirit

Following the American transcendentalists, I regard spirit as the ground of being and spirituality as the process by which humans (and perhaps other animals) relate themselves to the ground of being—by responding to its call, expressing it, and in part, by participating in its self-constituting nature through creative acts. Spirit, on this view, is the mysterious basis through which matter and mind arise, express themselves, interact, merge, interconvert, or do whatever it is they do in reference to one another and to the ground of being. Spirit is not consciousness and it is not matter. It is the mysterious, partially embodied principle of their mutuality.

Though the materialist George Santayana would not define spirit this way, I think this conception of spirit can help to underscore important similarities between Santayana and the Transcendentalists. Spirit has a fundamentally different denotation in American transcendentalism than it does for Santayana. For Santayana spirit is consciousness, an epiphenomenon supervening on material processes. It is an event without material causal efficacy in which essences are intuited.

Transcendentalists, on the other hand, do not equate spirit with consciousness. They equate it with nature, in nature's most primitive and fundamental, onto-theological sense. Much of transcendentalist philosophy, especially Emerson's treatise *Nature*, muses on the relation between spirit-at-large, manifest in Nature, and spirit as it manifests in individual persons. The individual spirit, in this account, is much more closely analogous to Santayana's "psyche" than it is to what Santayana calls "spirit." Though it mediates between each of the realms that for Santayana are distinct, spirit plays a role that overlaps crucially with the role of Santayana's psyche in that: (1) it is causally efficacious,¹ (2) it grounds consciousness ontologically while remaining distinct from consciousness,² (3) it is an aspect of nature,³ (4) it manifests material principles, and (5) the precise manner in which it grounds consciousness is a mystery inaccessible to the human intellect. I regard the individual spirit in American transcendentalism to be similar to what the psyche would be in Santayana if he took a Peircean turn toward panpsychism.

Indeed, if Santayana took such a Peircean turn, it might help him overcome one of the sticking points in his own naturalism—namely the fact that as a matter of animal faith, we view our mind (if not precisely our consciousness) as causally efficacious.⁴

¹ Emerson, 39.

² Emerson, 38.

³ Emerson, 33.

⁴ Though there are striking similarities in moral vision between Santayana and Spinoza, they contrast sharply on this issue. The theme that complex animals such as humans experience mind as a capacity for action, even in the context of sense perception, is a major aspect of Spinoza's naturalism that also influenced Stuart Hampshire's work on the philosophy of action. In discussing Spinoza, Hampshire writes: "The *conatus*, the drive for survival and for greater power and freedom, provides the point of entry for understanding the behavior of a creature under the aspect of thought" (Hampshire, xxvii). Santayana's description of

When we deliberate, we feel strongly that our minds function for purposes and that our deliberations may result in changes to the environment. Likewise, as I grunt to bench press 305 pounds, I do not feel like an aloof spectator beholding the work of a determined psyche, nor do I experience the lift as an effect caused by some “internal” force external to my conscious self; rather it is a strenuous act in which I, myself, lift the weight through arduous mental effort. If natural philosophy is tasked with the systematization of animal faith, as Santayana claims, then presumably it should support this very fundamental belief. In reading *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, it strikes me that Santayana’s account might be fuller if he had spent more time in manual labor or athletic competition. In any case, what separates Santayana’s philosophy of mind most distinctly from that of the American transcendentalists is an issue—mind-matter interrelations—that each party recognizes to be a mystery. Perhaps it is a point about which neither should be especially dogmatic.

As it turns out, in their respective prescriptions for a human life well lived, the thinkers have much in common.

Life

Santayana wrote that to “be alive is to be inspired.” (ICG 243) Then he observed:

There is diversity in these inspirations, which is virtue, but sometimes contradiction, which raises a painful question. Is one inspiration right or superior and another wrong or inferior? Shall one man or nation cultivate the one and another man or nation cultivate the other? Or should each man cultivate all inspirations in turn, as far as time and genius permit? (ICG 244)

In these words Santayana addresses concerns that were central to transcendentalist philosophers who preceded him, in words that suggest these thinkers influenced him. Human life in its fullness, for Emerson as well as Thoreau, is life that expresses individual genius—genius being the capacity to find Beauty⁵ in the world, and in so doing to manifest the world spirit in the evanescent workings of an individual spiritual nature. Genius is an inner principle that is at once both radically, uniquely individual and also expressive of Nature in its wholeness.

Is one inspiration, or act of genius, right or superior to another seemingly contradictory one? The transcendentalists answer this question much as Santayana would. Sometimes it is a mistake to analyze works of genius discursively. Genius is not primarily a discursive principle. As Emerson argues in his famous essay “Self-Reliance,” the demand for logical or historical consistency stands alongside the fear of solitude as one of the twin terrors that impede healthy self-trust.⁶ Even in matters of physical science, Santayana adds, we are wrong to regard our theories and theoretical entities as mirrors of unadorned nature. Our ideas are always adorned. They are always inspirations.

the office of spirit as consciousness, on the other hand, takes almost the opposite trajectory.

⁵ I use the capital “B” for Beauty to designate a principle, beyond ordinary aesthetic beauty, that mediates and completes the triad of beauty, goodness and truth. In so doing I take some terminological liberties. See Trotter, “Autonomy as Self-Sovereignty,” 242–44.

⁶ Emerson, 138.

Life is, on the transcendentalist view, a self-sustaining normative force. It is the principle of its own existence—as Thoreau argues in “Life Without Principle.”⁷ Such a principle, even in its most practical and social senses, is not a concept that can be specified or balanced against other practical principles, or stabilized in a reflective equilibrium. It manifests more directly as spiritual intuition or inner lights than as discursive reason or public discourse. And its forms are transient rather than stable. On these points, both Santayana and the transcendentalists strongly insist – and in so doing part ways radically with most contemporary purveyors of practical ethics.

This parting of the ways is to some extent captured in a critical practical distinction between visions of morality and life that: (1) consistently appeal to social fashions, formulations and conventions, over and against personal intuitions should they conflict, and visions that (2) consistently reflect upon, and return to, the sources of meaning and satisfaction that seem most deeply imbedded in the individual psyche (Santayana) or spirit (transcendentalists). Following the transcendentalists and Santayana, I side with the second vision.⁸

Another way in which the transcendentalist vision of a good life differs from that of mainstream medicine and practical ethics, and to some extent from that of Santayana, is with respect to questions of security and agency. As I have argued elsewhere,⁹ biomedical ethics tends to be a little schizophrenic when it comes to its images of personal empowerment and agency. On the one hand it portrays the poor, the disabled, the racially oppressed and other “vulnerable” groups as lacking agency—sometimes even to the point that it claims they cannot be held responsible for their actions—while on the other hand it tends to maintain a high degree of optimism regarding the transformative power and the role of independent reason in deliberations by ethicists and other professorial sorts—sometimes even to the point that it would appoint these elite thinkers as guardians for the interests of un-empowered persons. In its guardianship role biomedical ethics aspires to provide vulnerable persons with two fundamental sources of personal well-being and empowerment: opportunity and security. This is distinctly not a social project that either the transcendentalists or Santayana would approve. Emerson holds, for instance, that such state paternalism subordinates and demeans “the poor and the low”¹⁰ by reckoning them “in the gross” as members of populations, wholly at the mercy of social and physical forces, rather than as distinct and capable individuals. Nor does he find the urge for global citizenship to be ennobling or morally compelling:

⁷ Thoreau, 348–66.

⁸ Despite being America’s premier philosopher of community, Josiah Royce joins Santayana and Emerson on this matter (Royce, 14, 38). However, Royce is deeply averse to the notion of leaving the relation between individual and social morality unmediated, epistemically undecided, and unresolved. Royce wanted to prove that, in the end, these two visions of the good life are sides of a single coin (Royce, 19–21, 144). Sometimes Emerson held much the same thesis—though without pretensions to philosophical deduction. I think that Thoreau and Santayana, on the other hand, are more willing to live with the divorce.

⁹ Trotter, “No Theory of Justice can Ground Healthcare Reform,” 598–605.

¹⁰ Emerson, 55, 58–59.

Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did today, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they my poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong . . . though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.¹¹

For a deeper understanding of the divergence in worldviews between transcendentalism and mainstream biomedical ethics, it may be useful to recall a hurricane metaphor from Zen teacher Charlotte Joko Beck.¹²

Beck asks us to imagine an airplane pilot flying in a hurricane, and desperately trying to find safe haven in the eye of the storm. Most of us live our lives, she claims, in this manner. “There’s this enormously powerful thing we call our life,” she writes, “and we’re somewhere sitting in the middle of it in our little plane, hoping to make our way through without being hurt.” Then she asks us to suppose that rather than an airplane, we occupy a glider—“without the control and power that the engine provides.” She envisions the experience of the glider quite differently:

We’re caught in the sweeping winds. If we have any idea that we’re going to get out alive, we’re foolish. Still, as long as we live within that enormous mass of wind, we have a good ride.¹³

Her prescription for the glider is detachment from ordinary concerns—especially concerns about personal safety, longevity, material well-being, psychological happiness, and about doing something “special” with our lives. “There is no safe space, not for our money, not for ourselves, not for those we love. And it’s not our business to worry about that.” Rather than engaging the world actively and provoking its transformation, Beck’s hang glider beholds the world in wonder, enjoying the panorama of eternal essences even as her physical destiny unfolds in accordance with nature’s chaotic and unmanageable contingencies.

To this metaphor I add a third aviator, Skuld. Like the glider pilot, Skuld has little interest in finding a safe haven, as indeed she favors dangerous thrills. Yet in distinction to the glider pilot Skuld equips her plane with useful gadgets and seeks to express her will in its operation. One moment she soars majestically like the eagles she admired in childhood, in a rapture of panoramic beauty. Then suddenly she becomes a Viking Berserker, darting between lightning bolts, fueled by a maelstrom of adrenaline and ecstatic fear that merges itself with the thundering storm clouds. She does not shirk from things she fears, and is willing to suffer pain, heartbreak, yearning, and deprivation in order to ascend to uncharted heights. Skuld is the American transcendentalist of this bunch, just as the glider pilot might be taken to represent Santayana.

Mainstream medicine and bioethics, on the other hand, are the conventional pilot seeking the eye of the storm. Their orientation to security is obvious and prominent

¹¹ Emerson, 135–36.

¹² I first developed this metaphor as an illustration of transcendentalist thinking in “Autonomy as Self-Sufficiency.” The original version comes from Charlotte Joko Beck and Steve Smith, *Nothing Special: Living Zen*, 68–71.

¹³ Beck and Smith, 68–69.

in this metaphor. But an orientation to opportunity also can be observed. For the conventional pilot, “opportunity” is envisioned primarily in terms of potentially effective strategies (e.g., careers) one can employ to maintain oneself within the eye of the storm.¹⁴ There are two outstanding characteristics of opportunity conceived in this sense. First, opportunities are shaped, and also delimited, by the social structures that maintain the eye as a safe haven. Second, a multiplicity of opportunities is a nearly unqualified good.¹⁵

For Skuld, on the other hand, opportunity consists in the possibility of experiencing beauty. For this reason, she rejects both the delimitation of opportunity by social structures and the concept that opportunities in any abstract sense are unqualified goods. In the first instance, she finds that excessive social delimitations impede the operation of her personal genius. In the second, she finds she is only interested in a limited array of opportunities—namely those to which her genius is inclined. Such opportunities are neither abstract, nor by nature scarce, nor dependent on a preexisting guarantee of personal safety or security. Furthermore, the result of positing opportunity as a fundamental and unqualified human good is a nearly absolute diminution of decisiveness—since any firm decision for a particular quest, career, or life trajectory surrenders this good. It is a recipe for creating 35-year-old children who live with their parents.

The opportunity to receive healthcare, conceived as access to medical goods and services provided by contemporary, organized biomedicine, is a case in point. While mainstream bioethics prizes it and sometimes even puts it forth as a universal right, Skuld views it with suspicion. Let us consider why.

Healthcare’s Threat to Life

The World Health Organization, a branch of the United Nations, defines “health” as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being. Or, in other words,

¹⁴ A reviewer asked: “Why the eye? . . . Wouldn’t the conventional pilot prefer to avoid or get out of the storm?” I presume Beck would reply that the pilot is already in the storm, and this particular storm is too extensive and nasty for the pilot to escape. Furthermore, because the storm is a metaphor for the dangerousness and unpredictability of life, it is a storm that will never dissipate. The responses of the pilots in this metaphor are taken to symbolize not merely inclinations to act in an emergency, but more importantly general strategies for living in a world where danger is ineradicable.

¹⁵ Taking his cue from John Rawls, Norman Daniels has argued that each person has a fundamental interest in preserving a broad array of opportunities so that she at any time is able freely to revise her life plan and correlatively her conception of a good life. This interest is more fundamental for Daniels, and for like-minded liberal egalitarians, than the interest in bringing any particular life plan or moral vision to fruition. Daniels writes that “persons are not defined by a particular set of interests but are free to revise their life plans. Consequently, they have a fundamental interest in maintaining the conditions under which they can revise their life plans as time goes on” (Daniels, 47). The only way to resolve the apparent fallacy in this reasoning is to suppose that when Daniels says people are “free to revise their life plans,” he means to imply also that the freedom to revise life plans begets a fundamental interest in facilitating this freedom (through the provision of opportunities), and this interest is more fundamental than the interest in living out a particular life plan. In fact, that is precisely Daniels’s position. For Daniels (and Rawls), the term “freedom” loses its traditional denotation of non-interference and becomes practically a synonym for socially facilitated “opportunity.”

it views health as the *summum bonum*: as a synthesis of physical perfection, total self-actualization, bliss and utopia. This definition is actually taken seriously and has been uttered by educated individuals without giggles. WHO also asserts, again without giggle or guffaw, that there is a “right to health”—which it fleshes out as the claim that “the highest attainable standard of health” is “a fundamental right of all human beings.” Combined with the WHO definition of health, this conception of the right to health demands that every human being has a fundamental right, insofar as it is feasible, to anything that can provide any increment of psychological, social or physical benefit, no matter how small.

Which persons or institutions are obligated to provide this exhaustive array of benefits? And who is to decide when one benefit must give way to others (presumably on the basis that it is less essential to perfect physical, mental and social well being)? Well, governments—in consultation with the World Health Organization itself. Being that it has taken all aspects of human flourishing under its umbrage, it is not clear why WHO continues to regard itself as merely a branch of the United Nations. Certainly politics, religion, treaties, commerce and finance are all aspects of social well-being—and hence now matters of health.

More curious still is the fact that the World Health Organization continues to focus its attention on old-fashioned health statistics—disease prevalence and incidence, mortality rates, etc. But if health is total well-being, shouldn't WHO also be looking at gross domestic product, divorce rates, customer satisfaction with the latest crop of automobiles or smart phones, Super Bowl halftime shows, sanctification in communion wine, and the development of tastier blueberry pies? After all, insofar as it adds to my mental well-being, I have a fundamental human right to the tastiest possible slice of blueberry pie.

Though most persons have not sincerely or literally taken the WHO definition of health and its assertion of a right to health to heart any more than these have been taken to heart by WHO itself, public sanctimony surrounding this rhetoric is troubling on several fronts. First is the expanding scope of health and healthcare. Even if health does not subsume every aspect of human well-being, there is an increasing tendency to reclassify human problems as health issues.¹⁶

Second is the presumption that health trumps competing goods. If there is a fundamental right to the highest attainable state of health, then by definition health

¹⁶ The current media frenzy over “hypoactive sexual desire disorder (HSDD)” and its treatment with flibanserin combines the modern compulsion to define any diminution in human functional capacity as a medical disorder, with the ideological proclivity to characterize any asymmetry of opportunity between identifiable social groups as an instance of injustice. Disgruntled activists hold that the FDA is sexist because it has not approved the marketing of flibanserin in a manner comparable to its approval of drugs for the male sexual disorder, erectile dysfunction. An alternative take would be that: (1) HSDD and erectile dysfunction are dis-analogous in that one consists of a lack of desire (in the face of a desire to have that desire), while the other is a form of vascular insufficiency, (2) the reluctance to approve flibanserin may have more to do with its lack of demonstrable efficacy and its risks than with the FDA's disregard for women, (3) neither HSDD nor erectile dysfunction should routinely be classified as medical disorders, since both describe phenomena that are common features of aging, and (4) the major problem with the FDA is that it has too far usurped the prerogative of adult women and men to make their own decisions about the tradeoff between pharmaceutical benefits and risks (something cancer patients have been saying for a long time).

trumps all competing goods. Again this rhetoric may not actually be taken seriously in its literal meaning—but it is indicative of an increasing tendency to view health as fundamentally more important than potentially competing human values such as freedom, privacy, adventure, or the enjoyment of fine tobacco.

Third and most troubling is the doctrine that health promotion is a political imperative. Government health promotion is achieved in part through constitutional, statutory, and regulatory laws—the latter being especially prominent in healthcare—all of which operate through a threat of force. The justification of such laws requires not only a standardized account of which healthcare goods and services are conducive to human well-being, but also a scheme to hierarchize these goods and services in a relative value scale, and to weigh them against competing non-health-related goods. To achieve such an objective in a coherent manner, government must employ—either implicitly or explicitly—a conception of the good life. And it must impose this conception by force.

For American transcendentalism and for Santayana, with their recognition of variation, evanescence, and idiosyncrasy in the expression of individual genius (and correlatively in human natures), state-sponsored formulations of a hierarchy of goods are at best a ludicrous charade. When they are enforced they may become dangerous shackles. Imposing a conception of the good potentially constricts pathways for the expression of genius. This limitation itself is not necessarily such a terrible assault, since such pathways are nearly infinite and alternatives might be opened. Of far more importance, however, are the negative consequences that occur when and if the state-sponsored conception of the good is successfully inculcated. These include diminished moral variation, diminished original thinking, and diminished self-reliance. For transcendentalists, these are catastrophic results—amounting essentially to the suppression of the human spirit.

The pilot in search of the eye of the hurricane might offer a rebuttal: pointing out that expressions of human spirit are impossible if one is dead and difficult if one is particularly unhealthy. But for Skuld, a short life plagued by ill health is infinitely more desirable than a life governed by bureaucratic ideals. In the end, all will die. The sickly, short-lived transcendentalist—in distinction to the health-obsessed nonagenarian conventional pilot—will have actually lived.

Dangerous adventures (such as mountaineering and motorcycling), risky pleasures (such as tobacco and psychedelic drugs), contact sports (such as football and Viking raids) have all found prominent detractors among today's healthcare and public health leaders—just because they pose hazards for health or longevity. But insofar as these activities are manifestations of genius, insofar as they express beauty, nobility, and self-reliance, they are likely to be regarded by transcendentalism as life affirming. A healthcare establishment that suppresses them—either directly through health regulations and government propaganda, or indirectly by diverting subjects to unfulfilling labors (as in taxing subjects to provide health benefits)—is hazardous to life.

Thankfully, the impulse to pursue adventure has not been completely suppressed. It is telling that when I query first year medical students about a hypothetical pre-birth option—in which one must choose either (1) a life that medicine seems to presuppose as ideal (85 years of life unimpeded by illness or personal tragedy, with meaningful work, wealth, and a loving, healthy family) or (2) a life of adventure (50

years of life in which one battles dragons, climbs the highest mountains, copulates with the world's most attractive and interesting partners, explores beautiful but harsh landscapes that no human has ever seen—while incurring numerous injuries, illnesses, deprivations and tragic personal losses)—nearly half of them choose the life of adventure.

But let us set all of this aside and suppose that the general threat to life from conceptions of healthcare as a human right is tamed or overcome. Are we then free of biomedicine's threat to life? Alas, no. Attitudes and practices currently entrenched in clinical medicine have rendered the clinic and the hospital into enclaves that are threatening, if not overtly hostile, to a well-lived human life.

One straightforward but under-appreciated threat comes in biomedicine's tendency to thoughtlessness about the burdens it inflicts. Recently my internist informed me that I was of the age where screening colonoscopy is needed. Our subsequent conversation was, very roughly, as follows:

"Needed, why?"

"To provide for the early detection of colon carcinoma. Colon carcinoma is a known killer, potentially curable if discovered early, and screening colonoscopy has a proven track record of saving lives."

"But aren't we all destined to die anyway and haven't I, at 57 years, already lived a relatively full life?"

"Perhaps, but why not extend it, if you can, through a simple procedure?"

"Simple procedure? Fair enough. What does it involve?"

"Well, you'll need to take some powerful drugs to induce a brisk and voluminous diarrhea, lasting about 12 hours and cleaning out your intestines. Then the physician will insert a long scope into your. . ." etc., etc.

"Yikes. Sounds horrible. So what is the number needed to treat—i.e., the number of these things you have to do before you save a single human life?"

"About a thousand."

"I see. In other words, the likelihood that I will receive no benefit from the procedure is 99.9%."

"Well, there are other possible benefits—peace of mind, the detection of polyps, and so forth."

"Marvelous. And the number needed to harm? That is, how many of these things do you have to do before you hurt someone badly?"

"Statistics suggest about 350. For every 350 procedures there is one serious complication, such as bowel perforation, that requires hospitalization."¹⁷

"So there is a three times greater likelihood that I will be seriously harmed than that I will be significantly benefited? Or rather I should say 1,000 times greater, since—call me crazy—I regard 12 hours of diarrhea and a scope shoved up my arse to be serious harms in themselves."

"Well, I suppose. But there is a chance we can prolong your life."

¹⁷ In the actual conversation, I had to provide my internist with the number needed to treat and the number needed to harm. He was unaware of these crucial statistics, as are most physicians, since the orientation is simply toward doing whatever procedures are recommended by professional societies, presumably based on a proven track record of saving lives.

Alas, such conversations are a rarity in clinical medicine. Doctors are trained to consider, and to disclose, risks while as a general rule neglecting burdens. Patients, for their part are rarely bold enough or sufficiently medically informed to initiate such dialogue. Though there may be genius that is profound enough, and peculiarly enough evolved, that it finds beauty in receiving a colonoscopy—for most transcendentals the procedure will exact a price in life lost far in excess of what is gained.

Another threat is the aesthetic impoverishment medicine typically imposes. Of all the senses facilitating an apprehension of beauty, the olfactory sense is perhaps the most neglected. It is one of our most primitive inheritances, and one of the most powerful. Smells can enliven us and imbue our world with delight (as for me with the smell of cedars), or they can send us reeling with nausea and disgust (as for me when I am subjected to aromas wafting from an explosion of pus after incising an abscess). Mainstream biomedicine makes no effort whatsoever to accommodate the aesthetic sense. In the clinic or hospital, one is greeted by the smell of industrial solvents and the color white. One is expected to wear a hospital gown that exposes one's backside to the world. And one is often required to sit passively in a wheelchair, carted from place to place by a pimply-faced teenager who lacks conversational skills. This is not empowering, and it does not evoke the sense of beauty.

During my career in emergency medicine I developed a keen ability to establish rapport with patients—reflected I think in the fact that during one seven-year period in which roughly 700 patient complaints were received in the emergency department where I worked, only one complaint came from a patient who had seen me. Also, though it is largely a result of good luck, I am that rare emergency physician who has never been sued. I attribute this rapport almost entirely to the fact that I share a fundamental conviction with most of my patients: I regard the hospital as an inhospitable, nasty place that no sane person would ever want to visit. Just walking into a hospital is dispiriting for me.

But alas, if such is the case, then medicine is hazardous to human life, and I was a fool to persist as long as I did in the practice of emergency medicine.

Then there is the threat of social fashions. As it turns out, even with their penchant for focusing on risks rather than burdens, physicians are far better at transmitting fashionable agendas than they are at informing patients about actual risks. I recently asked a pediatrician if he queried parents about gun safety and advised them of the need to lock up their firearms.

“Always,” he replied. “All of us in my department do this with all our patients, as counseling about gun safety is a basic part of pediatric care.”

“Very good,” I followed. “And what about swimming pools?”

To his credit, this pediatrician immediately saw where I was going with the query, and conceded that he does not routinely breach the topic of swimming pool safety.

“But isn't having a swimming pool at the house about 100 times more dangerous for children than having a guns? And doesn't drowning kill far more children than firearms accidents?”

“Indeed yes,” he admitted. “But drownings are far less a fashionable social issue for organized pediatrics than firearms are.”

Social fashion, it seems, trumps the preservation of children's lives. And likewise with the issue of second-hand smoke. In 1992 Ross Brownson and colleagues reported a (barely statistically significant) 1.3% odds ratio for lung cancer in women exposed to 40 pack-years of second hand smoke through a spouse who smoked.¹⁸ In other words, if one lives 40 years with a husband who smokes one pack per day, then one's risk of lung cancer goes from 5 in 1,000 to 6.5 in 1,000. The researchers also reported a contrary and much more statistically significant protective effect against lung cancer from 20 pack-years of exposure to second-hand smoke, but this result was mostly ignored. On the basis of such findings, any remotely objective analyst would conclude that second-hand smoke poses little if any threat of causing lung cancer. However, Brownson concluded: "Comprehensive actions to limit smoking in public places and worksites are well-advised." No intermediate normative premises were offered.

In light of such studies and the subsequent quest to protect citizens from environmental tobacco smoke, most physicians have come to believe, and to counsel patients, that women who get lung cancer after living decades with a smoker, probably got cancer because of the second-hand smoke. Never mind that this claim is false. If we suppose that tobacco consumption can enhance life—as in some instances surely it can—then such anti-tobacco zealotry may be hazardous to life: not only by diminishing options for tobacco use, but more fundamentally by erecting barriers and creating resentments between smokers, dippers and persons with whom they might fruitfully associate. My own grandmother, when diagnosed with cancer, was told by her oncologist that she got it from grandpa. Gullible enough, and too respectful of the authority of medicine to suspect he was wrong, she nevertheless graciously continued loving the man whom medicine falsely convicted of killing her.

Here, as in the other instances, biomedicine's imperative for constant attention to security, longevity and physical health is most hazardous in its tendency to distract persons from life's befitting foci. Distraction is perhaps the *summum malum* for American Transcendentalism. But Santayana describes the concept with more nuance and precision. He calls it "the alien force that drags the spirit away from the spontaneous exercise of its liberty, and holds it down to the rack of care, doubt, pain, hatred, and vice" (RS, 673). Living with cancer, my grandma fortunately seemed to overcome such distraction. Many persons today do not.

Biomedicine and its apologists have insidiously constructed a world where biomechanical forces exhaust human ontology, and where public preference, expressed through behavioral norms and the rule of law, is the ultimate moral authority. On this account, we are interacting cells and organs, and we are at our best when these interactions have been carefully fine-tuned so that our cortical orientation is toward rational, publicly approved ends and our physiological capacity is sufficient to their successful pursuit. This moral anthropology expresses a worldview, not a confirmed scientific hypothesis. It is a worldview that is radically rejected by American transcendentalism—not just theoretically, as an article of conceptual dispute, but practically in lifestyles that express deep individual

¹⁸ Ross C. Brownson, Michael C.R. Alavanja, Edward T. Hock, and Timothy S. Loy, "Passive Smoking and Lung Cancer in Nonsmoking Women," *American Journal of Public Health* 82 (1992): 1525–30.

idiosyncrasies, that are hesitant about social projects and selective in the formation of alliances, that seek beauty and adventure rather than stability and health, and that engage nature as a source of spirituality rather than as a set of mechanical laws.

Though I have already alluded to medicine's exaggerated concern about lengthening patients' lives and its disproportionate neglect of the non-health-related quality of those lives, I would like to close with a related observation. Significant progress has been made against the conceit that we should preserve life at all costs—such progress manifesting, for instance, in flawed but progressive measures such as advance directives, futility discussions, and the doctrine of informed consent. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental impediment in medicine to the cultivation of a sane outlook on death. It is the hypothesis of public medicine, embodied in practices such as the certification of death: that human beings are by all rights immortal. As I discovered early in my training, when I listed “old age” as the cause of a woman's death on a death certificate, the official line is that no one ever dies of old age. We die solely from disease or accidents—factors that can and should be mitigated or even eliminated. Even with its elevated notions of human potential, dignity, and the capacity for heroism, American transcendentalism never suggested that humans should be immortal. Santayana was even more unassuming in this regard, holding out *homo sapiens* as an animal species whose members are limited, mostly ignorant, sometimes noble, always short-lived—and whose deaths are salient in supporting wider patterns of life.

When 100-year-old ladies appear at their doorsteps dead of unknown causes, contemporary physicians must conjure a diagnosis. Usually they will write: “myocardial infarction.” And then some social theorist from the academy will cry “sexism” or “ageism” on the basis that there is an epidemic of undiagnosed cardiovascular disease in elderly females—claiming these ladies have been deprived of their fundamental human right to health. With the transcendentalists, I disagree. I believe they have lived.

GRIFFIN TROTTER

Saint Louis University

Thanks especially to John Lachs, Richard Rubin, and Michael Brodrick for helpful discussions contributing to this essay. Of course, they should not be held responsible for my idiosyncrasies and errors.

Bibliography

- Joko Beck, Charlotte and Steve Smith. *Nothing Special: Living Zen*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.
- Daniels, Norman. *Just Health Care*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York: Modern Library, 2000.
- Hampshire, Stuart. *Spinoza and Spinozism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Royce, Josiah. *The Philosophy of Loyalty*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995 (1908).
- Santayana, George. *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. (ICG)
- . Santayana, George. *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923. (SAF)
- . Santayana, George. *The Realm of Spirit in Realms of Being*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942. (RS)
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Collected Essays and Poems*. New York: The Library of America, 2001.
- Trotter, Griffin. "No Theory of Justice can Ground Healthcare Reform," *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics* 40 (2012): 598–605.
- Trotter, Griffin. "Autonomy as Self-Sovereignty," *HEC Forum* 26 (2014): 237–55.

Healthcare for Unique Individuals: What We Can Learn from Santayana¹

Recognizing that people often do not value the same things or have the same priorities, contemporary bioethicists place respect for autonomy at the top of their list of ethical principles, ahead even of beneficence. In theory at least, they want to avoid the ugly paternalism of “doctor knows best” that characterized much of medicine in the first half of the twentieth century. One could even say that bioethics owes its very existence to the widespread reaction against such paternalism that began to emerge after the Nuremberg trials of Nazi physicians. In practice, however, many bioethicists and health policy makers unintentionally embrace paternalism by applying respect for autonomy within narrow limits defined by their own values. In some instances, the principle of beneficence justifies that, but in other cases such behavior wrongfully deprives patients of the freedom to live and die as they choose, without first having to obtain the approval of others.

This situation will not be surprising to those who have studied the history of moral philosophy. To the ancient Greeks, while many were unfit to participate in the good directly, the good was the same for all of us. Something like that theory endures today, receiving tacit affirmation even from extreme relativists who claim the good is whatever an individual wants it to be. Official theories notwithstanding, we normally operate as if some goods are obviously better than others. In that sense, the ancient Greek theories are better than any modern relational account of morality, because they are not at odds with how morality tends to be practiced. With theory and practice on the same page, there must have been far less uncertainty and conflict about values for the ancient Greeks than we experience today. Yet their theories cannot account for the fact that human flourishing occurs in relation to different goods for different individuals. Nor do such differences break neatly along lines of birth, race, or gender. We know from our experience with liberal societies that individuals who choose goods different from those embraced by others in their group or by their parents often find happiness.

Modern relational theories of value explain the moral pluralism revealed by everyday life in liberal societies better than theories that posit a universal good. Even untutored observers of such societies know that values exist in relation to individuals, not groups, species, or God. At the same time, our unintentional defection from such accounts reveals another moral reality, namely that we are profoundly uncomfortable with the fact that others value what we find uninteresting or abhorrent. In view of that reality, we should not be surprised to find contemporary moral philosophers at once giving relational accounts of value and rejecting what they view as inferior goods. One such philosopher is George Santayana. While maintaining that values exist in relation to the unique natures of individuals, Santayana nonetheless wrote that some goods are just superior. He disliked liberal democracies, because they do not foster what to him were the superior goods.

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the February 19, 2015 session of the George Santayana Society, American Philosophical Association Central Division meeting, St. Louis, Missouri.

The prevailing wisdom among scholars is that Santayana held a relational theory of value. My first objective is to show that such wisdom is, if not wrong, at least not entirely right. My second objective is to show what this means for how bioethicists and health policy makers should apply the principle of respect for autonomy. It means, I hypothesize, that as a rule they should apply the principle more liberally, deferring to the patient's assessment of better and worse. Finally, I want to suggest why philosophers and other intellectuals are particularly susceptible to the Orwellian view that all values are equal but that some are more equal than others. My point is not that intellectuals should not be involved in making health policy. On the contrary, today's liberal democracies must rely on principled intellectuals in policy-making roles. What I want to suggest is that our dependence on intellectuals raises the moral stakes when those making health policies fail to grasp their exposure to what I call selective relativism. In their professional roles, today's bioethicists and health policy makers must be consistent relativists.

There is no shortage of evidence that Santayana held a relational theory of value. In *Reason in Society*, he wrote: "each possible life knows its natural paradise, and what some unintelligent outsider might say in dispraise of that ideal will never wound or ruffle the self-justified creature whose ideal it is, any more than a cat's aversion to water will disturb a fish's plan of life" (LR2, 98). Again in the same book: "Things could not be near or far, worse or better, unless a definite life were taken as a standard, a life lodged somewhere in space and time" (LR2, 137). But then there are statements such as the following: "the will which is behind all ideals and behind most dogmas cannot itself be refuted; but it may be enlightened and led to reconsider its intent, when its satisfaction is seen to be either naturally impossible or inconsistent with better things" (LR2, 32). "Better," one wonders, according to whom? What explains the apparent contradiction between such statements as these? Several explanations are possible, any one of which, if true, would make Santayana a consistent relativist. After examining the full range of evidence, however, we must conclude that none of them is true.

One possible explanation is that when Santayana seems to be saying that values are not relative to individuals, he is just describing what he called "the life of reason." The life of reason was Santayana's name for the idea that we ought to pursue only mutually inclusive goods, such as education and physical fitness. One should not, according to that ideal, pursue physical fitness and the pleasures of chain smoking. Using a different good as an example, Santayana wrote the following in *Reason in Common Sense*: "The love of fame . . . would tend to take a place in a man's ideal such as its roots in human nature and its functions in human progress might seem to justify. It would be rationalised in the only sense in which any primary desire can be rationalised, namely, by being combined with all others in a consistent whole" (LR1, 247). This is just one example of what Santayana called the "gradual mastering of experience by reason" (LR1, 32) that is the hallmark of the life of reason. In a general sense, the life of reason was "a name for that part of experience which perceives and pursues ideals—all conduct controlled and all sense so interpreted as to perfect the natural happiness" (LR1, 19). But ideals have to be achievable if they are going to "perfect the natural happiness," which meant to Santayana that goods included in ideals had to be consistent with each other. One might pursue sound health and the pleasures of chain-smoking, but in most cases that would prove to be

“naturally impossible.” It would also prove in many cases to be inconsistent with “better things,” namely ideals one can actually achieve, because they are composed of goods that are consistent with each other. On this analysis, values are relative to individuals, while some goods are superior, provided one embraces the life of reason ideal. Those who do not embrace that ideal could legitimately prefer inconsistent goods.

One problem with this explanation is that Santayana presented the life of reason in strongly normative terms, making it hard to believe that he viewed pursuing inconsistent goods as a legitimate move on a par with pursuing consistent goods. If pursuing mutually inclusive goods suggested a “gradual mastering of experience by reason” (LR1, 32), those pursuing long and happy lives while riding motorcycles without helmets would fall into the category of irrational amateurs. “A perfectly wise and representative will,” Santayana wrote, “would aim only at what, in its attainment, could continue to be aimed at and approved; and this is another way of saying that its aim would secure the maximum of satisfaction eventually possible” (LR1, 237). But if a wise person is one who aims at “the maximum of satisfaction eventually possible,” then one who does not aim at that is a fool. If Santayana held that all goods are equal in relation to those who value them and that individuals who do not value the life of reason are fools, then he contradicted himself and did not hold a relational theory of value consistently.

But there is another possibility. Perhaps Santayana held that values are relative not to the unique natures of individuals but to universal natures shared by all members of a species. Just as the good in relation to elephants might be to shoot water from your trunk, the good in relation to humans could be to pursue only those goods that are consistent. This would mean that Santayana did not stray very far from the ancient Greeks. To Socrates, what explained the fact that some individuals did not pursue the good appropriate to humans was that they were ignorant of it. Those who knew the good, he claimed, could not fail to do what was good. The same analysis was available to Santayana, provided he held that all members of the human species share a common nature. In that case, values would be relative to human nature, making some goods inferior for humans as a matter of fact, regardless of the ignorant opinions of this or that individual. If this is what Santayana held, then we can acquit him of the charge of inconsistency.

A significant amount of textual evidence supports this possibility. In “Hypostatic Ethics,” for example, Santayana wrote in reference to radical hedonism that it:

is indeed inhuman; it undermines all conventional ambitions, and is not a possible foundation for political or artistic life. But that is all we can say against it. Our humanity cannot annul the incommensurable sorts of good that may be pursued in the world, though it cannot itself pursue them. The impossibility which people labour under of being satisfied with pure pleasure as a goal is due to their want of imagination, or rather to their being dominated by an imagination which is exclusively human (WD, 148).

Here, what seems to prevent us from seeing the value of radical hedonism is that we value those things that are appropriate to humans, and radical hedonism is not one of them. Perhaps other species, such as oysters, can be “satisfied with pure pleasure as a goal,” but humans simply cannot find that goal worth pursuing, because they are not oysters.

Yet it is not hard to find textual evidence that cuts in the opposite direction, suggesting that values are relative to the unique natures of individuals, not to universal natures shared by all members of a species. Santayana often gave examples of what he viewed as real variety within human nature. These were not examples of individuals choosing on a whim what they mistakenly believed to be their good only to eventually discover that it was not; instead, they were examples of individuals different in their nature from others choosing what in relation to their version of human nature was a genuine good. Again in "Hypostatic Ethics," Santayana observed that some humans, namely mystics, are like oysters in finding "changeless pleasure" to be a worthy goal. That Santayana thought human nature often varied from one individual to the next seems unambiguous in the following passage from *Reason in Common Sense*: "Human nature, in the sense in which it is the transcendental foundation of all science and morals, is a functional unity in each man; it is no general or abstract essence, the average of all men's characters, nor even the complex of the qualities common to all men. It is the entelechy of the living individual, be he typical or singular" (LR1, 280).

Whether Santayana was a consistent relativist cannot be determined without first clarifying his view of human nature. Was there, to him, a single human nature shared by all, or did he hold that human nature varies across individuals and perhaps within the same individual over time? I offer that Santayana held both of these views and that they are actually compatible. The idea of evolution suggests how what Santayana called "flux and constancy" coexist in human nature. Evolution cannot take place unless there is a definite something that evolves. Homo sapiens or any other species must retain some of its original characteristics as a condition of evolution taking place, or else what took place instead would not be evolution but incoherent change. Santayana wrote: "Mankind can never, without perishing, surrender its animal nature, its need to eat and drink, its sexual method of reproduction, its vision of nature, its faculty of speech, its arts of music, poetry, and building" (LR1, 287). Even more generally, humanity cannot surrender its mortality without becoming something that is not human (LR1, 289). There is, in other words, a "core" of human nature, yet human nature at the periphery "varies indefinitely in its historic manifestations and fades into what, as a matter of natural history, might no longer be termed human" (LR1, 289). It is therefore possible, and Santayana seems to have held that human nature is at once a constant and a variable. There is no reason why certain features of human nature cannot remain fixed, while others vary. Santayana wrote: "What the majority of human animals may tend to, or what the past or future variations of a race may be, has nothing to do with determining the ideal of human nature in a living man, or in an ideal society of men bound together by spiritual kinship" (LR1, 280).

But if Santayana really held that all members of the human species share a common nature, then may we not conclude that he was consistent in his relativism? Perhaps what he had in mind when referring to superior goods was that their superiority was in relation to the "core" features belonging to all examples of human nature, not to those features belonging only to some examples or confined to a single one. In fact, however, we cannot draw that conclusion. The reason is that what all humans share in common excludes all but the most generic features. If the core of who we are consists of finitude, metabolism, and sexual reproduction, then

knowledge of human nature tells us nothing about what is good for all humans. We cannot even infer from such knowledge that eating is superior to not eating, much less that we ought to pursue consistent rather than inconsistent goods. Without a fine-grained description of who we are as a species, the only means of identifying what satisfies human nature is by observing human behavior under conditions of substantial freedom from control by others. But if observation of human behavior in the absence of coercion is the only means we have of determining what is good for us, then Santayana's claim that consistent goods are superior is at best partially supported. Nor could he readily defend himself by replying that it is possible to freely and consistently choose what is not your true good. Empirical support for such claims is next to impossible to find, and no other form of support is available. Thus, if Santayana held that consistent goods are superior in relation to the core features of human nature shared by all individuals, then his theory of value is incoherent. The only defensible theory open to him was that values are relative to individuals, yet he also stated that some goods are just superior, no matter what individuals choose.

At this point, the conclusion that Santayana was inconsistent in his relativism seems unavoidable. If he had held that all members of the human species share a common nature comprised of more than just a few very general features, then he could have argued consistently that values are relative to that nature, and thus that the life of reason is the ideal for all humans, whether we know it or not. But he had to have held that values are relative to individuals. Although they are both mortal, a mystic finds the idea of changeless pleasure irresistible, while an ambitious executive presumably finds the same ideal repulsive. Given that human nature varies from one individual to the next, a consistent relativist, one could argue, would have stopped here. Only the individual can determine what the good is and only for herself. Yet Santayana asserted instead that the life of reason has "absolute authority" as an ideal.

However, that alone does not prove that Santayana was inconsistent in his relativism. That is because the life of reason is no more than a general framework within which there is plenty of room for divergent values relative to a range of different human natures. The only requirement of the life of reason is that one's ideals must be consistent. "If," Santayana wrote, an individual "can know himself by expressing the entelechy of his own nature in the form of a consistent ideal, he is a rational creature after his own kind, even if, like the angels of Saint Thomas, he be the only individual of his species" (LR1, 280). That being the case, Santayana could have concluded, for example, that a short life of hard manual labor, relentless thrill seeking, and much sensuous enjoyment might be, relative to the individual pursuing it, legitimately better than a long life of safety, moderation, and intellectual activity. After all, the former ideal is no less self-consistent than the latter.

But Santayana did not see it that way, at least not always, and that is where we can convict him of inconsistent relativism. Santayana's withering critiques of liberal democracies provide the most unambiguous examples of him rejecting ideals that clearly are versions of the life of reason. Given his relational theory of value, he ought to have welcomed such ideals as legitimate variations in relation to corresponding differences in the underlying instance of human nature. In *Reason in Society*, Santayana's characterization of working class individuals is blatantly contemptuous. To him, such persons have no ideals of their own that are worth

mentioning. “Those grimy workmen” (LR2, 127), he suggested, must look to their betters if they wish to improve themselves. He wrote:

We see how they spend their leisure to-day, when a strong aristocratic tradition and the presence of a rich class still profoundly influence popular ideals. Imagine those aristocratic influences removed, and would any head be lifted above a dead level of infinite dullness and vulgarity? Would mankind be anything but a trivial, sensuous, superstitious, custom-ridden herd? There is no tyranny so hateful as a vulgar and anonymous tyranny. It is all-permeating, all-thwarting; it blasts every budding novelty and sprig of genius with its omnipresent and fierce stupidity (LR2, 127).

Such contempt for average people rivals that of Nietzsche, yet Nietzsche consistently held that what made some goods better than others was just the brute strength of the will backing them up. Santayana has a better relational theory of value but did not consistently adhere to it.

To give Santayana the benefit of the doubt, suppose for the sake of argument that we know the life of reason is always good in relation to certain core features of human nature that we all share. Can it be that Santayana was actually consistent in his relativism and meant to say only that working class individuals do not adhere to the life of reason because they are ignorant of their true good? Earlier in the same work, he does say that many people “neither understand their own interests nor have the constancy to pursue them systematically; and further, that their personal or animal interests may actually clash, in so far as they have not been harmonized by reason” (LR2, 118). But it cannot be the case that Santayana rejected working class ideals simply because in their ignorance of the life of reason working class individuals pursue inconsistent goods. For there is nothing inconsistent about wanting to work hard, take pride in earning one’s keep, sleep soundly at the end of a long day, and look forward to time off. Moreover, for millions of medieval peasants living in tyranny and misery, that was an ideal that they could only dream of.

We must conclude that it was not that working class ideals are inconsistent that prompted Santayana to deny their relative value but his personal dislike of them. Yet that amounts to saying that all values are equal but some, namely the ones you happen to like, are more equal than others, a claim that overtly contradicts Santayana’s relational theory of value. As if to prove my point, Santayana wrote, again in *Reason in Society*, that a society of working class people:

has the mind of a worm and the claws of a dragon. Anyone would be a hero who should quell the monster. A foreign invader or domestic despot would at least have steps to his throne, possible standing-places for art and intelligence; his supercilious indifference would discountenance the popular gods, and allow some courageous hand at last to shatter them. Social democracy at high pressure would leave no room for liberty. The only freeman in it would be one whose whole ideal was to be an average man (LR2, 128).

How can a sane philosopher, after arguing superbly that values are grounded in the unique natures of individuals, then with a wave of his hand and a contempt worthy of the most unapologetic snob simply dismiss what millions of people find good?

I will try to answer that question later by explaining why philosophers and other intellectuals are more susceptible than others to that kind of unconscious inconsistency. But first I want to suggest that such inconsistency is a warning that professionals involved in crafting health policy should be among the first

to heed. Santayana was a brilliant moral philosopher who spent his entire career developing a relational theory of value. If he sometimes lapsed into the view that his own values were categorically better, then no one, no matter how educated or enlightened, is immune to selective relativism. Most bioethicists and health policy makers appropriately give pride of place to the principle of respect for autonomy, but that is not the same as correctly applying that principle, nor does it by any means guarantee that respect for autonomy will be correctly applied. Because evidently selective relativism is not just a theoretical mistake but is more like a disease that infects moral judgment and does not discriminate by credentials or intelligence, my argument is that respect for autonomy should be applied liberally.

The relational nature of value is nowhere more evident than in our very different assessments of risk. Yet that is ironically also where selective relativism often manifests, distorting our judgments of what others find acceptable. Consider the mission of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA exists for the purpose of protecting us from what others view as unacceptable risk. New drugs must survive a series of rigorous clinical trials to determine their safety and effectiveness before drug companies can sell them to the general public. FDA officials, we may assume, understandably believe that risk is categorically bad. All other things being equal, no one wants to try a new drug at the risk of suffering harmful side effects, especially if that risk can be removed. For those awaiting new drugs, however, not taking that risk often means certain death. To them, even a slim chance of survival might be worth the risk of harmful side effects. Clinical trials of new drugs often take years to complete. In that time, untold numbers of people have no choice but to die because officials do not value their risk as much as they do. In a recent case, the FDA refused to approve a drug called pirfenidone that was later shown to improve lung function by 47.9% in patients with the irreversible and fatal lung disease idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. The basis of their refusal was that one of two clinical trials conducted previously showed no significant effects. The results of the other trial were positive. Every year, about 40,000 people die of respiratory failure due to idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Many of them presumably value the risk of trying a new drug over being free of harmful side effects while they are dying.

Bioethicists and health policy makers embrace the principle of respect for autonomy because they recognize that, as Santayana argued so persuasively, values are relative to individuals. Risk is no exception to that rule. Its value is not categorical and can be determined only by those deciding whether or not to undertake it. Yes, someone might object, but people should not be allowed to take excessive risks, to risk excessively bad outcomes, or to risk their lives. The instinct to protect others from risk is admirable, but we must remember that what is excessive to us may be acceptable to them. For many awaiting new drugs, not to risk one's life is to forfeit it. The answer is not to do away with clinical trials or to throw all caution to the winds but to apply the principle of respect for autonomy more liberally. That is all the more important given our vulnerability to selective relativism. The only way to reliably correct for our tendency to define the good for others is to design institutions and policies that err on the side of individual choice. Those whose lives are not in immediate danger can wait for clinical trials and other safety measures designed to mitigate risk, but the FDA should at least provide pending drugs to the dying who request them. The agency already does this through its Expanded Access program

and through case-by-case “compassionate use” approvals, yet the underlying principle remains one of selective relativism. If I am a patient, I must apply to others and wait for them to approve or disapprove my values. Both Expanded Access and “compassionate use” should be liberalized.

What were the superior goods that Santayana thought working class people were sadly oblivious to? Not surprisingly, they were the sorts of things philosophers like, namely intellectual activity, high culture, and ideals. The end of a good social democracy, Santayana wrote, “would be the glory and perfection of the state as imagination or philosophy might conceive them. This glory and perfection would not be a benefit to anyone who was not in some degree a philosopher or a poet. They would seem, then, to be the special interests of . . . an aristocracy of noble minds” (LR2, 132-33). It is significant that Santayana wrote this and similar passages almost in the same breath as he espoused his relational theory of value as a moral ideal. In “Hypostatic Ethics,” he wrote: “If we said that goods, including the right distribution of goods, are relative to specific natures, moral warfare would continue, but not with poisoned arrows. Our private sense of justice itself would be acknowledged to have but a relative authority, and while we could not have a higher duty than to follow it, we should seek to meet those whose aims were incompatible with it as we meet things physically inconvenient, without insulting them as if they were morally vile or logically contemptible” (WD, 151). What this suggests is that extolling the benefits of a relational understanding of values is an inadequate defense against selective relativism. We can celebrate the diversity of individuals and their values and yet without realizing it treat our own values as if they were Platonic ideas.

Even more troubling were the political arrangements that rejecting liberal democracy led Santayana to praise. Democratic societies, he reflected, are inferior for the purpose of nurturing “genius.” In such societies, “everybody would take his ease in his inn and sprawl unbuttoned without respect for any finer judgment or performance than that which he himself was inclined to. The only excellence subsisting would be spontaneous excellence, inwardly prompted, sure of itself, and inwardly rewarded” (LR2, 135-136). Better than democracy was what Santayana called the “aristocratic ideal.” He wrote: “Civilisation has hitherto consisted in diffusion and dilution of habits arising in privileged centres. It has not sprung from the people; it has arisen in their midst by a variation from them, and it has afterward imposed itself on them from above. All its founders in antiquity passed for demigods or were at least inspired by an oracle or a nymph” (LR2, 124-5). In the aristocratic ideal, lesser individuals did not resent greater ones but admired them and were therefore content to play their humble part in a society that culminated in such greatness. Thus, inequality alone could not be held against the aristocratic ideal. The problem, Santayana explained, was that in reality the upper classes thwarted the lower and imposed suffering on them (LR2, 105-6). He wrote: “The lower classes, in submitting to the hardship and meanness of their lives—which, to be sure, might have been harder and meaner had no aristocracy existed—must upbraid their fellowmen for profiting by their ill fortune and therefore having an interest in perpetuating it” (LR2, 107). But that did not stop Santayana from admiring arrangements by which the few rule the many.

Three points are worth noting here. First, the point I want to make by quoting Santayana on the aristocratic ideal is not that he thought the ideal unachievable,

which he did, but that the same thinker who developed a sophisticated relational theory of value somehow managed to posit the aristocratic ideal as an ideal for everyone. The second point is that such unconscious absolutism exists side by side in Santayana's writings with a moral defense of a relational understanding of values. In other words, Santayana apparently thought his relational theory was not only true but also ethically superior to theories that posited moral absolutes, yet he himself posited moral absolutes. Finally, while Santayana defended his relational theory of value on moral grounds, his preference for the aristocratic ideal not only led him to posit its absolute value but to wonder whether instead of liberal democracy, which allows all sorts of different values to flourish, humanity would not be on the whole better off under a more authoritarian regime. Such a regime, if aristocratic in nature, could impose civilization on the unwashed masses.

There is a kind of internal integrity to such selective relativism that holds not only for certain moral philosophers but for any number of intellectuals who address moral concerns, including those responsible for shaping health policy. It is as if conscious approval of diversity removes the need to guard against our natural biases, allowing them to thrive as never before. Our distorted perceptions now unchecked, the idea of using coercion to ensure that others do what we feel is good for them starts to look appealing. The value of the principle of respect for autonomy thus becomes more aesthetic than practical. Paradoxically, deliberate admiration of diversity and respect for autonomy frees conscience to approve the very preferences we say we should be questioning. If I am the kind of person who admires diversity, then I am not the kind who imposes my values on others. At the same time, I have my values and think they are very fine. If I am a bioethicist, I see the value of risk aversion. Doesn't everyone want to be safer? Shouldn't we have policies that require all of us to be more cautious? Doubtless philosophers, bioethicists, and health policy makers have the best of intentions, but selective relativism is congenital. The biker who loves nothing better than riding with no helmet or the dying patient who would give anything to risk his life on an experimental drug are unlikely to be impressed by the suggestion that someone in charge was "inspired by an oracle or a nymph."

Let me now try to explain why philosophers and other intellectuals are particularly susceptible to selective relativism. One reason is that philosophers cannot achieve greater precision in their theories than their medium allows, yet words and concepts are abstractions in relation to the realities they signify, making them necessarily imprecise. There is no way of discussing what is right for a particular individual without first translating him or her into a concept or an idea that at best imperfectly represents its original. Even worse, language tempts us with the possibility of knowing what is good for human beings as such or humanity in general, because such concepts are available for use in discourse. However, there is no such thing as humanity or human beings as such, only particular individuals in particular circumstances. Knowing what is good in relation to the concept of humanity is not the same as knowing what is good for real human beings in the real world.

For example, if we defined humans as rational beings, we might conclude, as Kant did, that making false promises is inconsistent with the concept of a rational being, making it always wrong. But that does not mean that it is always wrong for actual human beings in real-world conditions to lie. Sometimes, telling a lie is necessary in order to achieve a greater good. If instead of defining humans as

rational beings we followed Santayana in selecting mortality, eating, and sex as the defining features of humans, we might conclude that mortality should be avoided at all costs, since both eating and intercourse are ways of prolonging human life. That in turn could lead to lawmakers banning in the name of the general welfare football games, rock climbing, and countless other activities enjoyed by many. Yet what has been determined is not that risk is bad for anyone in particular, only that one can infer that it is bad in relation to a particular concept of humanity. For many individuals, cutting back on risk would remove the very thing that makes life interesting and worthwhile.

Another reason why intellectuals are especially prone to selective relativism is that as a group they tend to be risk-averse. They are deliberators and planners who believe in looking before you leap. It is easy to see the risk-aversion behind John Stuart Mill's principle of utility. To Mill, simply promoting some pleasure here and there would not do. You should not risk leaving the balance of pleasure and pain to chance when you might take control of it. The relevant question, therefore, is not how to achieve a net gain of pleasure over pain but how to secure the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number of individuals, leaving as little as possible to chance. But that requires performing elaborate calculations, including a highly imperfect accounting of possible outcomes. Fortunately, Mill thought we did not have to do that all the time, because we know from experience how to proceed in many cases. However, it is obvious that unusual cases would leave a conscientious person drowning in hypothetical units of pleasure and pain, unable to determine which course of action would maximize pleasure for all involved.

Equally apparent is the risk-aversion behind Santayana's vague notion of consistent goods. The notion is vague in part because goods thought to be incompatible as a rule can turn out to be compatible empirically. Are goods to be deemed inconsistent if they are widely held to be incompatible as a rule or if they actually prove to be incompatible for particular individuals? If the latter, then the life of reason is all but unachievable, except by accident as determined by a backward glance after the fact, because there is no way of knowing whether some goods are compatible until we have tried to combine them, and their compatibility or incompatibility often does not appear in the short term. Longevity and chain smoking are widely held to be incompatible as a rule, yet some individuals get away with both. The risk-aversion behind the notion that compatible goods are better is clear. One hedges against the possibility that a good will prove unsatisfying by pursuing however many others seem not to conflict with it. Like Mill's principle of utility, the life of reason saddles us with cumbersome and mistake-prone calculations that non-intellectuals can hardly be blamed for wanting nothing to do with. Health policy makers are often in a similar position, facing what amounts to an impossible cost-benefit calculus. In the FDA example, officials who prohibit new drugs from coming to market have no way of knowing whether their decision maximized utility, because those who might have been saved had the drugs been approved are no longer alive to be counted.

Whether they are moral philosophers, bioethicists, or policy makers, many intellectuals expend large amounts of time and effort devising theories or procedures that are supposed to mitigate risk. The unexamined life is not worth living, in their view, because not to examine your life is to risk not living as well as you can. While most intellectuals profess great respect for diversity and the autonomy principle,

their aversion to risk naturally colors their perceptions of what others do. It is not that non-intellectuals enjoy distortion-free perceptions. The difference is that intellectuals tend to self-select into the same occupations, surrounding themselves with other intellectuals. Members of such insular groups are very likely to share similar values. Non-intellectuals, on the other hand, are a much more diverse group. That makes intellectuals more likely than non-intellectuals to posit absolute values, while professing to be relativists. Intellectuals are also more likely than non-intellectuals to see risk as a theoretical problem that can be solved by means of careful reasoning and sophisticated analysis of the latest data, leading them to act on their innate view that safety and security are categorical values. Non-intellectuals are less likely to posit categorical values, because they tend to assume that risk is just part of life and we all take our chances. If there is no way of controlling the conditions others face, then it is best to allow individuals to use first-hand knowledge of themselves and their circumstances to pursue their own versions of happiness.

We live in a world where goods public and private depend on large bureaucratic institutions that must be designed and thereafter constantly improved by means of discursive reasoning and data analysis. We must rely on principled moral philosophers and other intellectuals to make the right plans and policy recommendations. My point here is that in view of our dependence on such experts it is that much more important for them to bear in mind at all times their exposure to selective relativism. That exposure, and the tacit agreement in liberal societies that for social and political purposes we must proceed as if values are relative, strongly suggest that bioethicists and policy makers, when in doubt, should err on the side of more individual freedom, not less.

MICHAEL BRODRICK

Miami University, Oxford, OH

Works Cited

- Santayana, George. "Hypostatic Ethics." In *Winds of Doctrine*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913 (WD).
- . *Reason in Common Sense*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917 (LR1).
- . *Reason in Society*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919 (LR2).

The Authorship of Life: Narrative and Dramatic Strategies of Sustaining Self-Integrity in Santayana with Reference to Paul Ricoeur

“By narrating a life of which I am not the author as to existence, I make myself its coauthor as to its meaning”

Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 162

I

One may search in vain for a systematic and exhaustive treatment of the issue of the self and/or subjectivity in Santayana’s body of work. His words, stating that “subjectivity is a normal madness...[and] should be discounted, not idolized, in the philosophy of the West,”¹ resonate in the scarcity of scholarly inquiry in this direction. A reader of Santayana, who at some point asks himself what kind of self is implied by his basic philosophical categories, is likely to have an intuition that the question abides no unequivocal answer, that the self emerging from this philosophy is problematic, or, as I propose to call it — *aporetic*.² To support this idea with examples, let me briefly juxtapose three contemporary readings.

According to Daniel Moreno, a dissolution of the self occurs in the context of Santayana’s atheism, his critique of egotism, and his objectivist ontology.³ One may think of it in terms of post-modern subjects, where the self may be at best a verbal, logical, useful construct, and at worst a battlefield of alien forces or an epiphenomenon of larger processes. One may support this interpretation with Santayana’s non-egological perspective and his anti-egotist views. The question arises, though, is it enough to speak of a dissolution of the self, in particular if we care to distinguish between “ego,” “subject,” and the “self”?

There is a powerful idea of *psyche* representing individual life and its interests, an idea that promises a stronger and more affirmative vision of selfhood rooted in the plane of action. The psychic perspective on selfhood has been persuasively presented by John Lachs,⁴ and it finds confirmation in Santayana’s explicit identification of the *psyche* with a “deeper self.”⁵

¹ George Santayana, Preface to *Dialogues in Limbo* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957). I will refer to this source as DL.

² “Aporetic” stems from a Greek noun *aporia*, meaning a doubt, a puzzlement, an impasse.

³ Daniel Moreno Moreno, *Santayana filósofo: La filosofía como forma de vida* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta 2007), 121–23, trans. by Charles Padrón.

⁴ John Lachs, *George Santayana* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988).

⁵ See for example: George Santayana, “Apologia Pro Mente Sua,” in Paul A. Schilpp, ed., *The Philosophy of George Santayana* (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1940),

Yet another view comes from Irving Singer, who sees the difference between the conceptions of the self held by Santayana and by pragmatists to be conducive to “their mutual distrust, mistaken criticism, and inability to appreciate one another.”⁶ Santayana, claims Singer, opts rather for a “kernel” model, i.e., one which can be illustrated by an individual center, surrounded by concentric circles of experience. Pragmatist thinkers, in turn, view the self in terms of an experiential circle or a spiral devoid of any “real” center. The idea of a kernel inspires a number of questions, in particular when the scholar calls it at once a “real nature” and an “individual spirit.” What kind of “kernel” is meant here, one may ask, a Cartesian, a transcendental one, or maybe a Lockean center of control? I do not mean to solve these doubts in this paper. The juxtaposition of the three dissimilar interpretations of what Santayana understood by the self was meant to illustrate the ambiguity of the issue, which echoes in the notion “aporetic.” In what follows I am going to use hermeneutic categories to throw some light on the obscure notion of the self emerging from Santayana’s philosophy. The current paper tackles only a couple of ideas from a larger project.

II

The second of the interpretations mentioned above seems most convincing and it finds confirmation in Santayana’s position from *Scepticism and Animal Faith*,⁷ where he points to the psyche as the genesis and the seat of selfhood and thus renders it irreducible and indissoluble, as against the Humean deconstruction of the self. A simple naturalistic equation of the self with a living, conscious organism may sound somewhat trivial. In ontological terms, the self is rooted in a complex psychic pattern, which is constantly evolving around an idiosyncratic nucleus, which is manifest in a self-reproduction and self-prolongation of a trope, as expressed by observable features of character, tendencies, dispositions, and repetitive behaviors. As such, the psychic trope resembles the first term of the famous *ipse-idem* dialectic by Paul Ricoeur.⁸ *Sameness* remains in a dialectical relation with *selfhood*, which is generated and sustained by means of spiritual mediation. In Santayana’s vision, as I read it, in the world of phenomena an “ego” or an “I” arises and—driven by a Cartesian illusion of independence and self-transparency—claims dominion over the self and the world. This ego, wearing different masks and costumes, is a proxy representing the deeper psychic self in the realm of sentimental time and pictorial space, which is the setting of action. Interestingly, yet another comparative venue

501. I will refer to this source as *APS*.

⁶ Irving Singer, *George Santayana, Literary Philosopher* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 28.

⁷ George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy*, in *The Works of George Santayana*, vol. XIII, Triton edition (New York: Scribner’s 1936), 130–46. See also George Santayana, “Locke and the Frontiers of Common Sense,” and “Fifty Years of British Idealism,” in *Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 33–41, 62–65.

⁸ Formulated by Paul Ricoeur in *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Subsequently this source is referred to as *OAA*.

is possible here. Understood in terms of a psycho-spiritual unity with an irreducible first-person aspect, Santayana's self reminds to some extent of the late Husserl's conception of "*idiopsychic*." They share the idea of the complexity of human self, where the existential order of a flux, or of "generation and perishing"—to use Husserl's language—is crossed by that of eternity. The point of this crossing is what Husserl calls the *idiopsychic*—an irreducible psycho-spiritual register of a personal history endowed with the first-person perspective.⁹

Santayana's idea of a vital process, which is rendered consciously as meaningful activity, has its roots in the tradition of Aristotelian metaphysics of life. Both Timothy Sprigge and John Lachs have pointed to the usefulness of certain Aristotelian concepts such as *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *entelechia* for understanding Santayana's anthropology. Furthermore, an Aristotelian distinction between *zoe* (bare life, a process) and *bios* (intelligent and meaningful life) offers an explanatory tool for the role of spirit in human life, and—I would add—for our understanding of the conception of human self implicit in Santayana's philosophy.

Having said of the self that it has its roots in the psyche and by means of spirit transcends the boundary of a blind process to become a self-caring and self-referring life, we may ask about the integrity of this conscious self. Some hints have already been provided along with Ricoeur's idea of a dialectic between sameness and selfhood, and Aristotle's distinction between *zoe* and *bios*. Both distinctions may be viewed as crafted to account for the phenomenon of intelligent action, which—in turn and in the spirit of Aristotle's idea of *autotelia*—may be recognized both as the overall strategy of sustaining self-integrity and a manifestation of it. Action involves the idea of agency and freedom, so we probably cannot avoid raising a recurrent question in Santayana studies, namely the question of the freedom of will and freedom as such. Otherwise, we risk falling into the trap of some disturbing dissociations questioning agency, which—according to Ricoeur—arise in materialistic philosophies that operate—like Santayana's does—with the idea of objective material events. This danger seems reinforced by the doctrine of impotent spirit and the alleged epiphenomenalism of Santayana. Recently Matthew C. Flamm, in his essay "Free Will for a Materialist,"¹⁰ has offered a good elucidation of the topic, so let me briefly recapitulate it and add a few comments.

III

Santayana's conception of "vital liberty" was an alternative to the ideas of "vacant freedom" and the "liberty of indifference." The former, according to Santayana, is "the moral illusion of free action without a definite impulse in an existing world";¹¹ the latter is that which "miraculously enabled a man to choose one alternative, for

⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, R. Rojcewicz, A. Schuwer transl. (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1989), 144–46.

¹⁰ Matthew C. Flamm, "Free Will for a Materialist." In *Santayana at 150: International Interpretations* (Lanham: Lexington 2013), 17–42.

¹¹ George Santayana, *Dominations and Powers* (New York: Scribner's, 1951), 47.

no reason, rather than the other.”¹² Santayana would be also dissatisfied both with the abyssal freedom and imposed responsibility of Sartre with its sense of “a scary power to create the world on behalf of all humanity”¹³ and the pragmatic association of free will with morality, responsible for producing “a perpetually bothered self forced to conform...to contingent and practically relevant standards mistaken as ultimate standards.”¹⁴ All in all, Santayana defined his standpoint in opposition to what Flamm calls a “misattribution,” turning “mind into a magical instrument of profound creation.”¹⁵

Reluctant to accept the obscure knot of philosophical concepts and cultural dogmas inherent in these models, Santayana offered a “disillusioned” view, which entailed a weaker conception of freedom and a more humble understanding of agency. Here, I would add, he followed the footsteps of Nietzsche. Will is psychic, it has material locus and belongs to the side of limitations. Now, by contrasting the burden of will with spirit’s “affinity to the eternal,” Flamm associates Santayana’s conception of freedom mainly with a life that is thoroughly spiritual.¹⁶ It is true that individual spirit is a *drop* or a *capsule* of freedom in nature, a spark of transcendence within immanence, which opens the way to *vita contemplativa*. As much as I agree with Flamm’s emphasis on Santayana’s advocacy of spiritual life, I am cautious of thinking that spiritual freedom exhausts the meaning of freedom implicit in Santayana’s thought. I am attempting a more holistic interpretation.

IV

Having mentioned that the main strategy of sustaining self-integrity consists in intelligent action, action being a manifestation of thinking, I assume that it is thinking as such that delineates the sphere of freedom.¹⁷ Mature Santayana found himself misunderstood in that his critics ascribed to him a view that thinking is impotent. He responded that “sensation, passion, and thought are...efficacious materially insofar as they are material[!]”¹⁸ It is true, according to Santayana, that a pure essence or a mere appearance “cannot determine existence.”¹⁹ Yet, Santayana claimed that attention and logical reasoning are fundamentally material processes.

¹² *Ibid.*, 54.

¹³ Flamm, 29.

¹⁴ Flamm, 25.

¹⁵ Flamm, 26.

¹⁶ Flamm, 32–33.

¹⁷ I assume a broad and liberal understanding of action as proposed by Max Weber (and after him by Paul Ricoeur himself). Action embraces the whole range of attitudes, including refraining from action, as long as the subject identifies them as his own (“attaches a subjective meaning to them”). See Max Weber, *Economy And Society: An Outline Of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. I (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), ch.1, par.1, p.4.

¹⁸ *APS*, 542. My emphasis.

¹⁹ George Santayana, *Realms of Being*, one-volume ed. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1972), 81. Subsequently I will use the abbreviation *RB* for this source.

The continuity and dialectic in discourse are according to him “physical” rather than logical.²⁰ He considered language and syntax to be tropes grafted upon wholly different, biological tropes.²¹ Thinking, then, in a basic sense, is an existential (and conscious) expression of a changing psychic status quo and the direction of psychic movement. All the underlying material tropes, finding their expression in thinking, are not irrelevant but represent the nature and interests of *this particular life*. Despite their plasticity, they are autonomous rather than heteronymous, one’s own rather than foreign, even though autonomy definitely requires much more than just to be born and alive. Still, “To be free,” says Santayana, “you must first be born and have some Will in particular.”²² A chain of intuitions might be a sign of or an index to a change, in which a thinking animal, through its psychic agency, has its share, which entitles it to claim the status of an agent. The self spontaneously believes in the possibility of action because the source of action is its current psychic dynamics. Decisions and choices enjoy a limited range of freedom, because they are expressive of the psychic principle of selection represented by will. It is typical of Santayana to believe that the narrower the range of choice faced, the freer the agent, for he/she has gained self-possession and self-knowledge. The *deeper self* or the *psyche* of a human being is *not only the principle of change but also the principle of action*. However, reflection, self-reflection, and imaginative variations on our own narrative play a vital corrective function in relation to any vital interest and any established psychic principle. We may say then that when reflection prevails over a mere performance of this or that principle it establishes in fact a new, second-order principle. Human rationality is, for Santayana, an example of a second-order “instinct” aiming at harmonizing action. Apparently purely spiritual activities, such as contemplation and the free play of imagination, are not without importance in the overall shape of the life of the mind and hence indirectly influence action. Both the distinction between psyche and spirit, and that between *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*, seem to be a source of productive tensions rather than unbridgeable gaps once we adopt a hermeneutic unity of life as our point of departure in reading Santayana. Thus, intelligent action, along with the degree of satisfaction it brings to the subject, may be recognized as a manifestation of self-integrity in the sense of self-mastery.

Paul Ricoeur, in a similar vein, speaks (after Aristotle) of a “*principle [of action] that is a self, a self that is a principle*.”²³ This brings to the fore the issue of self-identification as an agent. What makes me identify self-identification as an agent in the first place is my *psychic self* as a carrier of potentialities that call for realization on different levels of sophistication and sublimation.²⁴ The possible range of my

²⁰ *RB*, 102–103.

²¹ *RB*, 296.

²² *RB*, 622.

²³ *OAA*, 91.

²⁴ In Ricoeur’s account, of which I use here only a very few selected elements, action, as identity-shaping, is deeply embedded in the human, moral and ethical realm, where the ideas of otherness and seeking for recognition play a vital part. Santayana, in turn, articulates reflection and the margin of *redundancy* allowed for by one’s spirituality. A greater emphasis is put on the contemplative mode of existence and the possibility of partial detachment.

self-identification is limited physically/spatio-temporally by my body, logically by my capacity to reason, historically by my past narrative, and socially by the narratives or scenarios that are available for me to share. But above all, they are limited by the scope and the synthetic power of my imagination and my vocabulary.

Ricoeur, in his extensive search for a unifying philosophical support for his idea of selfhood as inclusive of subjective agency, which is constantly undermined by analytical philosophy of action, asks a key question, “*What ontology in view?*” Seeking for an answer, he refers to a number of standpoints, starting with Kant’s third conflict of transcendental ideas. Natural causality, according to Kant, is not the only one; another sort of causality is observable in the realm of phenomena, where we act exercising our freedom. Another possible way of speaking about agency is to “say, in Wittgenstein’s sense, that action and its motives on one side, and the event and its cause on the other, belong to two separate ‘language games,’ which we must be careful not to confuse.”²⁵ Yet, this dissociation of action and causality is too radical for Ricoeur, who cares about restoring some coherence here. Heidegger and his reinterpretation of Aristotle seem to provide more promising hints, but finally, Aristotle’s philosophy alone is recognized as most appropriate an answer to Ricoeur’s question. Without getting into the details of the study, I want to indicate that by establishing his theory on the basic Aristotelian concepts of *energeia*, act, potentiality, and *entelechy*, Ricoeur can account for the self’s freedom of will and its power to act in narrative terms. “By narrating a life of which I am not the author as to existence,” says Ricoeur,

I make myself its coauthor as to its meaning. Moreover, it is neither by chance nor by error that, in the opposite sense, so many Stoic philosophers interpreted life itself, life lived, as playing a role in a play we have not written and whose author, as a result, retreats outside of the role. These exchanges between the multiple sense of the term “author” and “authorship” contribute to the wealth of meaning of the very notion of agency. . . .²⁶

V

Coming back to Santayana, by trespassing the threshold between *zoe* and *bios* we are entering into a *hermeneutic and dramatic* realm or simply —the realm of *plots*.²⁷ Greek *bios*, from which stem words such as “biography” and “autobiography,” stands for a life that gives rise to a personal narrative and a drama—the main means of sustaining self-integrity. In Charles Taylor’s poetic language, the self here finds itself in the horizon of a “quest” in which “the future [is] to ‘redeem’ the past.”²⁸

²⁵ *OAA*, 64.

²⁶ *OAA*, 162

²⁷ I am using the terms “hermeneutic” and “dramatic” interchangeably by means of a quasi-equation which is legitimate in the light of a narrative theory proposed by Paul Ricoeur. See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990). To be precise, “hermeneutic” is a broader term, while “dramatic” denotes a variety of hermeneutic modes.

²⁸ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 50–51.

The idea of personal narrative conveys a specific kind of freedom tightly linked to human mimetic and metaphorical capacity. Unless we are committed to the Cartesian *fiat*, we may consent that psyche, being a principle of action, does suggest a certain meaning of freedom—namely the freedom to be oneself, or the freedom of the self to exercise its deeper nature, which is corrected by Santayana’s advocacy of self-limitation, his belief in the possibility of learning by experience, and the decisive influence self-knowledge and reflection may have on the experience and the course of one’s life. Santayana seems to have replaced the idea of free will with the freedom of acting according to one’s own nature. He calls it an

intelligent freedom, such as appears in actions expressive of the ingrained bent of living creatures, actions adapted to the circumstances, and prophetic of the result which, if fortunate, they are likely to have. Such moral power of self-expression is possible only because that previous fatality...in the sense of absolutely groundless action [in matter], has already established particular psyches and initiated in them an effort towards specific kinds of perfection.²⁹

This leads me to a formula of freedom which may be considered in terms of *ars vivendi*, namely the formula of *living with grace*—the freedom manifest in “assurance and peace in being what one is, and in becoming what one must become.”³⁰ A Nietzschean inspiration resonating here seems to be devoid of the fatalism and the forcefulness of the Nietzschean view. Grace replaces the will to power, it describes the ways of the self, the *how* of life’s performance. Becoming oneself is something desirable for its own sake and worthy of philosophical interest insofar as it involves an *art* and belongs to a broader idea of a good life. We are free artists or free thinkers in attending to the art of becoming ourselves.

As stated previously, freedom is possible only on the ground of a finite life and of limitations. For Santayana, as I read him, *freedom starts with external limitations and commences in voluntary ones*. The burden of material constraints and of will generates a situation of choice-making. The initial, psychic, and

partial predetermination of life—which in man is especially imperfect, and dependent on the chances of education and experience—is the source of the generic; the general, absent from the realm of essence, is omnipresent in impulse and action. Every living creature aims at and needs something generic, not anything in particular. . . .³¹

While experience accrues and self-knowledge matures, needs and demands become specific. In this process of education, what Santayana calls a disparity between capacities and demands leaves the psyche always partly unsatisfied.

Not this, not all this, not merely this, says the psyche at every turn. . . . Experience at the same time clarifies the instincts which it disappoints; and it is in terms of actual perceptions, expurgated or transformed, that secret ideals can first come to expression.³²

²⁹ *RB*, 387–88.

³⁰ George Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), 40.

³¹ *RB*, 97.

³² *RB*, 98.

Selfhood emerges out of these dialectical transactions of the psyche and the world and finds fruition in the actual. The whole psychic history imprinted in her ways shapes her action. Psyche is intrinsically temporal and whatever she brings into experience, including the whole burden of the past, define her and “the momentum and direction of her life at the [given] moment.”³³ Spirit is the place where the experience of these transactions is revealed and qualified. *The revelation, backed up by reflection, makes the whole difference in that it yields “unprecedented character to the sum of existence.”*³⁴ Thus, a narrative and an autobiography are created on the canvas of lived experience.

VI

At this point the function of the dramatic hermeneutics and the specificity of freedom it grants to a human self begins to be manifest. The actual crowns the material and a specific articulation of the actual illustrates the whole enormous effort of the psyche to find herself and assert herself in the world. Hermeneutics constitutes—in a sense—the “substance” of the dynamic self, which constructs, reflects upon, and re-examines meanings by a constant juxtaposition of the whole with its parts. Mind you that Santayana speaks of “*the sum of existence*,” its synthetic vision. “Memory lights up perspectives which in nature can subsist only as dead relations between dead facts; and expectation, contradiction, doubt and surprise vivify” the whole.³⁵ The commonsensical view prizing mind “for its utility in serving matter” may well be replaced by the view prizing “matter for its utility in serving mind.”³⁶ New experiences enforce the constant reconfiguration of the vistas of life past and future – an activity supported by the strategies of attachment and detachment, from intelligent planning, through self-reflection, to the contemplation of pure essences. Santayana, at the outset of his *magnum opus*, declares himself an advocate of “the free life of mind.”³⁷ He means the freedom from instrumentality and servility to power, both of which give birth to spiritual misery. Salvation and rebirth start with a humble recognition of partial dependence, the recognition of actual possibilities and self-limitation, which—paradoxically—may result in being able to “overcome the world without doing it violence.”³⁸ This strategy of sustaining self-integrity assumes the renunciation of power for the sake of gaining a different “power”—power of self-knowledge and self-possession. Free life of the mind requires mastering the art of pausing, waiting, using attention selectively, concentrating on the moment, switching in between larger vistas, and—to use Michael Brodrick’s words, “transcending means and ends”³⁹—all this as to avoid “idle escape from one error

³³ *RB*, 98.

³⁴ *RB*, xxx.

³⁵ *RB*, xxx–xxxii.

³⁶ *RB*, xxxi.

³⁷ *RB*, xxxii.

³⁸ *RB*, xxxii.

³⁹ Michael Brodrick, “Transcending Means and Ends Near the End of Life.” In *George*

into another.”⁴⁰ In a way similar to the ancient masters of the therapy of the soul, Santayana is interested in the quality of the life of the mind with an overall good life in view.

Attending to the quality of the life of mind is an exercise in self-integrity and freedom. Despite the idea of disinterestedness inherent in this vision, it is far from being unpractical or useless, as it brings about a far-reaching transformation of life. It is demanding and perhaps not attainable without knowledge of the self. How is this knowledge possible if, to quote Santayana, “the psyche remains a mystery in her intrinsic operations”?⁴¹ Santayana advocates a practice which he calls “auscultation”—a medical term which I propose to translate into an *everyday phenomenology of the psyche*—a careful, reflective tracing of psychic patterns as expressed in “verbal and dramatic conventions.”⁴²

Not knowing what we are, we at least can discourse abundantly about our books, our words, and our social actions; and these manifestations of the psyche, though peripheral, are faithful enough witnesses to her nature.⁴³

The results of *everyday phenomenology* are subject to correction and modification. This stage of criticism is described as follows:

All the errors ever made about other things, if we understand their cause, enlighten us about ourselves; for the psyche is at once the spring of curiosity and the ground of refraction, selection, and distortion in our ideas. Summary reaction, symbolisation, infection with relativity and subjective colouring begins in the senses and is continued in the passions; and if we succeed in removing, by criticism, this personal equation from our science of other things, the part withdrawn, which remains on our hands, is our indirect knowledge of the psyche.⁴⁴

The twofold strategy of the *phenomenology and criticism of the psyche*, leading to self-knowledge, recalls the task of deciphering a foreign language of material existence. Interestingly, in the passage quoted above, Santayana advocates applying the method of *hermeneutic phenomenology* upon *psychic hermeneutics*. We have a peculiar doubling here. Having done a hermeneutic work on our very own psychic hermeneutic activity (which entails “summary reaction, symbolization, infection with relativity and subjective coloring”), we proceed to employ a phenomenological *epochè*, by detaching ourselves to a greatest possible degree from our own most spontaneous experience of the world, to assess, from a distance, its specific subjective bent. The subject matter of our inquiry is nothing else than the form of our own finitude reflected in the specificity of the hermeneutic and mimetic activity of the psyche. A psychic trope, mutable, but to some extent repetitive and predictable, is imprinted in the sum total of our reaction to the world and our appropriation of it. Santayana might have simply said “study your character,” but his strategy is more

Santayana at 150, op. cit., 241.

⁴⁰ *RB*, 5.

⁴¹ *RB*, 335.

⁴² *RB*, 335

⁴³ *RB*, 335.

⁴⁴ *RB*, 336–37.

subtle because he wants us to focus on ourselves not directly but indirectly—by way of a *detour*, via the world. He speaks of, to quote it again, “removing a personal equation from our science of things.” *Equation* is a “statement of equality between two expressions consisting of variables and/or numbers. In essence, equations are questions.”⁴⁵ We are looking for a variable which defines our subjective bent and is the question mark symbolizing our finitude. This liberating hermeneia of life attests to the therapeutic benefit that an ontology like Santayana’s—one which builds an “impossible” liaison between pragmatic orientation and references to the best of metaphysical tradition—bestows on human existence. It promises understanding—and to understand, for Santayana,

is pre-eminently to live, moving not by stimulation and external compulsion, but by inner direction and control.... Ideals...are possible forms of being...and he who...is able to embody them at least in part and for a season, has to that extent transfigured life, turning it from a fatal process into a liberal art.⁴⁶

VII

We strive to understand the pattern of our existence and probe its peripheries and boundaries for their plasticity with the possibility of self-transformation in view. The intrinsic language of existence being unknown, the dramatic language of the human world is under scrutiny. A narrative is nothing other than a meaningful rendering of a master trope of existence.

The flux, or the path of existence, will elude us if we are content to express it lyrically, by eliciting the intrinsic essences of its single moments; but it may be partly described dramatically, in epic tropes, in terms which are formulae or types of sequence.⁴⁷

To refer to Paul Ricoeur’s categories, we discern the scenarios, the plots available for us to join. We recognize other patterns and configurations, involving other human selves, into which our selves, as certain configurations, may become involved. This is a hermeneutic and at once a dramatic strategy called by Ricoeur “*emplotment*.” Borrowed originally from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and set in the context of existence, *emplotment* involves reconfiguration within our own dramatic plot, a movement prompted by the reflection on the whole in juxtaposition to its episodes in the light of new events. Assessing one’s possible position in the configuration of stories allows for establishing what Ricoeur calls “a relative beginning with respect to the entire course of the world.”⁴⁸ In other words, the beginning of our action “takes its place in a constellation of beginnings.”⁴⁹ A human self is conceived of here as *a piece of*

⁴⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. “equation”, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/equation>.

⁴⁶ *LR*, 441.

⁴⁷ *RB*, 296.

⁴⁸ *OAA*, 105. Ricoeur borrows the idea and the phrase “relatively first beginning” from Kant and employs it to explain free action in a narrative context. See Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1965), 413.

⁴⁹ *OAA*, 106.

self-interpreting reality. This self presents a recognizable character, defined as “the self under the appearances of sameness.”⁵⁰ It “has a history which it has contracted. . . . What sedimentation has contracted, narration can redeploy.”⁵¹ Both literary and existential fictions “remain imaginative variations on an invariant, our corporeal condition experienced as the existential mediation between the self and the world.”⁵² The substance of this mediation constitutes narrative events, which have a peculiar effect of changing necessity into chance and chance into fate. Narrative creates a synthetic meaning at the price of annulling the natural contingency of events. Emplotment, inspired by the Aristotelian categories of *mimesis* and *mythos*, is possible due to a crucial faculty of human imagination and language: namely, the faculty of *semantic innovation*, manifest in creating metaphors. Both metaphorical reference and mimetic function of emplotment, reminds Ricoeur, make sense in reference to the temporal realm of living and acting humans, as Aristotle explicitly noted in *Poetics*.⁵³

How is emplotment thinkable on the ground of Santayana’s ontology? Precisely by way of psychic phenomenology and criticism, by tracing and reflecting upon the regularities expressive of tropes meant to enhance our understanding of the share we as selves can afford within the observable dynamics. The “fundamental contingency of existence,” asserts Santayana, coexists with “intelligent freedom, such as appears in actions expressive of the ingrained bent of living creatures.” Then, “At whatever point we call a halt in our backward survey of history, we find extant some arbitrary state of things, determining the forms which intelligent judgment and action shall then assume.”⁵⁴ This seems to correspond to Kant’s and Ricoeur’s “relative beginning.”

The above considerations, as noted at the beginning, are parts of a larger interpretive effort of placing Santayana in the hermeneutic context and beyond. Looking at the dynamics of selfhood which one may elicit from Santayana’s *oeuvre*, one may also speculate—somewhat in the vein of post-structural reflection—that this self may exercise its integrity and intelligence by means of the principle of infinite qualitative difference, ensured by the realm of essences and the phenomenon of repetition, occurring in nature, including psyche. The mind is where both are synthesized by means of images, symbols, and concepts:

the habits and passions of each creature. . . are principles of reiteration; they involve repetitions in action, and they find and use repetitions in nature, answering to their own precision of form. Organisms are instruments of repetition; and they rely, for their existence and prosperity, on the repetition of opportunities for the repetition of their acts. Were this reliance not justified, or this mechanism unstable, there could be no life, experience, or art in the world.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *OAA*, 128.

⁵¹ *OAA*, 122.

⁵² *OAA*, 150.

⁵³ See Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. I, op. cit.

⁵⁴ *RB*, 387–88.

⁵⁵ *RB*, 298.

The synthetic and deconstructive capacity of the spirit along with the synoptic capacity of the psyche sustaining the realm of sentimental time and pictorial space, collaborate, by means of different metaphorical and mimetic strategies, to sustain self-integrity. They collaborate under the aegis of the hermeneutic principle *pars pro toto*. Santayana, with his lifelong emphasis on creative imagination, metaphor, and poetry, was keenly aware of their importance as dramaturgical and narrative tactics belonging to the strategy of sustaining self-integrity.

Becoming oneself inescapably involves bearing witness to “my [own] fatal character—or my fatal acts, making irruption from moment to moment into my character.”⁵⁶ The point is to overcome the viewpoint of fatality. In line with Ricoeur, Santayana claims that only by understanding life can we become its authors. This sort of freedom is *hermeneutic in nature and dramatic in style*. Santayana’s realms add a sense of ontological profoundness to this hermeneia of life. The vertical temporality of the spirit breaks into the horizon of daily existence offering a chance for every moment to become a new beginning. Thus, existence can be redeemed from the mechanical repetition of *zoe*. This earthly redemption relies on the undetermined relation between the flux of events and their interpretation, and draws on a partial irrelevance and redundancy of the human trope as seen from the perspective of nature.

Life at our level has adopted a vehicle which—like all natural vehicles—has a form and a story of its own, apart from the inherited movement which it serves to propagate. The individual...has become a redundant trope, surrounding that other with epicycles and arabesques and prolongations useless to the march of transmissible life, yet enriching it at its several stations.⁵⁷

KATARZYNA KREMPLEWSKA

The Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

⁵⁶ *RB*, 389

⁵⁷ *RB*, 334.

Review of *Art and Morality: Essays in the Spirit of George Santayana*

Art and Morality: Essays in the Spirit of George Santayana

Morris Grossman, edited by Martin A. Coleman (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2014)

I first met Morris Grossman at an Eastern Division American Society for Aesthetics conference a few years before his death in 2012. I was a graduate student in philosophy, and I had attended Columbia College as an undergraduate, which provided us with a sort of fellowship of shared alumni-ship. He was interested in the fact that I was leaving the practice of law to go back to school for philosophy, and wanted my opinion on what he thought was a clear analogy between Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the U.S. Constitution. That proposition was entirely mysterious to me at the time, viewing the U.S. Constitution with lawyer's eyes. It would be years before I could begin to soften the legal edges of my thinking and see it as a philosopher might, and then, later, as what Grossman would call a "poet-philosopher" might. Grossman wanted to talk further about the idea at some point and handed me a business card, which had written under his name, "~~Philosopher with Soul~~." I wondered about both this title and about its visible redaction but I didn't ask him about it. After reading *Art and Morality* I now believe I know why he did it: Grossman, in what he would undoubtedly say is "in the spirit of Santayana," was large enough, complex enough, and pragmatic enough, to encompass both the assertion of "with Soul" and its denial (the redacted "~~with Soul~~"). I mention this here not for its anecdotal value (although Grossman would not necessarily see the need to separate anecdotal or literary value from philosophical or critical) but because it is relevant to interpretive understanding of *Art and Morality*.

In short, my claim in this book review is that there are a number of common threads that run through the diverse and often eclectic essays in this book and that they include these:

- (1) Philosophy and other texts with legal, moral, and practical import that are not designed to be understood primarily as literature can be viewed and understood aesthetically;
- (2) Artistic events and art objects can be understood structurally, functionally and with continuity, giving them morality-like features;
- (3) Understanding of aesthetically and morally relevant experiences, philosophers, and artists, requires a holistic rather than piecemeal mode of interpretation even if to do this is more complex and entails some apparent or real internal contradictions;
- (4) The art/morality distinction is not clearly a distinction between the real and unreal because there is art in life and life in art; and finally,
- (5) To do these things is to enter into the spirit of George Santayana (or, as Grossman would aver, the spirit of Santayana in the spirit of Morris Grossman).

These threads run through the Introduction and Part I, which consists of essays on Grossman's own musings on art and morality, Part II, in which Grossman discusses and critiques the work of "artistic philosophers and philosophical artists," and Part III, a collection of Grossman's essays on various aspects of Santayana's thought, including ontology, morality, spirit and spirituality, aesthetics, nature, "ultimate" reality and the method of philosophizing in a literary mode. All of these essays (with the exception of the Introduction and Chapter 23, "Santayana in California,") were published previously from the late 1960s until 2005, and they are presented not in chronological order but by subject matter.

Throughout *Art and Morality* Grossman demonstrates his facility to view the subjects of his analyses either through a moral perspective (what he would call a functional, serious or result-oriented one) or an aesthetic one (which for Grossman is connected with pleasure and with play).¹ He goes back and forth between the two poles with ease, looking not for "ultimate truth" in these analyses but for a broader sort of understanding. I will survey each of the parts of the book in turn.

In the Introduction, Grossman provides the backdrop for the rest of the book by demonstrating the ways that art and morality connect in six case studies that Grossman provides in which both aesthetic and moral features are present: 1) the Quorum Call, 2) Lincoln Center and the Firehouse, 3) the Candle in the Dark, 4) the Gettysburg Address, 5) *Don Giovanni*, and 6) *Tosca*. The contexts of 1-4 demonstrate how practical and functional features of government legislation and protection of its people are often juxtaposed with simultaneous aesthetic features. Grossman's "candle in the dark" idea is that whether it is better to either curse the darkness or to light a candle is a performative choice and one that we make all the time when viewing our circumstances morally and/or aesthetically. In his discussion of *Don Giovanni* and *Tosca*, Grossman points out how operas can and do often present moral situations, juxtapose seriousness and enjoyment, and demonstrate that the distinction between the real and the unreal is not as clear as it might seem.

In Part I, "Art and Morality," Grossman discusses the ambiguity of the distinction between art and morality, holding that art both elevates and is continuous with life (Ch. 1, 23). He then discusses the various ways in which the arts use morality, both to bring life into art and to create certain aesthetic effects within art (see Ch. 2). From here Grossman discusses the ways that the arts can do this through the use of metaphor, "mixing memory of what is known with a desire to reach something beyond" (55), and modulation (in music), which provides the feel of temporal movement and transition as well as the impulse behind it (46). He also discusses the ways in which being an artist entails both ethical and artistic obligations that cross any purported boundaries between art and life (Ch. 4). By focusing on particular plays and operas (such as *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Ch. 5 and *Nathan the Wise* in Ch. 13—this is in Part 2) Grossman also shows how the arts often demonstrate and mirror ethical concerns and human changes from ignorance to knowledge. In addition, he shows how the best art makes use of such moral and aesthetic virtues as economy (Ch. 6), how moral and legal texts contain such aesthetic features as style, intention, and performance (Ch. 7), and how both human rights and artistic

¹ I should add here that Grossman attributes art seen as "play" and morality seen as "work" to Santayana's view, which Grossman follows, in *The Sense of Beauty* (see 14).

appreciation involve simultaneous perception and construction of the subjects and concepts at issue (Ch. 8).

In the first half of Part 2 of *Art and Morality*, “Artistic Philosophers and Philosophical Artists,” Grossman demonstrates how the philosophies of C.S. Peirce (Ch. 9), Frederick J. Ruf on William James (Ch. 10), Jean-Paul Sartre (Ch. 11), and Monroe C. Beardsley (Ch. 12), can be viewed in a literary mode via their irony (Peirce), in light of their own conflicts (Beardsley), in the context of what Grossman calls their “wider sympathies and appreciations” (159 on Beardsley, and Ruf on James), and in their methods of eschewing the sharp distinctions and dichotomies of some modes of philosophizing (Sartre). Here Grossman has shown a link between continental, analytic, and pragmatist thinkers that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

In the second half of Part 2, Grossman shows how such artists as the 18th century philosopher and playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (Ch. 13), Lewis Carroll (Ch. 14), Leo Tolstoy (Ch. 15), and the sculptor Brancusi (Ch. 16) can be viewed as demonstrating art’s continuity with life in various ways. Lessing is shown as using the literary and performance medium of a theatrical play to mirror and incorporate ethical concerns in a way that is at once religious and atheist (see 176). In a lengthy discussion on the issue of whether or not Carroll was a pedophile or Platonic lover, Grossman holds that understanding Carroll cannot be limited to biographical detail and that the precise features of his personal identity are both irrelevant and fundamentally unknowable. In his Chapter 15 on art and death, Grossman uses Tolstoy’s work, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, in order to discuss, compare and contrast closures, endings and “death,” in both art and in life. Finally, Grossman demonstrates how Brancusi, in some of his sculptures, manages both to create the illusion of continuity in a seemingly static piece and a timeless structure out of a piece that seems to be in perpetual motion, thus demonstrating the ways that art can manage and mirror real-life experience.

Part 3 of *Art and Morality* is dedicated to Grossman’s work in explicit connection with Santayana. In this section, Grossman discusses the extent to which drama, which he defines as (among other things) “[a] controlled presentation of contrary viewpoints” (216), and dialectic, which he defines as “the logical elaboration of viewpoints and a consideration of statements that are entailed with respect to their consistency” (216–17), are used as modes of philosophizing that create the tension and polarities between which philosophy moves (227). He also discusses Santayana’s view of ontology and metaphysics, reality and the realm of existence (Ch. 18); spirit vs. spirituality (Ch. 19); the sense of beauty (Ch. 21); the environment, transcendentalism and nature (Ch. 23); and on the idea of truth and “ultimate truths” in general (Ch. 24). Grossman also discusses Santayana’s memoir in novel form, *The Last Puritan* (Ch. 22), and provides his own view of how to best interpret Santayana as himself a philosophic and literary interpreter (Ch. 20). It is here that Grossman says that we need to interpret Santayana as “the whole egg,” even if doing this complicates our understanding of Santayana (see 257 and following). In short, he presents Santayana as confusing, contradictory, multi-faceted, imaginative, dramatic, dialectic, religious, secular, and naturalistic in various modes and sometimes all at once. I will leave it to the reader to decide whether or not viewing Santayana in this way is valuable for understanding Santayana’s work.

To sum up, this book of essays is connected primarily by the lifelong interest that Grossman has had in pleasure, play, work, and function, as they appear in the arts, in philosophy, and in other aspects of life. What comes through most clearly in *Art and Morality* is not a singular philosophic theory, or set of insights about those he critiques (although these are there), but the pragmatic sort of gestalt that orients Grossman's focus and interests. Throughout, Grossman is concerned not mainly with categories and distinctions but with complexity, change, nuance, aesthetic richness, and ethical import. One need not, of course, accept this way of viewing either art or morality. One might point out, for example, that art and aesthetic interests come apart, and that even the term "aesthetic" is now applied to disgusting and visceral as well as satisfying and pleasurable experiences. Or that art often (or always) involves hard work of the sort that is not "play" and that this work is properly conceived of as part of art and not as part of morality. Finally, one might take issue with Grossman's account of morality, which seems less concerned with the good than with the mode of attaining it via function and structure. The book succeeds, however, in giving us Grossman, a complex and generous thinker with a rich aesthetic and ethical sensibility who seeks holistic understanding and wisdom rather than analysis and dissection. As such, I think he is a Philosopher with Soul. I have not redacted the phrase with a strikethrough, although I encourage the reader to view this moniker metaphorically, literarily, and perhaps even a bit ironically, in honor of the spirit of Morris Grossman.

AILI BRESNAHAN

University of Dayton

Review of *Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life*¹

Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life

Daniel Moreno, translated by Charles Padrón (Lewisburg, Penn: Bucknell University Press, 2015)

Daniel Moreno's *Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life* (a translation of his Spanish-language *Santayana filósofo: La filosofía como forma de vida* [Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007]) pursues "the golden thread of [George Santayana's] thought" (42) in order to read his work "from the inside" (xxi) and give an account of his philosophy as a coherent system. The idea is that taking Santayana's interior perspective—engaging in *literary psychology*—is the best way to make sense of his philosophical system. Accordingly, Moreno is concerned with Santayana's philosophy as he lived it; but this book is not a biography, intellectual or otherwise. Moreno acknowledges that the life one lives influences the way one thinks, but he does not hold that the way to grasp the interior world of a thinker is to read the thinker's work in light of biographical detail. Rejecting the search for "the key to [Santayana's] thought in the vicissitudes of his life," Moreno chooses "to move from Santayana's oeuvre to his life, and not merely to the commonplace facts of his life, but rather to the interiority of that life" (xxii). In other words, the realm of matter undeniably influences spirit and the intuition of essences, but moments of spirit can be understood without reducing them to material factors, and Moreno chooses to consider them in terms of the essences intuited rather than the material flux.

Moreno picks up the golden thread at the point of Santayana's commitment to avoiding the idolatry of taking essences for existences, of taking the deliverances of the human mind as exhaustive of reality. Moreno writes,

Recognizing the natural necessity in humans driven to be natural born mythologists, Santayana suggests the possibility of not succumbing to illusion, and of arriving at moments of rapture in which projection is suspended. What interests him is not only the ascertaining of illusion but also the interesting consequences that follow from rejecting it. (44)

Santayana's project turned on a tension between the animal compulsion to believe myths and the spiritual ability to transcend that compulsion. His philosophical system, in distinguishing essence and existence, guards against deception by illusions while cultivating the capacity to appreciate them.

The golden thread leads Moreno to a striking realization about Santayana's perspective: Santayana's avoidance of the seduction of illusions is a pursuit of sanity, which reflects his "constant preoccupation: madness" (49). It is madness to mistake illusions for reality, and "the chief and most lasting illusion of the mind is the illusion of its own importance" (*DL*, 44; quoted in Moreno, 50). This is

¹ A Spanish translation of this review by Inmaculada Yruela appears in *Limbo: boletín de estudios sobre Santayana* (35), 2015.

the point of the story of Autologos in Santayana's dialogue "Normal Madness": Autologos loses his head when he abandons the garden in despair after learning that the names he has given to the plants based on his feelings and perceptions do not pick out anything existent in the garden; when stripped of his illusions about nature, Autologos' despair betrays his attachment to the illusion of his mind's importance.

Moreno points out that the strangeness of the disillusioned life was well known to Santayana, who characterized living without illusions as

walking dead among the living, not knowing what we seem to know, not loving what we seem to love, but already translated into an invisible paradise where . . . one only companion . . . stands beside us and shakes his head silently, bidding us say Nay, nay, to all our madness. (*DL*, 57)

In response, Moreno writes,

This is a terrifying text in which Santayana exhibits his personal demon, this companion, silent and smiling, who reminds him that everything is an illusion, who compels him constantly to say 'no,' 'no,' to the things that influence the majority of people. What comes to light is his less visible side, hidden beneath an august style. . . . (50)

In pointing out Santayana's preoccupation with madness, Moreno follows a path of interpretation similar to Richard Rorty's readings of Vladimir Nabokov and George Orwell in which he emphasized their concern with cruelty (Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989], 146). Rorty read Nabokov and Orwell as pointing out temptations to and consequences of cruelty so that we might expand our awareness of the suffering of others; similarly Moreno reads Santayana as pointing out temptations to madness and consequences of illusion so that we might grow in self-knowledge and sanity and expand our awareness of ourselves.

The book traces Santayana's golden thread through his ontology, social and political philosophy, novel, and speculations on spirituality. Moreno's emphasis on Santayana's concern with madness aids in understanding what motivates the ontology: Clearing his mind of cant, cleaning the windows of his soul and eliminating superstition mean distinguishing categories that help one avoid the madness of confusing essence and existence and of overvaluing the importance of the human mind. In Chapter 2, "Knowledge and Reality," Moreno identifies "the vertebra of [Santayana's] philosophical system" as "the categorical separation between essence and existence, animal faith and intuition, and psyche and spirit" (53). He follows Santayana's descent into and reemergence from skepticism and the subsequent articulation of the Realm of Being. The chapter ends with a consideration of Santayana's anti-metaphysical approach to traditional philosophical topics including teleology, God, and self.

Moreno challenges the perception that Santayana's disillusion and philosophical detachment entailed political indifference, and, in Chapter 3, "The Social Warp," Moreno argues that Santayana's philosophy includes a definite and considered political aspect. It is "a political philosophy thought out through the *spirit*" (97) and is expressed neither as activism nor policy recommendations. Santayana did not object to other thinkers being politically active, but it betrays a misunderstanding of Santayana's work to demand of him solutions to problems he never took up. As

an illustration of Santayana's political outlook, Moreno compares the responses of James and Santayana to the 1898 Spanish-American war:

James truly believed, innocently and romantically, in the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and this belief (once tainted) helped draw out his fit of bitter, profound tears over the first proofs of the imperialism in his own country. Santayana nevertheless, presented himself as listening attentively to this inner voice that said *no*; *no*. (119)

Here Santayana's political philosophy can be seen to follow from his concern with how best to regard ideals and avoid deceptive illusions.

Moreno shows, in Chapter 4, "Philosophy and Novel in *The Last Puritan*," how this literary work places "before the reader, under a different format, Santayana's own philosophical system" (130). The novel is presented as a memoir, written by a fictionalized Santayana, of Oliver Alden, who exemplifies transcendentalism taken to its extreme. The story is, writes Moreno, "the literary and philosophical progression of the boy Autologos" (132). Its tragedy lies in Oliver's inability to accept the irrationality of matter and the spiritual consolation of essence; and his insistence on the absolute value of his own perspective. Oliver's intelligence, strength, wealth, and noble intentions cannot save him from spiritual consequences of confusing essence and existence. While recounting Oliver's spiritual disease, the novel's structure expresses Santayana's perspectives on spirit. The novel—by including Santayana as a character—blurs the line between fact and fiction. According to Moreno, "this particular relation between reality and fiction connects directly with the point of view of the *spirit*" (127), for which essences of history, truth, fiction, and illusion have equal status. In this way, the novel is a play of essences expressive of spirit's activity, and this blending of essences is apparent in the characters as well: "each one represents a unity that corresponds not to an actual person but rather to an elaborate composite made up of fragments from distinct spheres" (128). This prevents assigning Santayana's perspective to any particular character; and, in fact, Santayana's ideas are expressed by many different characters. This allows for suggestive self-criticism, as in the Epilogue when one character tells Santayana that the memoir contains better philosophy than his other works. Moreno thinks this "claim reflects a way of understanding philosophy that does not impose on others its perspectives, nor becomes indignant when confronted with contrary views, but rather limits itself to describing from a spiritual point of view distinct possibilities, in order that it be the *psyche*, if anything, that chooses in the final say" (130).

Moreno follows the golden thread to the idea of "the spiritual as an essential element in Santayana," and finds the message that spirit makes life worth living when saved from distraction and madness (145). In Chapter 5, "Spiritual Testament," Moreno considers Santayana's speculations on the spiritual life, finding the novelty of Santayana's approach to lie with his thoroughly materialist starting point. He considers the difference in mood between *The Life of Reason* and later work on the spiritual life but does not think the forms of life incompatible. He examines religion, charity, metanoia and self-transcendence, and concludes that this last notion is unique for its assertion of a thing's capacity to transform into something else from within—an idea Moreno uses to tie together the realms of being and to consider the idea of union with God. Moreno claims that Santayana's understanding

of union showed that “embracing the divine point of view does not damage the psychological self, or lead to suicide, or even constitute a mental illness, at most, it does imply the regeneration of the psyche” (166). Moreno’s interpretation suggests that Santayana’s preoccupation with madness led him to articulate a program of spiritual hygiene, a way to avoid deception without cutting oneself off from the best things of human life. As Moreno writes in the final section of his book, “the mission of philosophy has to be to lessen the authority of the world without suggesting an escape from it” (169), which is what Santayana did by subduing illusion without being tempted to master the world.

Moreno’s book is an inspired and careful reading of Santayana’s work. It presents Santayana’s philosophical activity in its own terms and does not force it into mainstream categories. Though the text does contain editorial flaws that can be highly distracting (typographical errors and other mistakes including ones that most definitely are *not* the fault of the author or translator—for example, a consistently misnamed character from *The Last Puritan*), this is an extremely well informed and insightful work that should be taken seriously by anyone who cares about Santayana’s philosophy.

MARTIN COLEMAN

Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis

Manuel Garrido Jiménez (1925–2015)

Manuel Garrido Jiménez, one of the most important figures in contemporary Spanish philosophy, sadly passed away in Madrid on January 8th, 2015. His departure means the disappearance of an intellectual who still regarded philosophy as a protean discipline, different in aim and scope from the natural and social sciences, but in permanent dialogue with them. His University teaching career was devoid of any dogmatism or sectarianism and he was well-known for his absolute generosity and his contempt for philosophical quackery, personalisms, and fashions.

Prof. Manuel Garrido held the Chair of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of Valencia (1962–1979), at the Autonomous University of Madrid (1979–1983), and at the Complutense University of Madrid from 1983 until 1991, when he retired.

Prof. Garrido's stay at the University of Valencia marked a significant period for Spanish philosophy. On the one side, from the 1960s onwards he played a key role in the introduction of such disciplines as Symbolic Logic, Philosophy of Science, and Philosophy of Language into Spanish universities. Thus, his book *Lógica simbólica* became a reference for many students of humanities in Spain and Latin America. On the other side, Prof. Manuel Garrido (together with his wife Carmen) founded in 1971 the Philosophy journal *Teorema*, which brought to Spain the topics, concepts and methods of Analytic Philosophy, in some sense, as José Ortega y Gasset had done with Phenomenology four decades earlier.

Furthermore, from the late 1960s Prof. Garrido organized in Valencia (and later in Madrid in the 1980s) a series of yearly symposia and philosophical meetings, including the massive and controversial "Philosophy and science in Spanish contemporary thought" (1972), perhaps the foundation of "new" Spanish philosophy. These meetings featured as invited guests people such as Gustav Bermann, Noam Chomsky, Jonathan Leonard Cohen, Donald Davidson, Alwin Diemer, Michael Dummett, Peter Geach, José Ferrater Mora, Jürgen Habermas, Stuart Hampshire, Gisbert Hasenjäger, Friedrich von Hayek, Franz von Kutschera, Kuno Lorenz, David Pears, Karl Popper, Hilary Putnam, Willard Van Orman Quine, John Searle, Peter Strawson, Christian Thiel, and Georg Henrik von Wright, to name only some of the best-known participants.

Prof. Garrido was a distinguished specialist in the philosophy of Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega. And from his student years he kept a strong attachment to the philosophy of George Santayana and a deep concern for its neglect in Spain. In 1996, as a result of this ongoing concern, he set himself the task of rescuing Santayana's thought for Spain. To this end, he promoted the publication of *Limbo: An International Bulletin for the Study of Santayana*, as a supplement of *Teorema*, both to make Santayana's philosophy better known and to strengthen the links between Santayana scholars from Spain and America. He also fostered the publication of numerous hitherto forgotten works by Santayana in different book series issued by the Tecnos, Cátedra, and KRK publishing houses.

In the last few years of his life, Prof. Garrido published two monumental works: *The Philosophical and Scientific Legacy of the 20th Century* [Madrid, Cátedra, 2005], and *The Legacy of Spanish and Latin American Philosophy in the 20th Century* [Madrid, Cátedra, 2009]. Both works (of more than 1,000 pages each) aim to trace the contribution that Spanish philosophy has made to twentieth century thought.

LUIS M. VALDÉS-VILLANUEVA

University of Oviedo

Irving Singer (1925–2015)

The noted philosopher and Santayana scholar Irving Singer, author of the magisterial three-volume work *The Nature of Love*, died on February 1, 2015, aged 89. Singer was born in Brooklyn on December 24, 1925, and served in World War II. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Harvard in 1948, under the G.I. Bill. The following year he wed Josephine Fisk, an opera singer with whom he had four children. They spent a year at Oxford (1949–1950), during which time Singer read *The Last Puritan*, and in 1950 took a trip to Italy to meet its author. This is related in detail in the delightful article “A Pilgrimage to Santayana,” which can be found in Singer’s 2000 book *George Santayana, Literary Philosopher*, an essential work for anyone interested in the life and thought of Santayana.

Graduating with a PhD in philosophy from Harvard in 1952, Singer taught at Harvard, Cornell, the University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins before joining MIT in 1958, where he was to remain for over half a century, retiring from there in 2013. Over his long and distinguished career, Singer wrote numerous articles and 21 books, devoted to such diverse topics as aesthetics, creativity, film, literature, music, and moral philosophy. He combined the rigorous approach of analytic philosophy with the experimental technique of pragmatism. In addition to the *Nature of Love* trilogy, other titles include *Modes of Creativity: Philosophical Perspectives*; *Mozart and Beethoven: The Concept of Love in Their Operas*; *Cinematic Mythmaking: Philosophy in Film*; *Ingmar Bergman: Cinematic Philosopher*; *Santayana’s Aesthetics: A Critical Analysis*, and the aforementioned *George Santayana: Literary Philosopher*. The MIT Press has honored his work by initiating “The Irving Singer Library,” which has republished many of his books. At the time of his death, Singer was working on a manuscript entitled *Creativity in the Brain*. A more detailed description of Singer’s many works and awards can be found on the MIT website: <http://web.mit.edu/philosophy/singer.html>.

Singer was predeceased by his wife Josephine, who died in 2014. They had been wed for 65 years. He called her his semi-collaborator, and joked that “I write in bed, where I am comfortable, and dictate to my wife. She often disagrees with what I say, and we’ll discuss it, and sometimes I incorporate her ideas.”

On a personal note, I first met Irving Singer in 1991 at a conference organized in his honor by my friend David Goicoechea, at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. To prepare for this event I read *The Nature of Love*, and was astonished both by its depth and by its clarity. What astonished me even more was the way in which Professor Singer—who immediately invited me to call him Irving—responded so knowingly to all of the various papers delivered over the three-day conference. The proceedings were later published in a volume entitled *The Nature and Pursuit of Love: The Philosophy of Irving Singer*, in which he wrote an elegant and deeply responsive afterword.

We stayed in touch over the years, and he always alerted me when his latest book came out. What I most remember are the many visits I had with Irving over the years whenever I was in Boston, walking down various streets with him and learning more about his meetings with such legendary figures as George Santayana, Bertrand Russell, Leonard Bernstein, and Mrs. Alfred North Whitehead, as well as discussing

with him his ongoing views about opera, movies, novels, and other creative areas. He was generous with his time, and always asked me to fill him in on my own work. It was clear to me that he relished conversation, and like Socrates believed that true wisdom is arrived at through dialogue. I wish that I had had more opportunities to interact with him in this way, as he exemplified Nietzsche's remark in *Twilight of the Idols* that only thoughts reached by walking have value.

Throughout his writings, Irving Singer called for cooperation among scientists, philosophers, poets and novelists, and demonstrated a conscientious effort to familiarize himself with the literature of love from all fields. It is fitting that George Santayana should be a major touchstone in all his work. For Santayana, with his level-headed, dispassionate manner, had the eye of a scientist, yet was also one of the few people to master the fields of philosophy and literature. It is also interesting to note that he always kept a framed photo of Santayana prominently displayed on the window sill of his office at MIT, right next to the photos of his family.

Just as Irving was fortunate to have met George Santayana in 1950, so was I fortunate to have met Irving in 1991. As he states in the afterword to *The Nature and Pursuit of Love: The Philosophy of Irving Singer*, "What I learned most of all from Santayana was the importance of the humanities as an interdisciplinary resource in all intellectual pursuits. His writings taught me that in the life of the mind there is no absolute chasm between philosophy and literature, the two academic fields that have meant the most to me." These are lessons passed on to me by Irving, and I will never forget them. He was—and remains—a true inspiration to me, and a genuine example of a thinker of the highest caliber.

Irving Singer's writings will, I am sure, stand the test of time, as his primary topic—the nature of love—is not likely to disappear any time soon, and one cannot find a better guide to help one navigate its many shoals.

TIM MADIGAN

St. John Fisher College

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHECKLIST

THIRTY-FIRST UPDATE

The items below will supplement the references given in *George Santayana: A Bibliographical Checklist, 1880–1980* (Bowling Green: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982) prepared by Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. and John Jones. These references are divided into primary and secondary sources. Except for the book reviews and dissertations, the following articles and books are classified according to their years of publication. Readers with additions or corrections are invited to send these to Kellie Dawson, Santayana Edition, Institute for American Thought, School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI, Indianapolis IN 46202–5157, or by email to santedit@iupui.edu.

A special thank you to Daniel Moreno for his time and effort in researching and compiling entries for this year's update.

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF PRIMARY SOURCES

2014

“Cuatro cartas inéditas de Santayana a Eugeni d’Ors.” [July 1, 1949; October 26, 1949; February 19, 1950; May 13, 1950.] Edited by Xavier Pla. *Revista de Occidente* 397 (2014): 49–59.

A Letter to Miss Calvert [July 8, 1952.] *Limbo* 34 (2014): 88–90.

2013

“Dieciséis cartas inéditas de George Santayana a Antonio Marichalar.” [January 24, 1924; February 26, 1924; April 19, 1924; July 3, 1925; August 19, 1926; November 12, 1926; November 27, 1926; December 5, 1926; January 31, 1930; September 3, 1930; April 4, 1931; July 25, 1931; February 21, 1933; June 14, 1933; August 4, 1933; August 12, 1933.] Edited by Domingo Ródenas de Moya. *Limbo* 33 (2013): 109–32.

CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF SECONDARY SOURCES

2015

Brodrick, Michael. *The Ethics of Detachment in Santayana’s Philosophy*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, 184 pp.

Laursen, John Ch. and Román Alcalá, Ramón. “George Santayana and emotional distance in philosophy and politics.” *Revista de Filosofía* (Madrid) 40.1 (2015): 7–28.

Maura, Juan F. “Ciencia, progreso y ética en Unamuno y Santayana.” *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos* 775 (2015): 69–79.

- Moreno, Daniel. *Santayana the Philosopher. Philosophy as a Form of Life [Santayana filósofo. La filosofía como forma de vida.]* Translated by Charles Padrón. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2015, 230 pp.
- Wahman, Jessica. *Narrative Naturalism: An Alternative Framework for Philosophy of Mind*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015, 208 pp.

2014

- Anderson, Douglas R. "Getting Over the Quarrel Between Philosophy and Poetry." *Cognitio: Revista de Filosofía* 15.1 (January–June 2014): 13–24.
- Brodrick, Michael. "Lachs and Santayana on the Importance of Philosophy." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 5–10.
- Cervera Salinas, Vicente. "El numen del amor dantesco en la filosofía poética de Santayana." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 11–30.
- Coleman, Martin. "Morris Grossman on Santayana." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 11–18.
- Dessi, Giovanni. "Lippman and Santayana." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 31–45.
- Eddy, Beth. "Henry Levinson's Santayana: Interpreter and Trickster." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 36–42.
- Faerna, Ángel M. "Santayana's Descriptive Metaphysics and 'the Implied Being of Truth'." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 47–60.
- Flamm, Matthew Caleb. "David Dilworth on Santayana." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 5–10.
- Frost, Kristine. "Bibliographical Checklist: Thirtieth Update." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 79–81.
- Hernández González, Belén. "G. Santayana in Italia: la riscrittura degli archetipi poetici." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 61–79.
- Kremplewska, Katarzyna. "Review of *George Santayana at 150: International Interpretations*." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 71–76.
- Padrón, Charles. "Santayana's Gliding Towards Disengagement: 1912–1914." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 57–62.
- Pajares Gómez, José Luis. "Correspondencia con una locura normal." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 81–90.
- Pla, Xavier. "Dos artículos olvidados de Eugenio d'Ors sobre Santayana." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 91–100.
- Rubin, Richard. "McKeon, Lamm, Levi, and Kerr-Lawson on Santayana." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 19–27.
- . "Santayana's Way of Life and Ours." *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 52–56.
- Ruiz Zamora, Manuel. *El poeta filósofo y otros ensayos sobre George Santayana*. Murcia: Ediciones de la Universidad de Murcia, 2014, 217pp. The essays included are:
- "El poeta filósofo"
 - "Santayana y el sentido de la crítica"
 - "El canon occidental de George Santayana"
 - "Una aproximación estética al Quijote: el Cervantes de Santayana"
 - "Santayana y las vanguardias"
 - "Regreso al futuro: Arthur C. Danto precursor de Santayana"
 - "George Santayana y T. S. Eliot: un asesinato en la catedral"

- “Las amistades peligrosas: Santayana y el pensamiento reaccionario”
 Seaton, James. “Richard Rorty’s Misleading Use of Santayana.” *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 63–70.
- Tiller, Glenn. “Review of *Naturalism’s Philosophy of the Sacred: Justus Buchler, Karl Jaspers, and George Santayana*.” *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 77–78.
- . “Santayana’s Absolute Idealist: Timothy Sprigge.” *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* 32 (Fall 2014): 28–35.

2013

- Anderson, Douglas. “Speaking Freely: Santayana on Philosophical Practice.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 9–25.
- Baltar, Ernesto. “George Santayana: una filosofía del viaje.” *Clarín: Revista de nueva literatura*, 18.106 (2013): 42–46.
- Domínguez Michael, Christopher. “Santayana y los profetas de segunda mano (los críticos literarios).” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 27–41.
- Estébanez Estébanez, Cayetano. “El dolorido sentir de Santayana en siete poemas.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 43–59.
- Gómez de Liaño, Ignacio. “La clave del puritano.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 61–79.
- Lachs, John. “Santayana’s Vision.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 81–90.
- Pardo, José Luis. “Dudar de la duda. Nota sobre George Santayana.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 91–100.
- Savater, Fernando. “Fernando Savater acerca de Santayana.” *Limbo* 33 (2013): 101–107.

2012

- Badía Fumaz, Rocío. “La poética teleológica de George Santayana.” *Castilla: Estudios de Literatura*, 3 (2012): 327–42.

2001

- Lanero Fernández, Juan J. “‘The Last Puritan’. George Santayana’s concept of a genteel tradition.” *Estudios humanísticos: Filología* 23 (2001): 313–328.

1998

- Pajares, José Luis. “Santayana.” In his *Redescribir Ávila*. Ávila: Mijan, 1998, pp. 314–318.

1996

- Cruz Hernández, Juan José. “‘The Genteel Tradition In American Philosophy’ as a Valedictory Indictment of the Unites States.” *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies* 17, (1996): 71–90.

1993

- Moreno, Carlos M. “El anuncio de un olvido: George Santayana.” *El Ciervo: Revista mensual de pensamiento y cultura* 512-513, (1993): 29–33.

1950

Ors, Eugenio d'. "Santayana." *La Vanguardia española*. Friday, October 3, (1950): 5.

1947

Ors, Eugenio d'. "Santayana y los mendigos." *La Vanguardia española*. Saturday, April 26, (1947): 6.

1911

Lippmann, W. "George Santayana. A Sketch." *The International* 8, vol.4, (1911): 43.

REVIEWS OF SANTAYANA'S BOOKS

Diálogos en el limbo. Con tres diálogos nuevos. Translated by Carmen García-Trevijano and Daniel Moreno. Madrid: Tecnos, 2014.

"Diálogos en el limbo, un Santayana de bolsillo (y portátil.) *Limbo* 33 (2013): 153–65 (Julio Seoane Pinilla)

El egotismo en la filosofía alemana. Edited by Daniel Moreno. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2014.

"El egotismo como patología moderna." *Limbo* 33 (2013): 133–52 (Eugenio Moya)

Filosofía del viaggio. Translated by Giuseppe Patella. Roma: UniversItalia, 2013.

"Filosofía del viaggio." *Limbo* 33 (2013): 197–200 (Federico Bellini)

REVIEWS OF BOOKS ABOUT SANTAYANA

Lachs, John. *Stoic Pragmatism*.

"The Lachsian Version of Santayana: Reflection on Stoic Pragmatism." *Limbo* 33 (2013): 167–79. (Charles Padrón)

Lovely, Edward W. *George Santayana's Philosophy of Religion*.

"La filosofía de la religión de Santayana." *Limbo* 33 (2013): 189–96. (Sixto J. Castro)

George Santayana: un español en el mundo. Edited by Manuel Bermúdez Vázquez.

"Un buen ejercicio de interpretación." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 115–18. (Graziella Fantini)

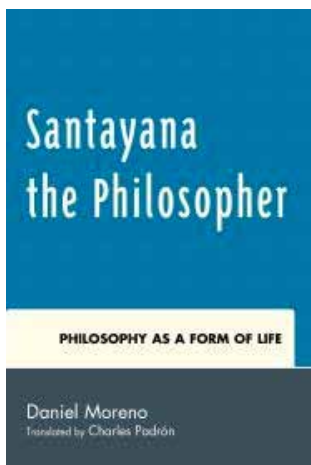
Santayana at 150. International Interpretations. Edited by Matthew C. Flamm, Giuseppe Patella, and Jennifer A. Rea.

"Entre la material y el espíritu. Santayana 150 años después de su nacimiento." *Limbo* 34 (2014): 101–114. (David Pérez Chico)

Savater, Fernando. *Acerca de Santayana*.

"Escritura en el destierro. Savater y Santayana." *Limbo* 33 (2013): 181–87. (José Sánchez Tortosa)

Recent Books



*Santayana the Philosopher:
Philosophy as a Form of Life*

Daniel Moreno

Translated by Charles Padrón

Bucknell University Press

2015

Regarding Santayana, it has been claimed that he lacks a system while contradicting himself in outrageous ways. An attentive analysis of his complete oeuvre, however, reveals something else entirely.

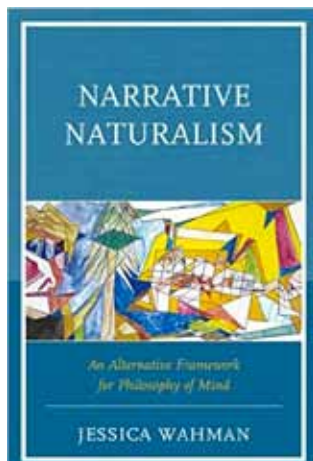
*Narrative Naturalism: An Alternative
Framework for Philosophy of Mind*

Jessica Wahman

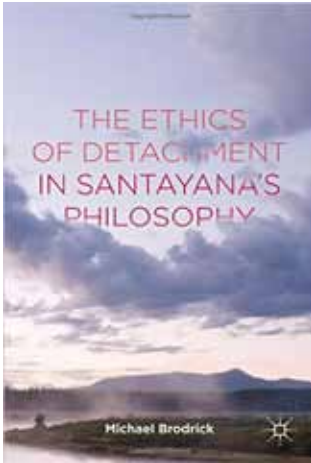
Lexington Books

2015

Jessica Wahman challenges the reductive (i.e., mechanistic and physicalist) assumptions that render the mind-body problem intractable, and claims that George Santayana's naturalism provides a more beneficial epistemological method and ontological framework for thinking about the place of consciousness in the natural world.



Recent Books



*The Ethics of Detachment in
Santayana's Philosophy*
Michael Brodrick
Palgrave Macmillan
2015

Santayana explained how we can achieve inner peace through 'spirituality,' a form of momentary detachment from ideals and values that frees us to enjoy what there is without judging it. Brodrick clarifies and completes Santayana's account of spirituality, while suggesting how spirituality can relieve human suffering, enrich our daily lives, and even make us better human beings.

Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works

Page numbers refer to the critical edition of Santayana's work, where this exists, or to the Scribner's/Constable edition in most other cases.

AFSL	<i>Animal Faith and Spiritual Life</i> , ed. John Lachs	PGS	<i>The Philosophy of George Santayana</i> , ed. P. A. Schilpp
BR	<i>Birth of Reason and Other Essays</i>	POML	<i>Physical Order and Moral Liberty</i> , ed. J. and S. Lachs
COUS	<i>Character and Opinion in the United States</i>	PP	<i>Persons and Places</i>
POEMS	<i>Complete Poems</i>	PSL	<i>Platonism and the Spiritual Life</i>
DL	<i>Dialogues in Limbo</i>	RB	<i>Realms of Being</i> (one-volume edition)
DP	<i>Dominations and Powers</i>	RE	<i>The Realm of Essence</i>
EGP	<i>Egotism in German Philosophy</i>	RB Bk. I	
ICG	<i>The Idea of Christ in the Gospels</i>	RM	<i>The Realm of Matter</i>
IPR	<i>Interpretations of Poetry and Religion</i>	RB Bk. II	
LGS	<i>The Letters of George Santayana</i>	RT	<i>The Realm of Truth</i>
LP	<i>The Last Puritan</i>	RB Bk. III	
LR	<i>The Life of Reason</i>	RS	<i>The Realm of Spirit</i>
LR1	Bk. 1, <i>Reason in Common Sense</i>	RB Bk. IV	
LR2	Bk. 2, <i>Reason in Society</i>	SAF	<i>Scepticism and Animal Faith</i>
LR3	Bk. 3, <i>Reason in Religion</i>	SB	<i>The Sense of Beauty</i>
LR4	Bk. 4, <i>Reason in Art</i>	SE	<i>Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies</i>
LR5	Bk. 5, <i>Reason in Science</i>	TTMP	<i>Some Turns of Thought in Modern Philosophy</i>
OS	<i>Obiter Scripta</i>	TPP	<i>Three Philosophical Poets</i>
		WD	<i>Winds of Doctrine</i>

Submission Guidelines

The editors of *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society* invite submission of articles and essays about George Santayana from any discipline. Letters to the editors (not exceeding 300 words) are also welcome.

The editors may suggest revisions before a piece is accepted for publication. Upon acceptance, authors will be expected to approve editorial corrections.

Previously unpublished manuscripts are preferred and simultaneous submission is discouraged. Authors typically may expect notice of the status of their submission within three months of submission. Submissions are accepted all year with a March 1 deadline for inclusion in a particular year's issue.

Manuscript Style

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as e-mail attachments to gssedit@iupui.edu.

Manuscripts should be double-spaced and in an editable file format such as Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf).

Manuscripts should be prepared for blind review. Identifying information should not appear in running heads, footnotes, references, or anywhere in the manuscript. Identifying information in footnotes or reference may be replaced with blanks or dashes.

Manuscripts should be prepared according to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th edition guidelines.

Substantive notes should be in the form of footnotes with author-date citations appearing within the text and a reference list provided at the end of the manuscript. Wherever possible, references should be to authoritative scholarly editions, such as *The Works of George Santayana* (MIT), *The Collected Works of John Dewey* (SIU), *The Works of William James* (Harvard), *The Jane Addams Papers* (UMI), etc.

Research articles and essays should be no more than 8,000 words.

Authors should divide their manuscripts with appropriate section headings of no more than five words in length.

Submissions should include a brief description of the author's background and work for use in a contributor's note.

Any permissions necessary to print any part of a submission are the responsibility of the author to obtain.

Submitted manuscripts and communication regarding submissions should be addressed to gssedit@iupui.edu. Other matters related to the Santayana Edition may be addressed to santedit@iupui.edu. Correspondence not including submissions may be addressed to General Editor, *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the Santayana Society*, c/o The Santayana Edition, 902 West New York Street, Education and Social Work Building 0010, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

Overheard in Seville

Overheard in Seville is published and distributed by the School of Liberal Arts at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis.

General Editor:

Matthew Caleb Flamm (Rockford College)

Managing Editor:

Martin Coleman (Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis)

Editors at the Santayana Edition:

Kellie Dawson

Kristine W. Frost

Steven A. Miller

David E. Spiech

Editorial Board:

Richard M. Rubin (Washington University in St. Louis)

Michael Brodrick (Arkansas Tech University)

Glenn Tiller (Texas A & M University – Corpus Christi)

Jessica Wahman (Dickinson College/Emory University)

Honorary Board Members:

David Dilworth

John Lachs

Herman Saatkamp, Jr.

Archived issues are available at <http://www.iupui.edu/~santedit/sant/santayana-society/bulletin/>.

Matters concerning subscriptions, the Santayana Edition, the George Santayana Society, and the Bibliographic Update should be sent to Megan Lizarme, Administrative Assistant for the Santayana Edition, School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI, 902 W. New York Street, ES0010, Indianapolis, IN 46202-5157 USA. Email: megliu@iupui.edu.

The George Santayana Society is on the web at <http://santayana.iupui.edu/>.