

Overheard in Seville

*Bulletin of the  
Santayana  
Society*

No. 34  
Fall 2016



# *Bulletin of the George Santayana Society*

No. 34 FALL 2016

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## *The George Santayana Society*

2017

ANNUAL MEETING

The Society's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the January meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division) at the Renaissance Baltimore Harborplace Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland.

### Speakers

***Diana Heney***

Fordham University

“Metaethics for Mavericks: Santayana and Nietzsche on False Idols and True Poetry”

***Herman J. Saatkamp, Jr.***

“Is Animal Faith the Death of Philosophy?”

***John Lachs***

Vanderbilt University

TBA

### Chair

***Matthew Caleb Flamm***

Rockford University

1:30 P.M.–4:30 P.M., Friday, January 6th

## George Santayana Society: News and Activities

Contributions to this issue of *Overheard in Seville* (OIS) are the fruit of two meetings that featured the George Santayana Society (GSS): the January 2016 meeting of the GSS at the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (APA) in Washington D.C., and the GSS session at the March 2016 meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy (SAAP) in Portland, Oregon. This edition of OIS helps extend the legacy of Santayana's thought, and upholds the standards of excellent scholarship readers have come to enjoy and expect for over three decades.

The January 2017 GSS session at the Eastern APA is in Baltimore, Maryland and features distinguished Santayana scholars John Lachs and Herman Saatkamp. In addition the GSS is excited to be able to feature the first winner of the Angus-Kerr Lawson Prize, Diana B. Heney, who will present her winning paper “Metaethics for Mavericks: Santayana and Nietzsche on False Idols and True Poetry.” Readers should take note of the announcement in this issue for the second Kerr-Lawson Prize.

Meantime, the GSS's association with SAAP continues. At the March SAAP meeting in Portland the GSS connected with a cohort of other American Philosophy Society representatives to discuss how the different (especially classic American) societies might support each other's ongoing work. Issues discussed included: dues charged to subscribers, numbers and methods of subscriber-solicitation, print versus digital publication of proceedings, promoting and soliciting newer scholars of American philosophy, and innovative and fair approaches to providing exposure for all of the societies at subsequent SAAP meetings.

As fruit of those discussions the GSS has established its new dues structure, commensurate both with the recent shift to mainly digital distribution of OIS and with other important developments wrought by this burgeoning age of electronic scholarship. Standard membership in the GSS can be maintained with a yearly payment of \$30. Students can request membership without such payment, but must continue to make this request if they wish to maintain that status. Emails will be collected for a low-traffic mailing list to keep members updated on Society-related activities and engagements and to announce the release of Santayana-related articles and books, including (of course) the annual OIS. Interested parties can join this mailing list through contact with [santedit@iupui.edu](mailto:santedit@iupui.edu).

Another gathering of relevance to Santayana scholarship was just completed: the July 12–14, 2016 Santayana Congress in Berlin, Germany sponsored by the Berlin Practical Philosophy Forum, a group of “eight intellectuals and humanists, some of whom are philosophers, who work within academia and outside of it.” The Forum, in conjunction with generous monetary support from Vanderbilt University, organized the three-day conference, which featured an international array of scholars, many of whom have long been associated with the GSS and have contributed to past editions of OIS. Proceedings from the conference are undergoing expansion and revision for inclusion in an anthology, edited by Chris Skowroński, and Charles Padron (publisher pending).

MATTHEW CALEB FLAMM  
President of the George Santayana Society

*Rockford University*

## Santayana and Neoplatonism<sup>1</sup>

George Santayana was a formidably learned and highly cultivated naturalist and a materialist who highly valued philosophical traditions such as Platonism, but who thought that their proponents wrongly assessed their value and reality, because they gave causal efficacy to entities, such as forms or essences: a position based on a no-longer-viable metaphysics. His strategy involved re-evaluating and transforming such traditions; for example, to bring Platonism in line with his own conception of the realm of essence and the spiritual life, he recalibrated it using his own unique notions of essences and being.<sup>2</sup> This paper, for the most part, is an attempt to understand this strategy as it is presented in Santayana's short work, *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*.

Neoplatonism had a significant influence in nineteenth-century North America. The transcendentalists read the seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonists and they were especially influenced by the Romantic English Neoplatonist Thomas Taylor, whose translations initiated them into Hellenic Neoplatonism. Bronson Alcott, a natural Platonic/Pythagorean born out of his time, made the Platonic realm "as solid as Massachusetts" to Emerson. Alcott followed Taylor in valuing Pythagoras as the guide for practical life and Plotinus as the delineator of "celestial, unfallen man." He called Taylor "an...exotic...transplanted from Alexandrian gardens."<sup>3</sup> Midwestern Platonists were inspired by Alcott: Thomas M. Johnson of Osceola, Missouri took his advice and tried to continue Thomas Taylor's work. Johnson founded a Journal, *The Platonist*, which featured Taylor's works and new original translations of Neoplatonic texts, as well as Neoplatonic-themed articles. Johnson also published the proceedings of Hiram K. Jones' Plato club of Jacksonville, Illinois; started a Plato club in Osceola; and maintained a correspondence with Alcott and the Porphyry translator and Aristotelian Thomas Davidson, all friends of the "perennial philosophy." The St. Louis Hegelians were critical but largely supportive of the movement. Some thought Alcott an absurd anachronism; others inspiring, but naively anachronistic. His Hegelian biographers W. T. Harris and F. B. Sanborn thought his theory of emanation lacked the historical dimension—for example, the idea of the logos incarnating and guaranteeing the spiritual value of time and history. By the early twentieth century, several trends weakened this American Neoplatonic movement. Naturalism was on the rise and Idealism on the defensive. Professional academics, such as the Plato scholar Paul Shorey, condemned the mystical and fuzzy-thinking "Plotinists," who distorted Plato's thought—from Alexandria and

Florence to Concord and Osceola. Thomas M. Johnson and his friends answered back with a sharp polemic, but they were already perceived as unprofessional and associated with a bygone era. In the early twentieth century, K. S. Guthrie continued to translate and write on Neoplatonism in the spirit of Johnson and company, but he was isolated. Santayana, however, was no fan of Hegelianism or Idealism—including that of his teacher Josiah Royce, although he knew the Transcendentalists—and gives no indication that he was aware of Thomas M. Johnson, Thomas Taylor, or his own contemporary K. S. Guthrie.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1920s the state of Anglophone Neoplatonic scholarship was behind the Continent. Stephen MacKenna continued to work on his translation of Plotinus, which he had started publishing in 1917. A. E. Taylor compared Proclus with Spinoza and Leibniz, to the credit of the former, who he suggested was both a monist, like Spinoza, and a monadist, like Leibniz; he had convinced E. R. Dodds to work on a text of Proclus' *The Elements of Theology*, but that foundational text of modern Neoplatonic scholarship was not to be published until 1933. Hilary Armstrong's groundbreaking *The Structure of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus* came out in 1940; and his Plotinus translations for the Loeb Classical Library came out from 1966 to 1988. Most Neoplatonic scholarship built on the work of these pioneers after 1945. So it was the noted "gloomy dean" of St Paul's, W. R. Inge, the reigning translator and popularizer of Plotinus, whom Santayana had to deal with.<sup>5</sup>

In a 1922 Address, "Reversion to Platonism," Santayana told his audience that he was pleased to hear that Oxford is reading Plotinus—"a blessed change from Hegel." Plotinus is an inspired fabulist, whose philosophy is a "perpetual metaphor, expressing the aim of life under the figure of a cosmos which is animate and which has already attained its perfection." Though its metaphysics is no longer viable, it remains a high moral vision; and if correctly understood, it is preferable to most of our contemporary shifting and confining ideas. "Considering the hurried life which we are condemned to lead, and the shifting, symbolic ideas to which we are confined, it seems hardly worth while ... to carp at the cosmos dress in which they present their moralities."<sup>6</sup> In *Platonism and the Spiritual Life* (1927), Santayana wrote, "Consider the universe of Plotinus: a process of emanation from the One through the Ideas to the Soul of the World, whence like rays from different stars, human and animal souls descend on occasion to animate material bodies. This

<sup>4</sup> On Thomas M. Johnson and other American Neoplatonists see Bregman, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, Santayana's Greek was very good, so he could also read Plotinus in the original. W. R. Inge's writings on mysticism and Neoplatonism have remained popular in certain circles. Indeed, one, "omniscient" though not learned American Guru has stated that Armstrong is closer to the letter, but Inge closer to the spirit of Plotinus; never mind that he doesn't read Greek. Actually, Hilary Armstrong is closer to both the letter and to the spirit of Plotinus. Allow me to digress: on my last visit to Armstrong in Ludlow, Shropshire, I asked him what he thought of Inge. He said that he never took him seriously as a Platonist or as a Greek scholar and translator; he always seemed to be walking around with a head cold. But he did owe him an introduction to E. R. Dodds—who recommended him to be Plotinus' translator for the Loeb Classical Library.

<sup>6</sup> Santayana, "Reversion to Platonism" 363.

<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised and expanded version of a paper delivered before the George Santayana Society at the annual meeting of the Eastern American Philosophical Association, January 7, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> In no way was he attempting to somehow establish an absolute morality based on Platonism, which he then failed to do. Indeed, as we shall see below, Santayana criticized Plato and Platonism as well as Plotinus, the Neoplatonist, for espousing an objectively moral universe. And indeed, as we shall see, he also criticized Dean Inge for confusing essences with values.

<sup>3</sup> As, in turn, the St Louis Hegelians called him a natural Pythagorean, born out of his time, in his theory of the "lapse of the soul" as a-historical as Plotinus; n.4, below.

system was designed to encourage the spirit to rise from its animal prison—prison is the word—reversing that emanation until it recovered the bliss of contemplation with pure Being.”<sup>7</sup>

But Santayana was wary of the top-down approach of Plotinus: “a system of morals inverted and turned into a cosmology; everything in his magic universe is supposed to be created and moved by the next higher being.” (Here he is referring to the theory of downward procession [*proodos*] of the three primary Hypostases, the One, *Nous* [Intellect] and *Psyche* [Soul], down to the spatiotemporal activity of the Soul of the World—to Nature and the visible cosmos in which the embodied soul by a turnaround, *epistrophe* [conversion], is able to re-ascend and to enjoy pure contemplation of the Ideas and ultimately mystical union with the primal One, beyond all categories and names.) Fully developed spirituality, then, may be seen clearly in Plotinus<sup>8</sup> but, it is also poor natural science; unless his thought is taken symbolically as “true allegory,” it is an incoherent speculation in respect of modern ideas of causality.

As the leaven of the animal psyche, non-instrumental “spirit ... is a realization. ... At every stage, and wherever it peeps out through the interstices of existence, it is a contemplation of eternal things. Eternal things are not other material things by miracle existing for ever in another world; eternal things are the essences of all things here, when we consider what they are in themselves and not what, in the world of fortune, they may bring or take away from us personally.”<sup>9</sup> The “whole drama of creation, in everything except its tendency and meaning, must be due to ... predispositions in matter, for which this system [Neoplatonism] ... has forgotten to make room.”<sup>10</sup> (For Plotinus, matter is not materiality in any sense, but rather the bare ability of matter to receive form—the *paene nihil*—“almost nothing” of Augustine and the basis for his anti-Manichean idea that evil, rather than being a substance, was a “privation of the Good”—i.e. reality.)<sup>11</sup>—If the higher were really the source of the lower, it could not have determined ... the imperfection of its copies. Santayana, however, attempted to maintain *his own form* of Neoplatonism, as an integral part of his naturalistic philosophy. Santayana’s reading of Plotinus is corrective: Taken literally/ontologically Plotinus is misleading, but as symbolic truth, he offers “deep insights into our spiritual condition,” according to John Lachs.<sup>12</sup>

Santayana’s take on Platonism is summed up in an un-Platonic spirit by George P. Lamprecht in discussing the context of his reply to Dean Inge: “Throughout his many books over many years Santayana has always shown a strong animus against what he regards ... as a misuse of essence. Neo-Platonism he has treated as a perverted Platonism. The Platonic ‘ideas’ of universals or essences may properly

<sup>7</sup> PSL 70.

<sup>8</sup> Santayana, “Reversion to Platonism” 365ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>11</sup> See Augustine. *Confessions*. Book 7, Chapters 2–16.

<sup>12</sup> Lachs (2002), 145.

be used to define the values of natural existence and to guide the life of reason; but they are not to be hypostasized and treated as the generating forces behind the course of natural events. We should not take our visions of ideal ends as a discovery of efficient causes.”<sup>13</sup>

By way of *clear contrast* with Santayana, and with an explanation worthy of the fourth-century Neoplatonic Roman emperor Julian’s friend Sallust (who composed the so-called “pagan catechism” for the non-philosopher, although educated gentleman), Tim Addey, a contemporary advocate of Julian’s Romantic era disciple, Thomas Taylor the Platonist (who was so influential on Transcendentalist forms of American Neoplatonism), concisely presents the traditional Neoplatonic view: “Because the spiritual world is transcendently causal, dynamic and creative *it is always the case that things spiritual act on things material—and never things material upon things spiritual*. There are no exceptions to this, and even the least thing in the spiritual realm maintains this relationship to things material.”<sup>14</sup>

Santayana suggests we might start at the bottom, as nature did, passing to the level where Psyche organizes the vital functions and begins to ask itself “what it is living for. The answer is not, as an unspiritual philosophy would have it: In order to live on. The true answer is: ... in order to see the Ideas. ... The whole of natural life, then, is an aspiration after the realization and vision of Ideas, and all action is for the sake of contemplation.”<sup>15</sup> The excellence of the Ideas flows from health, which is a unity of function, and it flows from love, which is an emotional unity ... suffusing its object when it comes before the mind ... with inexpressible worth. This is the key to both Plotinus and Plato: “The One or the Good is the mythical counterpart of moral harmony in the spirit; it is the principle by which the Ideas were disentangled from the detail of experience and the flux of objects, and ... is again the principle by which the Ideas are ... consecrated, illumined, and turned into forms of Joy.”<sup>16</sup>

Santayana’s psyche is close to Aristotle’s “form of the body,” rather than a separate spiritual substance; it is also rational and by happenstance gives birth to spirit, as it were, which is basically the capacity to intuit the forms, Ideas, or essences noetically—when it does not get caught up in the existential worries of the psyche. “But spirit is a terribly treacherous inmate of the animal soul; it has slipped in ... from beyond the gates: and its home is the desert. This foreignness is moral, not genealogical: the spirit is bred in the psyche because the psyche, in living, is obliged to adjust herself to alien things: she does so in her own interest: but in taking cognizance of other things, in moulding a part of her dream to follow their alien fortunes, she becomes intelligent, she creates spirit; and this spirit overleaps the pragmatic function of physical sensibility—it is the very act of overleaping it—and so proves itself a rank outsider, a child rebellious to the household, an Ishmael ranging alone, a dweller in the infinite.”<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lamprecht (1967) 321–22.

<sup>14</sup> Addey (2000) 15–16.

<sup>15</sup> Santayana, “Reversion to Platonism” 366.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.

<sup>17</sup> PSL 66.

The realm of essence represents Santayana's answer to and re-conceptualization of (in terms of his naturalism) the Plotinian *Nous* or Intellect, which contains the Platonic Ideas as a unity; the Plotinian idea of each thing being all things and all each; every star a sun and all the other stars—and infinite the glory. The Ideas are individual but they interpenetrate so that each actually has “in potential” the qualities of all the others, even if it manifests primarily its own essence:

To ‘live at ease’ is There; and to these divine beings verity is mother and nurse, existence and sustenance; all that is not of process but of authentic being they see, and themselves in all: for all is transparent, nothing dark, nothing resistant; every being is lucid to every other, in breadth and depth; light runs through light. And each of them contains all within itself, and at the same time sees all in every other, so that everywhere there is all, and all is all and each all, and infinite the glory. Each of them is great; the small is great; the sun, There, is all the stars; and every star, again, is all the stars and sun. While some one manner of being is dominant in each, all are mirrored in every other.<sup>18</sup>

By contrast Santayana's more or less equivalent of *Nous*, his realm of essence, also, in a special sense, contains all the forms, as it were, in an indifferent infinite:

This infinite is the infinite of forms, the indestructible and inevitable infinite that contains everything, but contains it only in its essence, in that eternal quality of being in which everything is a companion and supplement to everything else, never a rival or a contradiction. These essences, when thought considers any of them without knowing whether they describe any earthly object or not, may be called ideal; but they are not ideal intrinsically, either in the sense of being figments of thought or of being objects of aspiration. They become ideal, or enter into an external moral relation to the animal soul, when this soul happens to conceive them, or to make them types for the objects of its desires.<sup>19</sup>

In Santayana's radical revision of Plotinus, then—spirit sees or intuits the non-causal essences; and the animal psyche is the basis of spirit—and spirit retains a connection with it, even in detached contemplation of essence, lest it somehow move beyond the human, as if a pure spirit in a vacuum. “It is therefore natural that the intrinsic infinity of Being should remain in the background, even in the spiritual life, and that essences should be contemplated and distinguished rather as ideals for the human imagination than as beings necessary in themselves. For this reason the Platonic philosophy opens a more urbane and alluring avenue towards spiritual enlightenment than does the Indian although the latter runs faster towards its goal and attains it more perfectly.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, although matter as such is not graspable by the mind, as with Plotinus and Aristotle—for Santayana it is the basis of all reality—the necessary matter that realizes form instantiates a number of infinite essences, which don't exist, but are the logically necessary, if insufficient, qualities of existent things. But difficulties remain. John Lachs asks: “how can the natural give rise to the ideal? The problem is a standard difficulty of naturalism and Santayana has but

<sup>18</sup> ENN V.8.4, MacKenna tr.

<sup>19</sup> PSL 67.

<sup>20</sup> PSL 67–69; To Santayana's sensibility, Greek humanism, even in its mystical register, remains preferable to pure Indian “super-human” mysticism.

one answer to it: “*Ab esse ad posse valet illatio*.”<sup>21</sup> If we make existence the test of possibility, the generation of the ideal from the natural will seem no great mystery. No matter how convinced we are that the ideal has a natural ground, if a plausible account of the interrelation of the two cannot be produced, the position will have to be abandoned. Thus Santayana's answer is not an argument; it is a statement of his conviction that the ideal must have a natural ground. This conclusion is in harmony with his general position: he never claims more than that he is a *dogmatic naturalist*.<sup>22</sup>

Moral judgments are functions of “animal faith.” Spiritual perceptions of essences constitute eternal (but transient) experiences of a non-existent realm of being, itself “beyond good and evil”; for example, the notion of a tabby cat with a nasty disposition is *essentially* no better than that of the cat with a nice one, because essences are a “nested infinity” (to use John Lachs' term) from which nature only selectively instantiates. Essence and existence are separate and distinct. Santayana employs the language of union with the One: this *feels* like a return to the source of primordial reality; but it *cannot* be taken as literally true (emphasis mine).<sup>23</sup> Spirit is not bound up with the supposition that “values are the most real things in the universe.” There is an essence of pure Being, but it holds no hierarchical, ontological superior position. It is distinguished from other essences only by its generality.

Donald C. Williams, in an un-Platonic spirit, sums up Santayana's idea that “the logic and ontology of essences are independent of the moral load laid upon them:

The main error of the old theory was that it required ... a discrimination between “essential” properties and un-essential ones which it could not provide. The cure, however, is not the nominalism which proclaims that there are no “real essences,” but what Santayana calls the homeopathic one,<sup>24</sup> that *all* properties equally are “real essences” in the sense that they *are* and are essences but that none is so in the sense that it shines inherently with a metaphysical prerogative. Instead of denying the choice Platonic natures, he drowns them in an ocean of logical realism.... For the realm of essence, Santayana writes, “is simply the unwritten catalogue, prosaic and infinite, of all the characters possessed by such things as happen to exist, together with the characters which all different things would possess if they existed.”<sup>25</sup> It is infinitely more of a privilege to belong to the realm of existence which Plato despised than to the realm of essence which he adored, for there are infinitely more essences than there are existents. The realm of essence itself “is a perfect democracy,” “not peopled by choice forms or magic powers,” but “neutral in value”<sup>26</sup> We may like some more than others, but “in the realm of essence no emphasis falls on these favorite forms

<sup>21</sup> Lachs (1967) 334 & n. 5; Latin: “there is a valid inference from what is (real) to what is possible [but not the reverse].”

<sup>22</sup> Lachs (1967) 335 n. 6; “However, when confronted with ... pulling an ought out of a hatful of is's there is some doubt about the inherent preferability of dogmatic naturalism to some equally dogmatic version of psychologism.” (334–35).

<sup>23</sup> Lachs (2002) 150 (paraphrase).

<sup>24</sup> SAF 77.

<sup>25</sup> SAF 77.

<sup>26</sup> SAF 80, 77, 78.

which does not fall equally on every other member of that infinite continuum. Every bad thing ... illustrates an essence quite as accurately as if it had been good.”<sup>27</sup> As essences are not moral models, neither are they principles of intelligibility, and they are as open to raw sensation as they are to *nous* itself. Since they are serene and timeless logical identities, finally, they can *do* nothing, either to push or to pull. To cure thus the confusion between the notion of essence or nature and the notion of an ideal power is to cure logic of a kind of idiocy and ethics of a kind of idolatry, for the very distillate of idolatry is to confound preëminence of value with preëminence of power or existence.”<sup>28</sup>

“Spirituality, then, lies in regarding existence ... as a vehicle for contemplation, and contemplation ... as a vehicle for joy.... For Plotinus the universe had no terrors; he liked to feel himself consumed and burning in the very heart of the sun, and poured thence in a flood of light from sphere to sphere. We, in this remote shore of time, may catch that ray and retrace it.”<sup>29</sup> But for Santayana there is a “Profound contrast between the sense of existence and the intuition of pure Being ... in order to reach the intuition of pure Being, it is requisite to rise altogether above the sense of existence.”<sup>30</sup>

Whether or not our perceived values really harmonize our interests and our circumstances—and Santayana denies this—when this perceived “harmony becomes audible, when for a moment some value is realized, all potentiality and material efficacy are left far behind: we are in the realm of actuality, of music, of spirit; and the value actualized lives and ends in itself.” Any subsequent contingency “will be due to the organization of nature beneath.”<sup>31</sup>

Santayana’s thought is reminiscent of Schopenhauer, who thought pure aesthetic experience of the work of art, as if of a Platonic form, allowed the pure subject to transcend briefly the perpetual vicissitudes of the Will. As John Lachs characterized Santayana’s parallel notion: “the life of reason is an extended pattern of existence embodying purposes and principles, whereas the spiritual ‘life’ is a discontinuous set of self-enclosed acts of vision.... Spirituality consists of eliminating intent from consciousness and, with it, all the worry and pain that accompany organic tensions and strains.”<sup>32</sup> But Schopenhauer also brought back the Platonic Ideas, as different levels of objectifications of the Will: metaphysical representations, beginning with the most generic. Santayana, asked about his compatibility with Schopenhauer, replied that he could be thought of as very close, provided the mechanism of nature be substituted for the Will. Nature realizes some essences; they only actually exist when physically empowered. But they can also, as it were, be detached and

<sup>27</sup> SAF 79.

<sup>28</sup> Williams (1967) 133–34.

<sup>29</sup> Santayana, “Reversion to Platonism” 367; his earlier explanation here clarifies his revisionary Neoplatonism: “The One or the Good is the mythical counterpart of moral harmony in the spirit; it is the principle by which the Ideas were disentangled from the detail of experience and the flux of objects.”

<sup>30</sup> Santayana (1936) *RE* (selections) 484–5.

<sup>31</sup> PSL 7, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Lachs (2006) 60, 61.

become objects of the pure contemplation of spirit. The latter, itself the “upper residue” of the life of the rational animal psyche with the ability to transcend that psyche (but only in the limited sense described above), “is indeed the intuition of essences in their own category, when the things that may embody them are absent or non-existent, that makes up the essence of spirit.... Spirit is the actuality of the unsubstantial.”<sup>33</sup> (This idea has led Paul Kuntz to ask, following Santayana himself, whether Santayana’s “realms” are in some sense objective, or really only subjective distinctions in thought. They have been read both ways. In any case, Santayana’s reading and re-revision of Platonic metaphysics recalls the famous quip attributed to Marx, who supposedly said when told he had stood Hegel on his head: “No, I have stood him on his feet!”)<sup>34</sup> Santayana does this at times most paradoxically with religious language.

An example is *his upside-down materialist conception* of the Christian Trinity, almost the reverse of Augustine. First, Santayana identifies will and love as the way to freedom, when “will is directed to what spirit truly loves.” He quotes Augustine: *Quid magis in voluntate quam ipsa voluntas?* (What is more in the will than will itself?) “Santayana uses the Father as *symbol of ‘the realm of matter’* and the Son as ‘*the realm of essence*’” (emphasis is mine). “This dogma ‘which might seem unintelligible, becomes clear if we consider that power could not possibly produce anything unless it borrowed some form from the realm of essence and imposed that form on itself and on its works.’”<sup>35</sup> (Note here again that Santayana himself asserts that the realm of essence is logically (or in some other sense) necessary for the really existing productions of the “mechanism of nature.”)

The Logos is “*begotten not made.*” [Santayana RB 846]. The Logos is “as much God as the Father, since power ... cannot exist without form. But form also cannot exist without substance” [Santayana RB 847].”

To these “incommensurable and equally original features of existence [I had rather say ‘being’]” are added the third dimension, Spirit [Santayana RB 847–8] ... [which] “proceeds from the Father and from the Son and is the universal lord and life-giver,” and is equally divine [Santayana RB 849].<sup>36</sup>

Santayana’s acceptance of the double procession of the spirit puts him squarely in the camp of Catholic rather than Eastern Orthodox *atheists*.

According to another vision, perhaps closer to that of the Hellenic Neoplatonist bishop Synesius of Cyrene than to Augustine, contemplative spirit “lives by knowing the thing above it.” In respect of the Platonic Ideas: “if its natural organ were ... a (Platonic/Aristotelian) ... harmonious and immortal revolution of the heavens ... spirit would properly be the rapt aspiration toward those Ideas, the immortal love of them, which kept the moving spheres constant in their round: for the soul of each

<sup>33</sup> Kuntz (2002) 281 & n. 29: quoting Santayana from *The Realm of Essence*.

<sup>34</sup> A version of this quotation appears in an English translation of a book by Friedrich Engels: “the dialectic of Hegel was turned upside down or rather it was placed upon its feet instead of on its head, where it was standing before.” *Feuerbach: the Roots of the Socialist Philosophy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1903), 96.

<sup>35</sup> Kuntz (2002) 283.

<sup>36</sup> Kuntz (2002) 283: quoting Santayana from *Realms of Being* (1940).

sphere was intently fixed upon the Idea (or the formula) which it was to realize by its motion and to turn into a sustained note in the celestial symphony. Even in this astronomical theology spirit would be the third person of the Trinity rather than the second; it would be the Soul of the World looking towards the Ideas, rather than the Ideas looking towards the One.<sup>37</sup> Thus, in one of Santayana's many brilliant creative passages in *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*, the persons of the Trinity have been equated with the three Plotinian hypostases: The One, *Nous* or Intellect (which contains the Ideas), and *Psyche*, or Soul (which instantiates them). Here Santayana seems closer to the Greek Christian Platonists. The most original synthesizer of the two traditions, clearly from the standpoint of Hellenic Neoplatonism, was Synesius of Cyrene.<sup>38</sup>

In an unpublished manuscript in the library of Columbia University, "The Order of Genesis and the Order of Discovery," Santayana provides a brief outline of his ontological categories: "First in the order of genesis comes essence since it spreads out the field of forms through which existence may travel and may pick up one form after another along its special path. Matter in this order is second and truth third; for truth is the ideally complete description of the existing world, as it is, has been, and is to be. Finally spirit with all its discoveries comes last, because the psyche—without which spirit could not arise or live—is a trope established in matter; that is to say, a truth concerning the order and cohesion of certain events in the flux of nature." There is no reference to a first principle here, and the top to bottom procession of Neoplatonism is absent. (Essence is primary as a field of pure potentiality of things to become something.) "In the order of discovery, what comes first is matter." A pure spirit, if it could exist, would simply by its very nature intuit essence from the flux of existence ("any datum of intuition ... is *ipso facto* a pure essence"). "Yet in an animal life intuition is hatched in a nest of pressing occasions; intent precedes intuition."<sup>39</sup> Paul Kuntz has seen this dilemma and struggle of embodied spirit that fill "spirit with a sense of urgency, of distress, or of triumph" as similar to that of Augustine in his *Confessions*, which also included a Neoplatonic moment in his conversion. Why? Because spirit, in Santayana's account, "may come to rest for a moment on the pure forms of things and on their essential relations."<sup>40</sup> Kuntz thinks it is indicative of a Neoplatonic "way up" through the realm of matter, which corresponds to Augustine's and which, if Santayana had completed it, could have given the way back to the Father through Truth, the Son.<sup>41</sup> But this takes us into the realm of theological speculation and faith. It also seems to *contradict* Santayana's basic outlook, and even his Trinitarian "reversals."

<sup>37</sup> PSL 73.

<sup>38</sup> On Synesius see Bregman (2010).

<sup>39</sup> Santayana (1967) 145–146; but in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* the order of discovery is different. Santayana distinguishes three orders: genesis, discovery, and evidence (*SAF* 109–110). What is first in each of these orders is: Genesis: matter; Discovery: good and evil; Evidence: essence. Richard Rubin has suggested to me that the differing orders are simply different ways of approaching the same things.

<sup>40</sup> Santayana (1967), 146, and Kuntz (2002), 282.

<sup>41</sup> Kuntz (2002) 283.

Santayana found Neoplatonism valuable, if correctly understood. His idea of the realm of essence certainly has Platonic "overtones." But he was very clear that there was *no way* the forms, or Plotinian Hypostatic entities, could be efficacious. Lachs thinks Santayana's essences are like Schopenhauer's "representations of the Will"—used by the mechanism of nature to articulate reality. They have the quality of "eternity" and they are infinite, but only a finite number are instantiated. Again, essences have no causal power; Santayana is clear on that issue in his critique of traditional Platonism, as I have consistently maintained in this paper; then again, we are not far from the similarity to Schopenhauer's reinstatement of the Platonic Ideas *as* representations of the Will. Thus, Platonic Forms and company "return," *not* as causally efficacious top-down metaphysical entities, or "forms themselves," but rather as something like "representations" nature "instantiates." Matter itself is, for Lachs, indeed something like Aristotle's substrate: there is an underlying natural process through which fully formed nature emerges. The mechanism "uses" or somehow, through its power, "manifests" these essences; not because Santayana *failed* to be a *true* Platonist, but because he wanted to adopt and adapt Platonism for its allegorical moral and pure aesthetic value.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps a brief further discussion of Lachs' view is in order.<sup>43</sup> Santayana's essences have primacy insofar as they "constitute necessary conditions without which neither mind nor matter is possible.... matter is also primary ... in the different sense that nothing could exist without its generative power," and "mind has primacy" as "constituting the first condition of all knowledge."

The primacy of essence is logical or structuring, for things could neither be nor be conceived without displaying some forms of definiteness. Anything existing must be either one or many ... some properties must characterize it, and it must stand in a variety of relations to other items. Numbers, properties, and relations are all essences; their availability for instantiation is what renders physical objects possible.

Essences are eternal in the sense that time is of no relevance to them. Two and two make four no matter where and when; such equality relations neither need nor permit temporal qualifiers. Even the essences of temporal relations are not intrinsically temporal: *Before* and *after* haunt time without belonging to one era any more than to another. Only objects in the material world come into existence, last awhile, and then pass away. Forms must not be conceived on such a model. As in-existent, they neither begin nor end and are neither instantaneous nor enduring. Their inner being rejects all external relations; they simply *are*, untouched by the ravages of time.<sup>44</sup>

"Essences are infinite," e.g., "each number is a form, and there is no limit to the number of numbers." But "infinity is ubiquitous: There is an infinite number of spatial relations" from 1 to N centimeters to the left, "and similarly in every direction." Even "events are embodiments of essences," which "yields another infinity." "The

<sup>42</sup> See above n.2. Aristotle's substrate or *hyle*, is an abstraction; it is never found in nature; e.g., a piece of wood may be the material cause of the table, but itself is also a combination of form and matter. Is Lachs saying that essences literally form matter; or that they are the logically necessary conditions for its formation—under its own power—since essences do not exist?

<sup>43</sup> The following discussion and quotations comprise a summary of the major ideas in Lachs (2006) 34–36.

<sup>44</sup> Lachs (2006), 34.



form of every event ... is a complex essence”: change a single element and you get a similar but different trope; thus “there is an infinity of alternatives to any embodied form.” And this leads, ironically, to “the impossibility of essentialism”: “generic universals have no priority over specific ones; the form of humanity is no more and no less an essence than the form of ... Socrates.”

This view dissolves the metaphysical, epistemic, and normative privileges of forms ... no essence can prescribe norms to existence. When it seems that standards of behavior or of perfection derive directly from the nature of being, the being involved is the psyche a mode of matter, rather than the realm of essences.<sup>45</sup>

Essences are impotent to bring about their own instantiation. Forms have no power to affect the course of events: although necessary for the existence of anything, they are not sufficient. They are passively available to characterize whatever matter may create.... Santayana occasionally refers to the realm of essence as frozen landscape and as inhuman in its vast, inclusive stretches. This is a useful antidote to the lovers of forms who, like Plato, think they are restricted to cozy, life-affirming types.<sup>46</sup>

Lachs’ explanation has the virtue of attempting to understand the way in which Santayana both understood—, i.e., saw the logical necessity of, according to his naturalism—and attempted a thoroughgoing reevaluation of the traditional idea of essence.<sup>47</sup> But all interpreters seem to agree that an *Epoche*, “suspension of judgment,” or “skeptical reduction” are close to what Santayana has in mind concerning spirit, when it “transcends” the concerns of psyche and contemplates the essences disinterestedly.

Essences, then, have the basic qualities of Platonic ideas without any hierarchy of power or value. They are what we contemplate when we rise above the vicissitudes of the natural world and the worries of Santayana’s (Aristotelian in conception) psyche and its general care for the organism. This seems similar to Schopenhauer’s notion of the pure contemplation of the work of Art, beyond the Will, “as if” of a Platonic Idea. As we detach from the Will and contemplate pure “eternal” form, so in Santayana’s view we “detach” from the psyche and nature in action, as it were, and contemplate the realm of essence, as pure “eternal” form or Being.

In conclusion, to return to Santayana: his seemingly eclectic ideas of existence, causality and matter, and a non-existent and timeless “realm of essence,” which “subsists,” can be contemplated as such by spirit, and is “utilized” by material nature

<sup>45</sup> Lachs (2006), 35.

<sup>46</sup> “Although the material world is, for the moment, accepting of our efforts and portions of the realm of essence permit a spiritual journey, the fit ... is contingent and precarious” Lachs (2006) 36.

<sup>47</sup> There are other interpretations of Santayana’s notions of essence and spirit on which I am not competent to comment. But with respect to Santayana’s discussions of the Platonic tradition, Plotinus and Neoplatonism, Lachs’ interpretation, and its compatibility with Schopenhauer, whom Santayana accepted as similar to him, seems to me to have a lot of explanatory power. As I said to him at the ISNS 1998 in Crete after his presentation (since published as Lachs 2002): “This reminds me of Schopenhauer; Santayana wanted to have his cake and eat it too.” He agreed.

to form the world, suggest that if Emerson was a Plotinus /Montaigne, as Oliver Wendell Holmes had it, then Santayana was a Lucretius/Plotinus.

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## Literary Philosophers: Irving Singer and George Santayana<sup>1</sup>

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 they took a trip to Italy to meet its author. This trip 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.

After returning to the U.S., Singer graduated with a PhD in philosophy from Harvard in 1952. He taught at Harvard, Cornell, the University of Michigan, and Johns Hopkins before joining the faculty of 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 twenty-one 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*, which, hopefully, will have a posthumous publication.

Singer was predeceased by his wife Josephine, who died in 2014. They had been wed for sixty-five 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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 than these qualities was the way in which Professor Singer—who immediately invited me to call him Irving—responded so knowingly to all 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*, to which he wrote an elegant and deeply responsive afterword.

Irving and I 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 him 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 conscious 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 he was also one of the few people to master the fields of philosophy and literature. It is also interesting to note that Irving 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.

I would like to briefly explore here how Singer, in his monumental three-volume work *The Nature of Love*, utilized Santayana’s curious combination of Platonism and materialism throughout, and also how, for all his admiration, he nonetheless felt obliged to criticize what he considered Santayana’s inadequate appreciation of the love of persons.

In *The Nature of Love*, Singer attempted to provide a naturalistic outlook toward the concept of love. He gave a sweeping overview of the myriad philosophers, theologians, poets and novelists who have tackled this subject. The cast is truly remarkable. Yet Santayana is a constant presence. His work is discussed in all three volumes. Volume One, *Plato to Luther*, has as its second chapter a long description of Santayana’s views on idealization, and Volume Three, *The Modern World*, also contains a chapter explicitly devoted to Santayana. Volume Two, *Courtly and Romantic Love*, contains several references to his neo-Platonic outlook. Santayana is also discussed in great detail in Singer’s later books *Meaning in Life* and *The Pursuit of Love*. Such a heavy emphasis on one man’s views cannot be coincidental, considering the broad array of individuals Singer was at liberty to discuss. Certainly he was mindful of the warning Santayana gives in *Reason in Society* to those who would explore the topic of love:

Even a poet ... can give of love but a meagre expression, while the philosopher, who renounces dramatic representation, is condemned to be avowedly inadequate. Love, to the lover, is a noble and immense aspiration; to the naturalist it is a thin veil and prelude to the self-assertion of lust. This opposition has prevented philosophers from doing justice to the subject. Two things need to be admitted by anyone who would not go wholly astray in such speculation: one, that love has an animal basis; the other, that it has an ideal object. Since these two propositions have usually been thought contradictory, no writer has ventured to present more than half the truth, and that half out of its true relations.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> George Santayana, *Reason in Society* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 12–13.

<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised and expanded version of a paper delivered before the George Santayana Society at the annual meeting of the Eastern American Philosophical Association, January 7, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Sam Roberts. “Irving Singer, 89, Philosopher Who Wrote ‘Nature of Love’” *New York Times*, February 16, 2015. <https://perma.cc/UP6Q-4UND>.

Singer was ever-mindful of these two propositions, and sought to supplement his own analytically-trained explications with plentiful illustrations from the works of poets and novelists such as Dante, Shakespeare, Shelley, Proust, Lawrence, and even the Marquis de Sade. And it is fitting that he should also use the work of Santayana himself, one of the few individuals besides Plato to excel in *both* philosophy and poetry.

There is also a personal element in Singer's homage to Santayana. As he states in the afterword to the 1995 volume *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."<sup>4</sup> Singer delivered many lectures and published many papers on Santayana's work, including the introduction to the critical edition of his novel *The Last Puritan*. And, as mentioned earlier, in 1950, along with his wife, he had the opportunity to meet the aged philosopher in his Italian retreat.

This personal touch must have had a profound effect on Singer. Yet he was no acolyte or apologist. In fact, the majority of references to Santayana in Singer's writings on love take him to task, or point out differences between their views on the role of idealization in love. Santayana is a touchstone rather than a foundation stone for Singer's work. "As Santayana complained that Dewey was a half-hearted naturalist," he writes, "so too do I feel that Santayana was a half-hearted materialist."<sup>5</sup>

What Singer is most troubled by is the tragic element in Santayana's philosophy of love, the view that our ideals can never really be met. He rightly credits Santayana for a powerful invocation of ideals and the hold they have on us, and he admires the way in which Santayana never deviates from grounding these ideals in material bases. In Volume I of *The Nature of Love*, Singer discusses Santayana's writings on the *ideal* of love:

For Santayana, as for Plato, all love worthy of the name must have an "ideal object." Lovers seek in one another the embodiment of "an ideal form essentially eternal and capable of endless embodiments." This "form," or "essence" as Santayana was later to call it, is the abstract possibility of some perfection. If a man falls in love with a fair-haired woman, he does so because his heart has been captured by the ideal of a perfect blonde. It is this ideal object, not the woman "in her unvarnished and accidental person," that the man truly loves.<sup>6</sup>

In a very real sense, then, Santayana is discussing not a love of persons but rather a love of essences, or ideals. There is a note of sadness, even at times despair, in some of his writings. One can see a strong affinity for ideals *as* ideals, which can be the source of great poetry.

Interestingly enough, Santayana places the origins of love in general within sexual passion, specifically the mating drives between men and women. One notes

<sup>4</sup> Irving Singer, "A Reply to My Critics and Friendly Commentators," in *The Nature and Pursuit of Love: The Philosophy of Irving Singer* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1995), 361.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>6</sup> Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 1–26.

here the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer's dour notion that romance is the blind will's way of tricking human beings into perpetuating the species. Santayana's emphasis on sexual passion is intriguing speculation from a man who himself never married or reproduced, and who was suspected of having homosexual inclinations, which he may or may not have acted upon. Santayana maintained an aloof attitude when it came to sex. Singer touches upon these biographical details (although he does not address what may have been the material cause of Santayana's aloofness: his upbringing by an emotionally withdrawn mother who seldom showed him any affection or nurturing). Without wishing to magnify these details, Singer cannot help but address them since Santayana himself places such great emphasis on the role sexuality plays in producing the ideals of love. Singer writes that "despite the differences between Proust and Santayana, they write as men who have been disqualified from appreciating the possibilities of a satisfying sexual love for any other person."<sup>7</sup>

What Santayana does brilliantly is to show how when this ideal is not achieved through sexual union, it can still be vital in life. In *The Sense of Beauty*, the book which outlines his aesthetic theory, Santayana points out how this drive is at the center of artistic appreciation. He writes:

Sex is not the only object of sexual passion. When love lacks its specific object, when it does not yet understand itself, or has been sacrificed to some other interest, we see the stifled fire bursting out in various directions. One is religious devotion, another is zealous philanthropy, a third is the fondling of pet animals, but not the least fortunate is the love of nature, and of art; for nature also is often a second mistress that consoles us for the loss of a first.<sup>8</sup>

One can again sense a Schopenhauerian detachment, an affinity for art as an escape from the world. But unlike Schopenhauer, Santayana never derides the material world, nor expresses a disgust toward nature. It is in his discussions of the love of things and of ideals that Santayana is most profound. He is surely speaking from experience. His sensitivity to subtle nuances is particularly refined. This eye for details shows in both his theoretical works and in his fiction, especially *The Last Puritan*. Oliver Alden, the central character, is a young man who finds his deeply refined sensibilities to be of little use in the hustle-and-bustle of turn-of-the-century New England. Attracted to men, but duty-bound to propose marriage to two young women who recognize that he sees them only for their ideals and not themselves, and who thus spurn his offer, Oliver retreats into an independent bachelorhood. As Morris Dickstein astutely pointed out in his review of the reissue of *The Last Puritan*, "with this doomed character, priggish and virginal yet sensitive and brilliant, the ageing author reaches a complicated verdict on his own strengths and limitations."<sup>9</sup>

I think the best description of Singer's qualms regarding Santayana's idealization of love may be found in Volume 2 of *The Nature of Love*, in his discussion of Percy Shelley's love poetry. Singer writes: "It is because Shelley thinks of love as

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:268.

<sup>8</sup> George Santayana, *The Sense of Beauty* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 54.

<sup>9</sup> Morris Dickstein, "A Puritan Education," *Times Literary Supplement*, January 20, 1995, 19.

imagination subsuming imperfect creatures under an inborn image of nonexistent perfection that his poetry is able to express such heart-rending lamentations about the world. His soaring soul suffers as it does because it cannot understand how nature could have provided him with a prototype of beauty and goodness while systematically preventing any reality from living up to it.<sup>10</sup> This seems to mirror Santayana's own tragic view—love at best is an appreciation of ideals, not a deep relationship between persons. Shelley, though, has a deeper appreciation of human relationships, the need that humans have for social interaction, and more importantly, the need to *act* upon ideals. There is a Promethean element in Shelley's life and work. His many love affairs and his tempestuous marriages demonstrate his concern with physical relationships. While there is a Neoplatonic aspect to Shelley's thinking, it is superseded by his emphasis on action.

Santayana, Singer points out:

saw in Shelley's genius nothing but a longing for abstract ideas. He therefore concluded that Shelley's poetry could not express historical reality or human nature in general. . . . But this interpretation, which puts too great an emphasis upon Neoplatonic elements in Shelley's thinking, neglects his constant preoccupation with the need to act, to strive within the world . . . Santayana thought that Shelley betrayed his vision and the high calling of his poetic talent by seeking for love through actual experience, by having love affairs and getting married rather than being content to write about the beauty of love's sheer possibility.<sup>11</sup>

Shelley, who was influenced by the utilitarian thinkers of his time, such as Hume, Adam Smith, and his father-in-law William Godwin, was concerned about the usefulness of ideals. How could they enrich life in the here-and-now? There is a strain of utopian thinking in Shelley, perhaps best manifested in his masterpiece *Prometheus Unbound*, where love unites all of the formerly warring parties on earth:

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,  
Whose nature is its own divine control,  
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;  
Familiar acts are beautiful through love . . .

Shelley understood that this ideal of universal peace and harmony would probably never be achieved, and he felt the pain of ideals unrealized. But he was *propelled* by these ideals, and felt that they keep one from retreating into splendid isolation. Unlike Santayana, Shelley, in his poetry and his writings on love, was not content to contemplate ideals—he saw them as guidelines for actions. While it is true that the map is not the territory, there is no need to worship the map itself.

Ultimately, what Singer finds lacking in Santayana is the concept of bestowal. Santayana seemed to lack an appreciation for the ways in which bestowing love on another person enriches both involved. The interpersonal aspect is crucial. In loving the ideal, one cannot help but be dissatisfied with the object of one's affections. As mentioned earlier, love for a fair-haired woman, no matter how beautiful she be, cannot match up with the ideal of ultimate beauty. Singer calls this *appraisal*—there is something about the love object which moves one, and which leads to a relationship. This is a rather cold-eyed view of love, an objective appraisal of

<sup>10</sup> Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love*, 2:416–417.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 422–423.

individuals as to how close they come to meeting a standard. Santayana would be an excellent judge of a beauty pageant. But Singer feels there is more to love than mere appraisal. Once one bestows value on another person, a bond is formed which can alter each individual. As Singer puts it:

In treating the beloved as an end, however, the lover has no need to compare her with anything else. His love is not a way of ranking her in relation to the ideal: he cares about *her as a particular person* despite her imperfections, despite her inevitable distance from any or all ideals. The lover uses his imagination not to see an ideal object reflected through another person, but rather to find ways of acting *as if* that person were herself the ideal.<sup>12</sup>

And Singer adds that even when it comes to appraising, Santayana has an unrealistic attitude. Our standards are seldom as precise as he makes them out to be.

This is perhaps due to the fact that Santayana had an uncanny sense of just what constitutes our ideals. Perhaps his above-the-battle position, coupled with his deep sensibilities, gave him a unique perspective on love. In many ways, he achieves what the Buddhists call a detached compassion. It would be wrong to see Santayana as a aesthete, withdrawn from the world in sullen retreat. He was fascinated by the world, and by the many ways human beings interact with each other. This is witnessed by his defense of materialism. It is important to note that he himself was never puritanical when it came to discussing sexual or—as he put it—“frank” love.

In Volume 3 of the *Nature of Love*, Singer pays tribute to Santayana's insistence upon appraisal as a crucial ingredient of love. Those who would try to eliminate the physiological and psychological mechanisms that shape our ideals and give them form are themselves missing out on an important element. Singer expresses a hope that the work of biologists, brain researchers and physiologists will deepen our understanding of the ways in which our ideals are formed.

Throughout his writings on love, Irving Singer called for cooperation among scientists, philosophers, poets and novelists, and he demonstrated a conscious effort to familiarize himself with the literature of love from all fields. It is fitting that George Santayana should be a major touchstone on 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. We can learn from Santayana a great deal about the forms, if not the content, of love. It is this aspect which Singer appreciates and pays tribute to, even as he feels obligated to point out its inadequacies in delineating a full-blown theory of love. Santayana, if the character of Oliver Alden is any indication, recognized this lacuna in himself, and—like all great artists—used it as an inspiration for his narrative writings.

If I may be allowed to wax poetic, I see the relationship between Santayana and Singer in *The Nature of Love* as being akin to that of Virgil and Dante in another three-volume work, *The Divine Comedy*. Throughout *The Nature of Love*, Santayana helps to guide Singer, and comments upon the many fascinating but flawed personages who come into Singer's line of view. But ultimately they reach a point at which they must part company, a point at which Santayana can go no further. Once Singer begins to explore the notion of bestowal, Santayana—true to his own empiricism—must drop behind. The inability to achieve a deep and lasting

<sup>12</sup> Singer, *The Nature of Love*, 1:36.

personal relationship with another was Santayana's own limbo (a concept which an atheistic Catholic like himself would no doubt appreciate). Consider the ending of Canto XXVII of the *Purgatorio*, on the threshold of the earthly paradise, where Virgil bids adieu to Dante:

My son, you've seen the temporary fire  
And the eternal fire; you have reached  
The place past which my powers cannot see.  
I've brought you here through intellect and art;  
From now on, let your pleasure be your guide;  
You're past the steep and past the narrow paths.<sup>13</sup>

While Singer and Santayana may part company at the point of discussing the meaning and importance of bestowal, their relationship throughout *The Nature of Love* is a fruitful and rewarding one.

Just as Irving Singer was fortunate to have met George Santayana in 1950, so I was 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.

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# Unmasking Bergson: Cosmic Agoraphobia, Literary Psychology and Death<sup>1</sup>

## Acute Bergsonmania

From Seville, on January 6, 1914, Santayana wrote to Charles Augustus Strong: "Dear Strong, Reeves has sent me the enclosed clippings (among others) which amused me and I hope may amuse you." The clippings are about Bergson and bear headings such as: "*On écoute aux fenêtres le cours de M. Bergson*" (the *Collège de France* auditorium was so crowded that people listened from the street through the open windows), "*M. Bergson parle presque en plein air*" (M. Bergson lectures almost outdoors), "Lecture by New 'Immortal,'" "Bedlam at M. Bergson's lecture."

Indeed, Santayana's "The Philosophy of M. Henri Bergson," published in *Winds of Doctrine*,<sup>2</sup> was written at the peak of the acute Bergsonmania that spread across the French intellectual/artistic world—and even all the way across the ocean, if it is true, as the author of the "Bergson" article in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* claims, that the first traffic jam in the history of Broadway may have occurred because of Bergson's first lecture at Columbia University, after the *New York Times* had published a long and enthusiastic article on him.<sup>3</sup>

## Santayana's essay on Bergson curiously neglected

A review of *Winds of Doctrine*, titled "Pessimism or Sanity—Prof. Santayana Criticizes the Optimistic Tendencies of Certain Modern Schools of Speculation," was published on June 1st, 1913, in the *New York Times*.<sup>4</sup> Although the volume under review contains "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy" (which is part of the American Studies canon) and "The Philosophy of Mr. Bertrand Russell" (which is supposed to have shattered singlehandedly Russell's ethical

<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised and expanded version of a paper delivered before the George Santayana Society at the annual meeting of the Eastern American Philosophical Association, January 7, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> George Santayana, "The Philosophy of M. Bergson" in *Winds of Doctrine: Studies in Contemporary Opinion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 58–110. Hereafter, this text will be cited parenthetically according to the standard abbreviation "WD."

<sup>3</sup> Lawlor, Leonard and Moulard Leonard, Valentine, "Henri Bergson," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), accessed October 4, 2016, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/bergson/>.

<sup>4</sup> "Pessimism—or Sanity?: Prof. Santayana Criticizes the Optimistic Tendencies of Certain Modern Schools of Speculation," *New York Times*, June 1, 1913, accessed October 4, 2016, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9402E4D9143FE633A25752C0A9609C946296D6CF>.

<sup>13</sup> Dante, *Purgatorio*, translated by Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 242.

Platonism), the reviewer singles out the essays on Bergson and Shelley as “the most engaging and the most important.” The importance granted to the essay on Bergson admittedly derives from the perceived importance of Bergson’s philosophy at the time, but I would argue that the essay is important in itself as an expression of Santayana’s thought and as a significant step in self-understanding. More precisely, I want to suggest that the essay is particularly interesting due to the somewhat *doppelgängerisch* relation between Bergson and Santayana. In a sense, Bergson is the perfect foil for Santayana, precisely because they both share fundamental philosophical traits, attitudes and interests that simultaneously give prominence to their irreconcilable divergence.

The essay is also greatly relevant today, when read against the backdrop of Bergsonism’s deep, long-lasting—and, from my perspective, catastrophic— influence on French philosophy and the global cultural influence of “French theory.”<sup>5</sup> And yet, “The Philosophy of M. Henri Bergson” has been curiously neglected in Santayana studies. None of the monographs grant it more than cursory mention and I am not aware of any articles delving specifically into it. Even Jacques Duron’s monumental *La pensée de George Santayana* hardly mentions his fellow citizen, Bergson.<sup>6</sup> Comments on Santayana’s relation to Bergson’s philosophy can be found in McCormick’s biography and in Daniel Moreno’s recent *Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life*.<sup>7</sup> But those comments seem to be about all, despite the fact, amply evidenced in Santayana’s correspondence, that Bergson never quite disappears below Santayana’s philosophical radar.

What, then, are the common points between Santayana and Bergson I alluded to earlier? I would mention five:

- (1) Santayana and Bergson are both in some sense “literary philosophers.” What Irving Singer says about Santayana, namely that “more than any other great philosopher in the English language, [he] not only harmonized [literary and philosophical types of writing]—but also made harmonization of this sort a fundamental resource in doctrinal outlook,”<sup>8</sup> perfectly fits Bergson, *mutatis mutandis*. Here is what William James had to say about Bergson’s literary accomplishments: In Bergson, “great peculiarity of vision is allied with great lucidity and unusual command of all the classic expository apparatus. Bergson’s resources in the way of erudition are remarkable, and in the way of expression they are simply phenomenal. This is why in France, where *l’art de bien dire*

<sup>5</sup> On Bergson’s influence on French thought, see Pascal Engel, *Les lois de l’esprit: Julien Benda ou la raison* (Paris: les Éditions d’Ithaque, 2012), 131. Julien Benda, a staunch opponent of Bergsonism, recounts in his memoirs the following anecdote: Théodule Ribot, the father of French scientific psychology, exclaimed before some of his students, referring to Bergson’s growing influence: “Resign yourselves: we’re in for fifty years of mysticism in philosophy.” The poet Charles Péguy, to whom Benda told this, retorted: “he got it wrong, we’re in for several centuries.” See Julien Benda, *La Jeunesse d’un clerc* (Paris: Gallimard, 1936), 141.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Duron, *La pensée de George Santayana* (Paris: Nizet, 1950).

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Moreno, *Santayana the Philosopher: Philosophy as a Form of Life*, translated by Charles Padrón (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Irving Singer, *George Santana, Literary Philosopher* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 2.

counts for so much and is so sure of appreciation, he has immediately taken so eminent a place in public esteem. Old-fashioned professors, whom his ideas quite fail to satisfy, nevertheless speak of his talent almost with bated breath, while the youngsters flock to him as to a master. . . . The lucidity of Bergson’s way of putting things is what all readers are first struck by. It seduces you and bribes you in advance to become his disciple. It is a miracle, and he a real magician.”<sup>9</sup>

- (2) Both can be called philosophers of flux, endowed with an acute metaphysical, heraclitean, sense of the mutability of reality (Santayana once said: “Actually Bergson was right: change *is* fundamental.”<sup>10</sup>).
- (3) Both have wide-ranging intellectual interests and are well aware of the scientific developments of their day, and both recognize the intellectual centrality of Darwin’s theory of evolution.
- (4) Both are adepts of literary psychology, and in particular of the art of reverting to immediate consciousness, what Santayana calls “microscopic psychology,” a study of the “minute texture” of bodily sensations and consciousness (WD 75).
- (5) Both profess a real openness, inclination towards and sometimes dedication in regard to religion, the spiritual life and even mysticism.

At first sight, these similarities seem to point to the possibility of a deep philosophical affinity between the two philosophers. Significant ingredients of Santayanan philosophy seem in place and yet . . . everything is somehow wrong. Bergson, as seen through the lens of Santayana’s critique, offers a systematically inverted, almost perverted, version of Santayana’s philosophical ideal. What Santayana perhaps glimpsed in Bergson’s deforming mirror, what he so disliked, was what literary evolutionism, flirting with mysticism through a dive into immediate consciousness, could look like if unfettered by the claims of common sense and reason.

I would even argue that this ambivalent relation to Bergson could explain important elements of Santayana’s later philosophy. For example, is it sheer coincidence that one of Santayana’s main epistemological theses in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* is the direct contrary of one of the central tenets of Bergsonism? Compare Santayana’s “Anything given in intuition is, by definition, an appearance and nothing but an appearance”<sup>11</sup> to Bergson’s idea that it is *only* by means of intuition (by a kind of “intellectual auscultation”) that one can come to know *ultimate* reality. I am even tempted to interpret the emergence of Santayana’s controversial theory of essences as a way out from Bergsonism’s generalized “mobilism”: for Bergson, the fact that reality is mobility through and through implies that thought must try to become mobile and concepts should “become *fluide*”—which is a bit like requiring that a thought about the color *blue* should be blue.<sup>12</sup> Notice also the opposition

<sup>9</sup> William James, *A Pluralistic Universe: Hibbert Lectures at Manchester College on the Present Situation in Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909), 226–227.

<sup>10</sup> Bruno Lind, *Vagabond Scholar: A Venture Into the Privacy of George Santayana* (New York: Bridgehead Books, 1962), 71.

<sup>11</sup> George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955. Reprinted from the 1923 edition), 24.

<sup>12</sup> See Julien Benda, *Le Bergsonisme ou Une Philosophie de la Mobilité* (Paris: Mercure de

between Bergson's implicitly held identity-theory of truth, whereby the content of intuition or judgment must be *identical* to the thing or to the facts, and Santayana's unwavering adherence to the transitive nature of knowledge (encapsulated in the memorable quote: "knowledge is recognition of something absent; it is a salutation, not an embrace").<sup>13</sup> In Bergson's philosophy, says Santayana, "there is no possibility of knowing, save by becoming what one is trying to know" (WD 144).

Another key to Santayana's essay can be gleaned from a letter to Kallen written in 1908, in which he expresses his fundamental *disappointment* with Bergson:

Your experience with Moore is like my experience with Bergson: I thought him a great man, one of those whom we admire without feeling called upon to agree or disagree, since they seem to be above controversy, like the poets. But when I saw Bergson, and felt what his inspiration was, that he was a little cowed advocate of irrational prejudices and stubborn misunderstandings, feigning and acting the part of an impartial, subtle, liberal thinker—then all the charm vanished even from his written word, and I hear the cracked voice of the sectary and the whine of the reactionary in every syllable.... Bergson is suavity itself.<sup>14</sup>

### Other early criticisms of Bergsonism

Santayana's piece on Bergson is more or less contemporaneous with Russell's "The Philosophy of Bergson,"<sup>15</sup> but the approaches are very different. Russell's famous critique focuses on Bergson's confusions in regard to the nature of number ("Bergson does not know what number is, and has ... no clear idea of it" [PhB 334]), to Zeno's arguments (which are defused along Cantorian lines), and on the consequences of Bergson's willful ignorance of the distinction between the act of knowing and the object known (the capital sin of idealism). Russell's overall verdict on Bergson's thought is summed up in the following remark: "One of the bad effects of an anti-intellectual philosophy, such as that of Bergson, is that it thrives upon the errors and confusions of the intellect" (PhB 337).

Russell provides a useful short outline of Bergson's views (which I have in my turn further compressed), "without giving the reasons adduced by him in favor of their truth," adding mischievously that "[t]his is easier than it would be with most philosophers since as a rule he does not give reasons for his opinions, but relies on their inherent attractiveness, and on the charm of an excellent style" (PhB

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France, 1912), 45.

<sup>13</sup> LR1, 48. For Santayana, as for Lotze (Logic, Bk. III Ch. 1, Sect. 308), the antithesis between the act of knowing and the thing known is involved in the very meaning of knowledge, which "will never be the thing itself but only an aggregate of ideas about the thing." Or, as L. Susan Stebbing puts it: "he who demands a knowledge which should be more than a perfectly connected and consistent system of ideas about the thing, a knowledge which should actually exhaust the thing itself, is no longer asking for knowledge at all, but for something entirely unintelligible" (*Pragmatism and French Voluntarism* [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1914], 148).

<sup>14</sup> LGS, Book One, 378–9.

<sup>15</sup> Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Bergson," *The Monist*, XXII, no. 3, July 1912, 321–47. Hereafter cited as PhB.

332). Russell's outline, in any case, is serviceable as a fast-forward reminder of the contours of Bergsonism's doctrinal landscape: "The whole universe is the clash and conflict of two opposite motions: life, which climbs upward, and matter, which falls downward. Life is one great force ... given once for all from the beginning of the world ... struggling to break a way through matter" (PhB 322). "The division between intellect and intuition is fundamental in [Bergson's] philosophy, ... with instinct or intuition as the good boy and intellect as the bad boy; in the main intellect is the misfortune of man, while instinct is at its best in ants, bees, and Bergson" (PhB 323). "The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to understand life,"<sup>16</sup> "[it] separates things, [while] the essential characteristic of intuition is that it does not divide the world into separate things" (PhB 330). Intellect is connected with geometry and space, while instinct or intuition is connected with time, which is the essential characteristic of life or mind ("Wherever anything lives, there is, open somewhere, a register in which time is being inscribed"<sup>17</sup>—but the time here spoken of is not mathematical time ... which is really a form of space; the time which is of the essence of life is what he calls *duration*" (PhB 327).

Russell criticizes Bergsonism as a set of philosophical *propositions*. This is also what two other important early critics of Bergson set out to do: Julien Benda (whom Santayana admired<sup>18</sup>) and L. Susan Stebbing<sup>19</sup> (the main point of both Benda's and Stebbing's critiques is the denunciation of the ambiguity of the notion of intuition in Bergson).<sup>20</sup>

Santayana's onslaught on Bergson is of a very different nature. In a way it resembles George Politzer's vitriolic communist pamphlet *La fin d'une parade philosophique: le Bergsonisme*,<sup>21</sup> which presents Bergson as an illusionist in the service of the bourgeoisie, whose role it is to orchestrate the counterattack of idealism, spiritualism, and the church. Like Politzer, but obviously from a non-Marxist angle, Santayana "wants to show what is actually hidden in the magician's elegant box."<sup>22</sup> Up to a point, his essay is a case of *symptomatic reading*, detecting

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<sup>16</sup> This is actually a direct quote from Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, translated by Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan & Co, 1911), 174.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Santayana writes to Kallen on April 7, 1913: "Have you read Benda's capital book on Bergson? It relieved me of all qualms about my essay, which I feared might seem too severe." (LGS, Book Two, 128). Julien Benda wrote two book-length assaults on Bergson: *Le Bergsonisme ou Une Philosophie de la Mobilité* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1912) and *Sur le Succès du Bergsonisme* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1914).

<sup>19</sup> See L. Susan Stebbing, *Pragmatism and French Voluntarism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1914).

<sup>20</sup> As for Lovejoy's wonderfully penetrating lectures on Bergson, delivered in 1913, their aim is primarily historical, although they do contain scathing criticism of Bergson. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *Bergson and Romantic Evolutionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1914).

<sup>21</sup> Georges Politzer, *La fin d'une parade philosophique: le Bergsonisme* (Paris: J. J. Pauvert, 1968. Reprinted from the 1929 edition).

<sup>22</sup> Georges Politzer, *La fin d'une parade philosophique: le Bergsonisme*, 153.

at the heart of Bergsonism unavowed anthropocentric (“egotistic”) prejudices, “the desire to flatter oneself” (and others). In the main, Santayana’s project is to *unmask* Bergson. But this is not his only aim. Where Russell, Stebbing, and Benda tend to skirt the thorny biological and methodological issues linked to Bergson’s vitalist anti-mechanistic evolutionism, Santayana follows the trail that leads into those tangled issues, and is willing to wage battle on that field in order to refute Bergson.

### Unmasking Bergson

“The Philosophy of M. Bergson” is a forty-page long, rich, complex, multilayered text. In what follows, I will focus on the three aspects mentioned in my title: cosmic agoraphobia, literary psychology, and death. The essay’s opening sentence seems to echo William James’ raving eulogy of Bergson: “The most representative and remarkable of living philosophers is M. Henri Bergson. Both the form and the substance of his works attract universal attention” (WD 58). The next sentences, however, turn out to be classroom examples of damning by faint praise:

His ideas are pleasing and bold, and at least in form wonderfully original; he is persuasive without argument and mystical without conventionality; he moves in the atmosphere of science and free thought, yet seems to transcend them and to be secretly religious. An undercurrent of zeal and even of prophecy seems to animate his subtle analyses and his surprising fancies. (WD 58)

### Bergson’s cosmic agoraphobia and anti-mechanism

By the second paragraph of Santayana’s essay, we have understood that we are reading not a study in naturalism, not even one on “*half-hearted* naturalism” (the term Santayana used for Dewey), but one on what could be called “*sham or feigned* naturalism”:

In the history of philosophy, in mathematics and physics and especially in natural history [Bergson] has taken great pains to survey the ground and to assimilate the views ... of the most recent scholars. He might outright be called an expert in all these subjects ... were it not for a certain externality and want of radical sympathy in his way of conceiving them. (WD 58-9)

He [studies these subjects] conscientiously, yet with a certain irritation and haste to be done with it, somewhat as a Jesuit might study protestant theology. (WD 64)

Why this strained and embarrassed relation to scientific knowledge? Santayana offers, half-jokingly, a quasi-psychiatric diagnosis, almost a Nietzschean genealogy: Bergson suffers from “cosmic agoraphobia”; “he understands but he trembles” (WD 62). Behind the façade of Bergson’s gorgeous style and extensive erudition, Santayana detects an instinctive recoil from everything that is not the subjective, endured, warm, immediacy of the self. This is the intimate living mental hearth around which Bergson’s philosophy tries to erect protective walls: “[Bergson] dreads that the imagination should be fascinated by the homogeneous and static, hypnotized by geometry, and actually lost in *Auseinandersein*.<sup>23</sup> This would be a real death and petrification of consciousness, frozen into contemplation of a monotonous infinite

<sup>23</sup> This Hegelian term means something like “sheer exteriority.”

void” (WD 62–3). Many are the objects of Bergson’s fears, according to Santayana: space, mathematics, necessity, mechanism, intellect, the possible discoveries of science, nothingness, death. Actually, Santayana suggests, Bergson is *terrorized*: it is “as if some desperate small being were at bay before a horrible monster” (WD 63). That, of course, “prevents him from being a philosopher, in the old and noble sense of the word,” but then again, it is precisely what makes him such an eloquent spokesman for “animal timidity and animal illusion ... things that are deep in the heart of all of us” (WD 63), says Santayana. Hence the allure of Bergson’s universal recipe for attaining absolute truth: turn away from the intellect, whose aims are exclusively practical, and immerse yourself by intuition in the pulsating duration of the soul; or, in Santayana’s backhanded rhetorical reformulation: “Could we only listen undisturbed to the beat of protoplasm in our hearts, would not that oracle solve all the riddles of the universe, or at least avoid them?” (WD 64). Thus, under the disguise of a philosopher offering a new philosophy informed by the latest developments of empirical science, “M. Bergson is at bottom an apologist for very old human prejudices, an apologist for animal illusion” (WD 63). But, above all, he is a “terrified idealist” (WD 107).

Now, Bergson’s refusal to assume that natural processes can be reduced to mechanism could be seen as deriving from motives other than irrational dread and anthropocentric conceit: “th[is] refusal,” writes Santayana, “would be honest scepticism enough were it made with no *arrière-pensée*, but simply in view of the immense complexity of the facts and the extreme simplicity of the technical hypothesis” (WD 66–7). Wittgenstein probably had this type of prudent skepticism in mind when he said that Darwin’s theory “hasn’t the necessary multiplicity.”<sup>24</sup> But Bergson’s anti-mechanism is not inspired by mistrust of “speculative haste and the human passion for system and simplification” (WD 67). No. It does have an *arrière-pensée*: by suggesting that there can be no mechanistic true solutions to the problems that confront the naturalist, Bergson’s “methodology” (if it can so be called) effectively precludes all possibility of progress in the understanding of nature. Instead of “referring events to finer, more familiar, more pervasive processes, [Bergson refers them] to one all-embracing process, unique and always incomplete” (WD 67–8): the magic power of the *élan vital*. Talk about “the necessary multiplicity”! If we followed Bergson, notes Santayana, “our understanding would end in something far vaguer and looser than what our observation began with ... we should be left with a flat history of phenomena and no means of prediction or even classification” (WD 68). Even if Bergson had been a vitalist out of pure epistemological caution, “the balance of reasonable presumption” is clearly, for Santayana, in favor of mechanism: “dispassionate observers in all ages have received the general impression that nature is one and mechanical. This was, and still remains, a general impression only; but I suspect no one who walks the earth with his eyes open would be concerned to resist it, were it not for certain fond human conceits which such a view would rebuke and, if accepted, would tend to obliterate” (WD 71–2).

This brings us to the centerpiece of Santayana’s essay, a swift but masterful rebuttal of Bergson’s “palmary argument” in favor of metaphysical vitalism: the

<sup>24</sup> Rush Rhees, (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 173.



independent evolution of eyes by two different methods (or, in scientific parlance: the evolution of analogous organs for sight in different taxa):

Since in some mollusks and in vertebrates organs that coincide in being organs of vision are reached by distinct paths, it cannot have been the propulsion of mechanism in each case, says [Bergson], that guided the developments, which being divergent, would never have led to coincident results, but the double development must have been guided by a common *tendency towards vision*. Suppose ... that M. Bergson's observations have sounded the facts to the bottom; it would then be of the ultimate nature of things that, given light and the other conditions, the two methods of development will end in eyes; just as, for a peasant, it is of the ultimate nature of things that puddles can be formed in two quite opposite ways, by rain falling from heaven and by springs issuing from the earth; but as the peasant would not have reached a profound insight into nature if he had proclaimed the presence in her of a *tendency to puddles* ... so the philosopher attains to no profound insight when he proclaims in her a *tendency to vision*. If those words express more than ignorance, they express the love of it. (WD 92–3)

What Santayana spotlights is the utter methodological sterility of Bergson's metaphysical vitalism: all the interesting questions (for example, why did this tendency to vision—or to puddles—arise in the first place? How did it come to interact with a particular transformable matter?) remain unanswered. In other words,

this side of M. Bergson's philosophy illustrates the worst and most familiar vices of metaphysics. It marvels at some appearance, not to investigate it, but to give it an unctuous name. Then it turns the name into a power.... This is simply verbal mythology or the hypostasis of words, and there would be some excuse for a rude person who should call it rubbish. (WD 94)

Or, in contemporary American philosophical jargon, bullshit.

### Literary psychology and its proper scope

One of the few instances of sincere praise of Bergson by Santayana concerns his “wonderful knack” (WD 81) for the “very modern, very subtle, and very arbitrary art ... of literary psychology”<sup>25</sup> (WD 73). Bergson, notes Santayana, practices a very particular brand of literary psychology: he is a “microscopic psychologist,” studying something “[very] recondite, the minute texture of sensation, memory, or impulse” (WD 75). Bergson has taught himself “a difficult art”: “to revert ... to rudimentary consciousness,” to “touch again the vegetative stupor, the multiple disconnected landscapes, the ‘blooming buzzing confusion’” (WD 80). This greatly interests Santayana and he readily recognizes that Bergson's ingenious introspection of the immediate and its skillful verbal rendering may give us some inkling of what consciousness is like in other creatures, since “it is probable that at that level all sentience is much alike” (WD 80). It may even allow us to imagine what it is like to function “instinctively”:

M. Bergson is a most delicate and charming poet on this theme, and a plausible psychologist; his method of accumulating and varying his metaphors, and leaving our intuition to itself under that artful stimulus, is the only judicious and persuasive

<sup>25</sup> Defined in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, 252, as “the art of imagining how [animals] feel and think.”

method he could have employed.... It seems no longer impossible that we might, like the wise men in the story-books, learn the language of birds; we share for the moment the siestas of plants; and we catch the quick consciousness of the waves of light, vibrating at inconceivable rates. (WD 81)

But, of course, what literary psychology *cannot* do is reach metaphysical *objectivity* from a point of view that is *subjective* by essence: the proper scope of literary psychology is bounded by objectifiable conditions of plausibility (though these may be fuzzy at the boundaries): some degree of structural similarity and the “possibility of imitation” (WD 76) must somehow make the observed and the observer commensurable. Bergson, however, belongs to a school of thought, namely French Spiritualism, which explicitly attempts to derive metaphysics from an investigation into the mind. And he is its boldest (not to say its most reckless) representative. Intuition, which is claimed to grasp the concrete flux of duration itself, is supposed to bring us to the heart of being. Bergsonian intuition-based psychology and true metaphysics are supposed to be one and the same thing. However, as Santayana remarks,

a human psychology, even of the finest grain, when it is applied to the interpretation of the soul of matter, or of the soul of the whole universe, obviously yields a view of the irresponsible and subjective sort; for it is not based on any close similarity between the observed and the observer; man and the ether, man and cosmic evolution, cannot mimic one another ... [such an interpretation] would be an admirable entertainment if there were no danger that it should be taken seriously. (WD 77)

Bergson, however, obviously intends that the move from intuitive introspection of the flow of duration to a new metaphysics, “a new theory of the universe” (WD 81), be taken seriously. Santayana imagines an innocent, commonsensically realistic and materialistic reader of Bergson, wondering: how can the study of the “texture of primitive consciousness,” which is “a part of the internal rumble of this great engine of the world” (WD 81), lead to a view that denies the reality of this material engine and professes that a vital impulse be substituted for the abolished world of matter? Santayana enlightens his imaginary reader, by reminding him of a few unpleasant truths about our profession's congenital inclination for sensationalism:

If philosophers were straightforward men of science ..., they would all substantially agree.... But philosophers are either revolutionists or apologists, and some of them, like M. Bergson, are revolutionists in the interest of apologetics. Their art is to create some surprising inversion of things ..., or to defend some such inverted system, propounded by poets long ago, and perhaps consecrated by religion. It would not require a great man to say calmly: Men, birds, even ether-waves if you will, feel after this and this fashion. The greatness and the excitement begins when he says: Your common sense, your practical intellect, your boasted science have entirely deceived you; see what the real truth is instead! So M. Bergson is bent on telling us that the immediate, as he describes it, is the sole reality: all else is unreal, artificial, and a more or less convenient symbol in discourse.... So we must revise our psychological observations, and turn them into metaphysical dogmas. It would be nothing to say: *For immediate feeling* the past is contained in the present, movement is prior to that which moves, ... perception is in its object and identical with it, the future is unpredictable.... No, we must say instead: *In the world at large* the whole past is preserved bodily in the present, duration is real and space is only imagined; all is motion and there is nothing substantial that moves ... men, birds and waves are

nothing but the images of them ... evolution is due to an absolute Effort which exists *in vacuo* and is simplicity itself. (WD 83)

One of the very best moves in the essay occurs when Santayana shows in detail how many “strange, fantastic and obscure” points of Bergson’s metaphysics are based on microscopic literary psychology (WD 77–8). For example, he provides a good, sober explanation of how somatic feelings (but nothing in external reality) exemplify Bergson’s disconcerting assertion that “movement exists when there is nothing that moves, and no space that it moves through” (WD 79): “if we descend to somatic feelings ... in shooting pains or the sense of intestinal movements, the feeling of a change and of a motion is certainly given in the absence of all idea of a *mobile*” (WD 79).

Thus, “M. Bergson’s proper achievement begins where his science ends, and his philosophy lies beyond the horizon of possible discoveries or empirical probabilities” (WD 74). His doctrine will appear accurate or hollow according as we take it for literary psychology or natural philosophy. If the latter, it will appear as yet another example of the “metaphysical abuse of psychology” (WD 94) that is one of the unfortunate characteristics of a lot of modern European philosophy.

### Can anyone die in Bergson’s system?

For Santayana, who once wrote that he was “almost an ancient philosopher,”<sup>26</sup> “a good way of testing the calibre of a philosophy is to ask what it thinks of death” (WD 100). And that is precisely what he does for Bergson’s philosophy in the final part of the essay. Although “M. Bergson has not yet treated of this subject” (WD 100), Santayana makes an earnest effort to try to reconstruct the place that it might occupy in a system where Life is the original and absolute force and Matter only a peripheral subordinate something that Life posits or creates in its ascent towards human consciousness. And the truth is that, however one interprets the “vital impulse” (in a naturalistic exoteric sense or in a mystical esoteric one), it is very difficult to see how death is possible at all in such a system. Bergson recognizes that lower organisms store energy for the higher organisms to use, and that may sound like admitting, as Lucretius does, “that nothing arises in nature save helped by the death of some other thing”<sup>27</sup> (WD 102). But it is not quite the same thing, for the death of all the lower organisms is no defeat at all for the *élan vital* which is the only true substance:

for according to our philosopher, the whole universe from the beginning has been making for just the supreme sort of consciousness which man ... now possesses. The sheep [that man eats] and the grass [that the sheep eat] were only things by the way and scaffolding for our precious humanity. (WD 102)

But why stop at humanity? asks Santayana, in sci-fi mode; if evolution is creative and open-ended, as Bergson understands it to be,

would it not be better if some being should arise nobler than man, not requiring abstract intellect nor artificial weapons, but endowed with instinct and intuition and,

<sup>26</sup> George Santayana, *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922), 179.

<sup>27</sup> See Lucretius, *De Natura Rerum*, Book I, lines 264–5.

let us say, the power of killing by radiating electricity? And might not men then turn out to have been mere ... energy ... stored for convenient digestion by that superior creature? A shocking thought no doubt, like the thought of death.... Yet I can see no ground, except a desire to flatter oneself, for not crediting the *élan vital* with some such digestive intention. (WD 102–3)

Perhaps the entry for “*Mort*” in the index of the critical edition of *L’évolution créatrice* seems so scanty (for a book on evolution) because Bergson, who served as President of the Society for Psychical Research in 1913, is, in Santayana’s ironical words, “too amiable to deny to our dilated nostrils some voluptuous whiffs of immortality” (WD 106). That, in any case, is what the famous climactic ending of *Creative Evolution*’s third chapter promises: “All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand on the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity, in space and in time, is one immense army galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge able to spurn every kind of resistance and break through many an obstacle, perhaps even death.”<sup>28</sup> How could Santayana resist poking fun at this cosmic grand operatic cavalry charge and ridiculing the philosopher-general at the lead? “Here the tenor has ended on the inevitable high note, and the gallery is delighted. But was that the note set down for him in the music? And has he not sung it in falsetto?” (WD 107).

Bergson claims to have penetrated deep into the essence of life, “and yet death, together with birth, is the natural analysis of what life is” (WD 107). Whatever *Creative Evolution* is about, it doesn’t seem to be about the contingent phenomenon that has arisen on this planet and that could be wiped out by a little fall or rise in temperature. The omission of death in M. Bergson’s philosophy, which, as Santayana says, “is almost the omission of wisdom from philosophy” (WD 107), warns us against taking M. Bergson’s thought at face value or too seriously. Santayana’s final verdict is that

[Bergson’s philosophy] is something occasional and partial, the work of an astute apologist, a party man, driven to desperate speculation by a timid attachment to prejudice. Like other terrified idealisms, the system of M. Bergson has neither good sense, nor rigor, nor candor, nor solidity. It is a brilliant attempt to confuse the lessons of experience by refining upon its texture, an attempt to make us halt, for the love of primitive illusions, in the path of discipline and reason. It is likely to prove a successful attempt, because it flatters the weaknesses of the moment, expresses them with emotion, and covers them with a feint at scientific speculation. (WD 107–8)

### Conclusion: Three philosophical virtues

Santayana’s conclusion will be my own:

[Bergson’s] doctrine is indeed alluring. Instead of telling us, as a stern and contrite philosophy would, that the truth is remote, difficult, and almost undiscoverable by human efforts, that the universe is vast and unfathomable, yet that the knowledge of its ways is precious to our better selves, if we would not live befooled, this philosophy rather tells us that nothing is truer or more precious than our rudimentary consciousness

<sup>28</sup> Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, translated by Arthur Mitchell (London: Macmillan & Co., 1911), 285–6.

... [It] flatters together the intellectual faithlessness and the material servility of the age and [teaches] [them] to justify themselves theoretically. (WD 108–9)

Even compared to Santayana's most acerbic assessments of other philosophies, including those in *Egotism in German Philosophy*, his considered view of Bergson appears exceptionally harsh, too harsh perhaps, perhaps unjust; but it probably won't seem so to those who, as students of Santayana, consider courage, honesty, and modesty as prime requirements for a sane philosophy: *courage* in facing the facts without (too many) illusions, *honesty* in trying to "stand in philosophy exactly where [one] stands in daily life"<sup>29</sup> and *modesty* in recognizing the limitations our animal-human natures impose on our thinking and desiring lives.

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## Santayana and Voice<sup>1</sup>

"Publish?" he hissed in mock loathing. "How should I publish anything? My verse is never written down. To nail a verse down on a page is to murder it. Don't you remember your *Phaedrus*? And if no living philosophy can ever be found in a book, how much less any living poetry. Homer never wrote anything. Socrates never wrote anything. Christ never wrote anything. St. Francis never wrote anything. And why should I materialize my spirit, and spatialize my melodies, by vilely imprisoning them in a chain of letters? Letters are fetters. I breathe my inspirations, I utter them; and those who have ears to hear may retain and report my words. Or, if they don't exactly report them, but fetch a new inspiration, as St. Paul did, from a mere echo of a rumour of the divine word, so much the better. They will sing their own songs under my name, and I shall be singing a new song through their throats forever (LP 523).

These are the words of Basil Kilcoole in George Santayana's novel, *The Last Puritan*. Kilcoole is speaking here as pure spirit, a major category for Santayana.

In this paper, I intend to show that Santayana's view of *voice* is not far from the Platonic tradition as expressed in the *Timaeus* and its commentaries and, perhaps most famously, in the Gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John I:1).<sup>2</sup> The centrality of man's capacity to name things makes it crucial to understand *voice* as well as we can. Santayana was somewhat unusual among philosophers in the way he distinguished this human capacity, dedicating an entire volume to what he called *essence*, namely that which naming invokes (RE).

In a way, *voice* is obvious to us all, an assumed capacity in daily life that is not reflected on, unless someone's response to us has unexpected tone or timing. It's not that *voice* is too abstract to grasp, but rather that it is so close to us that we miss noticing it: this is how Santayana describes *essence* in various places. For example, of essences: "the only things people ever see and the last they notice," (PP 20) and of *voice*: "The world of things seems arid and alien compared with the inexhaustible world of talk; and a man will laugh at his mistakes about matters of fact, when shame will consume him all his life long if he has slipped into a fault of speech" (RT 55–56).

He also talks about *spirit* as *voice* in many places. For example in *The Realm of Spirit*: "whilst spirit is physically the voice of the soul crying in the wilderness, it

<sup>1</sup> This essay is a revised and expanded version of a paper delivered before the George Santayana Society at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy in March, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> For Plotinus, see *Ennead* V:1:6, "the Soul, for example, being an utterance and act of the Intellectual Principle as that is an utterance and act of the One." See also John Dillon's article on 1 John as regarded by students of Plotinus: "St. John in Amelius' Seminar" in *Late Antique Epistemology: Other Ways to Truth*, eds. Panayiota Vassilopoulou and Stephen R.L. Clark (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009). For Santayana as a Neoplatonist, see John Lachs' article, "Neoplatonic Elements in the Spiritual Life" in *Neoplatonism and Western Aesthetics*, eds. Aphrodite Alexandrakis and Nicholas Moutafakis (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002).

<sup>29</sup> George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955. Reprinted from the 1923 edition), vi.

becomes vicariously and morally the voice of the wilderness admonishing the soul” (RS 14), and later, “strange as it may sound to the rationalist who thinks prayer ridiculous, the only perfectly rational form of life for a spirit that has attained self-knowledge is the life of prayer” (RS 247).

When Santayana talks about vocal tone, it is consistently in terms of how close we are, how vulnerable we are to it: “These agencies distract only when they interfere with intuition at the desired level: as when in speaking you catch the tone of your own voice, lose the thread, become embarrassed, and detest yourself and all your peculiarities” (RS 121).

But the place where Santayana really displays the primacy of voice and the power of vocal tone is in his novel. The numerous discussions of talking and singing in *The Last Puritan* are the closest descriptions of voice to be found anywhere in his writings. Certainly, this book is a novel (i.e., a *memoir in the form of a novel*), and the assertions of the various characters are intended to express points of view which may not be philosophically arguable. However, in the epilogue of *The Last Puritan*, Mario van de Weyer tells (the character) Santayana that “perhaps there’s a better philosophy in [this book] than in your other books ... because now you’re not arguing or proving or criticizing anything, but painting a picture” (LP 572). This is a picture which Santayana began writing as an undergraduate and finally published in his seventies: a work encompassing forty-five years. This novel, together with his assertion in various places that *voice gives form to essence* has inspired me to try to piece together the references to voice in his major works, in hopes of showing something of his view of utterance.

Utterance includes a gamut of sounds; as well as speech, we have laughter and singing. From *Reason in Art*: “It has been said that man’s preeminence in nature is due to his possessing hands; his modest participation in the ideal world may similarly be due to his possessing tongue and ear. For when he finds shouting and vague moaning after a while fatiguing, he can draw a new pleasure from uttering all sorts of labial, dental and guttural sounds. Their rhythms and oppositions can entertain him, and he can begin to use his lingual gamut to designate the whole range of his perceptions and passions” (LR4 68–69).

Whether Santayana ever seriously considered becoming an opera singer is unlikely to be known, but he did write in *Persons and Places*, “Why should I think it unjust that I am not an applauded singer, which was in me to be,” (PP 13) and later, “music would be an acceptable profession if you could begin by being famous” (PP 235). In any case, his many descriptions of singing and singers, as well as of language and even of diction in *The Last Puritan* show close attention to the voice and its role in character.

“*Spirit fed by matter gives voice to essence*” (RS 103). Furthermore, *vocal tone* affixes Will to its project. The most concise demonstration of this assertion in *The Last Puritan* is perhaps the contrast in laughter between Mario (self-described as *frankly animal*) with his “peal of laughter” (LP 409) and the completely weak Peter Alden with his “silent chuckle” (LP 339). The animal nature is richly displayed by Mario and also by Irma, the German governess, suggesting to me the image of “souls from below” in Book 10 of Plato’s *Republic*. By contrast, Oliver Alden (the

*aner pneumatikos*), represents a budding “soul from above,” along with the Rev. Mr. Darnley and also Oliver’s father, Peter.<sup>3</sup>

Vocal tone, which is hardly referenced anywhere in Santayana’s philosophical writings, is a key element in the novel. Although vocal tone is never mentioned with reference to the speaking voices of *any* of the major characters, it is Santayana’s standard way of introducing minor characters. Just a few examples: 1. Professor Harry Bumstead “*talking through his nose on Applied Christianity*” (LP 317). 2. The clergyman Robert Fulleylove speaking “*hesitatingly*,” with his “*explosive and evanescent voice*” (LP 522); and 3. Caroline Van De Weyer’s “*deep but very clear and individual feminine voice saying sharply*, ‘Don’t dawdle out there, whoever you are’” (LP 343).<sup>4</sup>

Let us take a close look at how utterance is introduced in the book.

The first sound we hear in the story is that of “a whistling butcher boy” making a delivery to the house of the as-yet-unnamed (Uncle) Nathaniel Alden (before there are any names of people, there is whistling). The first chapter contains only subjunctive, conjectural speaking, as in “Peter wouldn’t notice until too late that” someone was saying “May I inquire into the state of your health?” (LP 23) to which Nathaniel *would* reply, and later, “he trembled at the possibility of someone saying, ‘Tell me, how is poor Julia? ... at least physically, she’s quite strong?’” to which Nathaniel *would* reply, “Yes, quite strong physically: even in that direction, at present, there seems to be no hope” (LP 24). Notice that the first person’s name that’s spoken is a hopelessly mentally-impaired person we never read about again. And the first named speaker is expressly hoping she would die. We are launched into a story with a difference: because *animal hope*<sup>5</sup> is never the hope for death, so Nathaniel’s response comes across as funny to the reader. Nathaniel doesn’t perceive it as funny, nor do the people he is speaking with, but *we*, as *readers* can experience the humor of it.<sup>6</sup> Then Chapter 2 immediately introduces direct speech with Peter saying, “*Going out?*” (LP 27).

<sup>3</sup> *Scepticism and Animal Faith* gives a full description of the distinction between these two natures.

<sup>4</sup> In *The Last Puritan*, although Peter Alden allowed his wife Harriet to make most of the decisions regarding Oliver’s early training, Peter does weigh in on how young Oliver should learn to pronounce English. “I should like his English to be fundamentally pure: then all the abominable speech he will have to hear will seem to him absurd and amusing. He needn’t be troubled by it, and won’t imitate it ... I suppose it’s more important to have the feelings of a gentleman than the speech of a gentleman: but the things are closely allied” (LP 84). Later, when Oliver is grown, Peter describes to him the intricacies of naming with reference to his ship, the *Black Swan*. This topic is continued later in a rant by Basil Kilcoole, with reference to his own name. Naming things is thus an important theme in the book, also treated in terms of heraldry, an obsession of Mario’s father, Harold.

<sup>5</sup> A major category for Santayana. See *Scepticism and Animal Faith*.

<sup>6</sup> One of the tropes of classical literature is the great significance given to the first, last and central phrases in a book. In the center of *The Last Puritan*, we find a sentence about how endlessly amusing existence is when you begin to see the humor in it. In *The Last Puritan*, Santayana steps outside the action of the story to write, “Indeed the absurdity of things is

The very first words of the story, “A little below” constitute Santayana’s constant plea for us all to remove ourselves from the fury of life’s business in order to be able to perceive the *essences* of things.<sup>7</sup>

And the final words of the story are spoken by Mrs. Darnley, “dropping into a cockney whine ... ‘He was a kind gentleman’” (LP 566). Surely that is how Santayana wished to be remembered. The whining tone of her voice seems artificial and bizarre, perhaps inhuman, but perhaps not unlike the whistling of the butcher boy at the beginning.

To look more closely at vocal tone, we can compare extensive descriptions of the singing of Oliver and Mario, and also consider what is said about the book’s other singers.

Mario is entirely at home with singing. We never meet his mother or learn her name, but she is amply described as an Italian opera singer of mythic greatness. His childhood includes enthusiastically performing great *diva* arias for his mother’s circle of friends, for which he is regularly rewarded by kisses from his mother and from the whole room full of women.

At puberty, when his voice changes, Mario loses that stupendous range, but he can still sing with a light, free voice with easy delivery, half-speaking half-singing, capable of producing delight in his hearers (LP 390). He is depicted accompanying himself on the piano, and occasionally winking, puffing a cigarette and talking between the phrases. There seems to be no great difference for Mario between speaking and singing.

Oliver, by contrast, has a deeply moving voice, “a great voice, like King David enforcing his views” (LP 395), reflecting an awareness that is “pervious to every ray” (LP 263). He must be accompanied and stands stiffly with eyes uplifted, “abstracted as if in the presence of Allah” (LP 390). His ability does not cause him to seek to display his voice, but rather to stop singing if he realizes that strangers are listening. He cannot sing what he does not feel (LP 247). Oliver opines, “To be happy was to sing, not to be made to sing, or to sing by rote, or as an art, or for a purpose, but spontaneously, *religiously*, because something sang within you, and all else for the moment was remote and still” (LP 160). The image here is of singing to confront the *flux of matter*, an important philosophical category for Santayana not dealt with directly in the novel.<sup>8</sup> Oliver sings to try to control *matter*, even deliberately caging it to make it be still, as it were.

The first time we see Mario as an adult, he is shipboard, approaching for the first time the country of his deceased father; he is fully embroiled in a love affair with the “reigning diva” on the ship, La Gorgorini, on her way to New York to sing at the Metropolitan Opera. She is introduced to us with a “rather tuneful and theatrical

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woven into them so inexhaustibly, that we never tire of the drollery we have once really perceived” (284).

<sup>7</sup> “It was unusually mature of me, in ripe years, to re-discover *essences*, the only things people ever see and the last they notice” (PP 20).

<sup>8</sup> There is a great deal of water imagery and several descriptions of moving over water which surely are intended to represent the flux of matter. For philosophical treatment, see *The Realm of Matter*.

scream” amid a laughing crowd, which is followed by the sound of a slap: this catches Oliver’s attention, enabling him to spot his cousin.<sup>9</sup>

So Mario’s mother is an unnamed, operatic goddess, and his lover is a trill-singer (*Gorgoritear* means *to trill* in Spanish). Not only has young Mario won La Gorgorini’s deepest affection, and apparently that of many other women already, but he has the somewhat unusual capacity to remain friends with all his conquests afterwards: “And why did things, no less than women, yield at once to his touch and dance to his piping as if, inaudibly to vulgar ears, some magic flute were compelling them? By contrast, Oliver felt heavy and clumsy in mind and body, older but less experienced” (LP 386).

Mario’s facility with this diva shows what he has learned growing up under his operatic mother, who gave up the greatest stardom to devote herself entirely to raising her son. Her voice is described by Peter: “You know that Mario’s mother is a born genius, with a contralto voice which, if she had been a vulgar singer, might have shaken the heavens and uprooted the earth; but in her the depth is not intentional. She is calm as a goddess and docile as a slave; and the greatest wonder in her singing is the rising sweetness and joy of it, the quite spontaneous *fioritura coloratura*, *sfumatura* that break out in it as if they were the trills of a caged canary” (LP 306).

By contrast, Oliver’s “sonic” heritage was bleak. Santayana records no mention of family singing or even descriptions of the vocal tone of his parents, only of his father’s silent chuckle. Oliver *sees* everything “except the humor in anything” (LP 318).<sup>10</sup>

The assertion that for baby Oliver “it was never appropriate to laugh” is carefully placed (LP 80). The first reference to Oliver’s laughter is when he meets the young captain of his father’s ship, Jim Darnley, and the two go swimming: “Amid laughter and mock imprecations they scrambled on deck” (note that the laughter is impersonal) (LP 158). Soon after that, on meeting and talking with his grotesquely disfigured cousin Caleb Weatherbee, “Oliver laughed, laughed with a flush of excitement and merriment that quite transformed him” (LP 191).<sup>11</sup>

The emerging picture contrasts Oliver and Mario with respect to the sonic experience of their parents.

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<sup>9</sup> Mme. Gorgorini’s servitude to her voice is absolute. She is depicted as being dependent on others at every moment, and her screaming can actually be read as a means to bring the two cousins together, even though Oliver will be taking Mario away from her: the opposite of her wish.

<sup>10</sup> Oliver’s seriousness contrasts with his father, who wondered as a boy, “was everything in this world like a picture-puzzle which seen right side up was the lovely Titania and turned upside down was a donkey’s head?” (LP 23). Hence the pervasive chuckle, rendered silent by protracted guilt and shame. Oliver, given his father’s capacity to see both sides of everything, humorlessly wonders whether art is not simply a fancy path to greater disappointments or even a disease (LP 396, e.g.). This *moral cramp* causes Oliver to see both sides of any case as equally tragic—no laughter to be had.

<sup>11</sup> This event marks the moment he becomes independent of his mother. In his next conversation with her, Oliver uses the subjunctive mood for the first time: “Letty Lamb would say so” (LP 203, italics in original).

Oliver's father, humorous but quiet, his mother controlling; the only music in the house comes with the eventual German governess, Irma, described by his mother as "too full of feeling" (LP 320, e.g.).

Mario's deceased father, Harold Van de Weyer, comes across as having been an unworldly aesthete, obsessed with heraldry, a figure reflected on with pity and affection. (Peter tells us, "He skipped Wagner and worshipped his wife" (LP 306). Harold perceived in his wife all the music he needed.) As a widow, Mario's mother's financial situation is a matter of continuous concern, so she and Mario are not subject to the guilty pressures of wealth. *Her* behavior is perfectly animal, and the description of her voice becomes a way of delineating the nurturing power of the generous female: described by such adjectives as serene, free, rich, beautiful, spontaneous. And all of these qualities extend to Mario's animal powers in the social sphere.

The third young man of the book, Captain Jim Darnley, also weighs in on singing (LP 255): "Wasn't I a choirboy once, like a chirping sparrow? But not on such an occasion"; and here he speaks of deliberately altering his voice to fit dramatically into a funeral at sea. Jim's perception of singing as a birdlike activity is also expressed when he hears Oliver sing: "I say, you did sing that hymn like a lark" (LP 244).<sup>12</sup>

Late in the story, Oliver is in Paris on leave from the front and is approached by the designing Baronne du Bullier. When she attempts to seduce him, instead of collapsing into sensuality, he is vaulted into a sublime, visionary state of compassion, and "even his French was now at his command" (LP 531): an empowering shift of position with regard to the Realm of Essence. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Santayana has an image of a pendulum that could help us envision what is being presented in this scene: where the normally pulsating pendulum is swung so violently that it flies to the apex of its round, where it may momentarily pause and waver, viewing all things from above and at a distance (SAF 107). Being assaulted morally by the Baronne causes Oliver to identify with Eternity rather than with Time, further establishing his position as an *aner pneumatikos*.

So Mario, for whom the realm of pregnant flux (aka *matter*) is economic, sings as a simple formalization of speech, to reveal and celebrate *spirit*. Jim sings to show himself as part of the herd—a cloaking gesture to *conceal spirit*. Oliver, for whom the flux of life appears to be the moral realm, sings as a radical revelation of spirit, an effort to fully cloak and stop ever-changing matter in a spiritual utterance.<sup>13</sup>

I hope that this little meditation on the voices of *The Last Puritan* will bring some insight into Santayana's other assertions about the voice. I opened with the words in the novel of Basil Kilcoole, lambasting the suggestion that he would ever murder his words by writing them down. Santayana, of course, wrote a great deal. There is

<sup>12</sup> Larks are the one bird thought to fly vertically. Further, Jim's perception of appropriate speech is quite definite when holding forth about the justice system: "there can't be freedom of speech for society to hold together" (LP 163). His range of concern quickly incorporates public opinion, both perceived and imagined. These forms of awareness provide the basis for the life he strives to create for himself.

<sup>13</sup> For Jim, flux is the basic injustice of the world: while Mario rides the wave, laughing, Jim perceives everything to be read in terms of personal loyalties which are basically treacherous. As such, all things must be energetically charmed or coerced for Jim. Oliver has neither such ease nor such certainty. For him the flux is repressed: people are mysterious, morally remote.

a short passage from his book, *The Realm of Matter*, that summarizes his assessment of such humble work:

Literature and literary philosophy are nevertheless the most natural and eloquent witnesses to the life of the psyche. Literature is conserved speech, speech is significant song, and song is a pure overflow of the psyche in her moments of free play and vital leisure and this overflow is double...the ontological overflow [of *spirit*, with its] concomitant emergence of consciousness, alone seems to arrest the wonder, not to say the wrath of philosophers; and they are so surprised at it, and so wrathful, that they are inclined to deny it, and to call it impossible" (RM 154).

To close, I would like to share a bit of Mario's advice to Oliver: "You must come to Paris next summer and let my mother teach you to sing ... all you must do is shake off your crust, your artificial shell, because it *is* artificial, and is merely cramping and tormenting you into being what other people expect or what circumstances require. Art takes you beyond all that, as if you were mad, or a poet, or in love. You are inspired: and then, if you sing, everybody that hears you is transported with you. That's when the whole house goes wild and shouts and claps, as if you had let loose a thousand devils, or angels, inside each of those poor johnnies in the gallery. And you have"<sup>14</sup> (LP 395).

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<sup>14</sup> "As if you were mad, or a poet" refers to the four forms of madness in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

## Comment on Nancy Ogle's "Santayana and Voice"

Nancy Ogle's engaging essay on voice in the works of George Santayana gives us a close reading of *The Last Puritan* as a demonstration of the significance of utterance and vocal tone in Santayana's thought. The essay traces an interesting expression of the relation of spirit, essence, and matter. As such it reveals concrete details of human experience that underlie Santayana's system—his ontology and method. As a way to appreciate and extend the insights of Ogle's essay I want to relate it to the work Morris Grossman, the Santayana scholar and musician, who, in his essay "Drama and Dialectic" also remarked upon voice in the thought of Santayana—especially the variety of voices that Santayana's method was committed to preserving in the face of sometimes stiflingly authoritative reason.

According to Ogle, voice is pervasive but often overlooked—like essence for Santayana. But voice also is akin to matter. Ogle refers to Santayana's assertion that voice gives form to essence. And through their voices the characters of *The Last Puritan* show their relations as spirits to matter. Voice seems to be an ontological nexus. And this could explain the philosophical import Grossman finds in voice because the spiritual activity of philosophy cannot ignore the variety of essence and the force of material flux.

Grossman was concerned with how to regard all of the voices we notice after we become aware of them. He discussed two broad ways: drama and dialectic. Drama is the more or less deliberately controlled presentation of contrary viewpoints. Dialectic is the logical elaboration of viewpoint and consideration of statements entailed with respect to consistency (Grossman 216–17). Dialectic is concerned with the elimination of contradictions by surprising them when they arise. Drama is concerned with the domestication of contraries to allow for their co-existence.

Grossman thought the best philosophers chose wisely between drama and dialectic in their philosophical expression. Like Ogle, Grossman thought Santayana followed an example set by Plato; in this case, in the use of drama and dialectic. Grossman cited an essay by Santayana called "The Search for the True Plato" (Santayana, *The Idler and His Works* 54–73), in which Santayana observed that it is not difficult conceiving that Plato, instead of moving definitely and finally from one style (drama or dialectic) to another, "should have tapped his various interests at various times," adapting expression to theme. Plato, according to Santayana, "knew the limitations of art and the often ambiguous complexities of dialectic" (quoted in Grossman 213). Grossman thought the same of Santayana. Santayana recognized that dialectic can silence contrary viewpoints, while excessive drama in trying to make room for every voice can lead to confusion.

Ogle seems to sense the same tension when she writes of the different voices heard in *The Last Puritan* that "the assertions of the various characters are intended to express points of view which may not be philosophically arguable" (Ogle 36). This seems to disqualify the attempt to preserve various voices as philosophical. But if voice gives form to essence, then voice, by leading us into the realm of discourse and contradiction, also ushers us into the realm of essence, which is, of course, the

realm of dialectic. Ogle's response is to attend to each voice for what it reveals about experience, in this case, about experience as Santayana articulated it in his philosophy.

So Ogle's essay is, I think, an example of what Grossman had in mind when he described philosophical method inspired by Santayana as "openness and a continued retention of the several strains of achievement that make up the tradition" (Grossman 227).

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## Santayana and the Arts<sup>1</sup>

### Differences of opinion

He got so much wrong: dance is ridiculous; cubism is what the eye would produce if it were unceremoniously cut off from the brain; photography can never be a fine art; savage music is unrefined and impersonal, and those who engage in it take little pleasure in it; Shakespeare had no sense of man's place in the cosmos (and was inferior to Homer); the actor's art is inferior in dignity to the sculptor's—so many judgments that today we would find quaint, old-fashioned, curmudgeonly, or simply laughable that one question to ask is: What value has a theory of art that leads to such conclusions?

Should we put stock in such a theory? Would we countenance an ethical theory that leads to morally repulsive conclusions? I shall defer an answer to that question for the moment and concentrate on asking whether Santayana's preferences tell us more about the man or about his philosophy. Is there a fundamental inadequacy in Santayana's theory or are his odd opinions relics of his time, place, and temperament?

Santayana's philosophy as a whole suggests they may well be relics. He certainly never intended his judgments about art to be dogmatic, because his philosophy is anti-dogmatic. No human judgment is final. We each view the world from a narrow and partial perspective filtered through the "lenses and veils" of our senses. Our material circumstances, our physical being and our social world, condition us to think the way we do. Half our tastes "come from our first masters," he wrote, "and the other half from our first loves" (LR4 194).

### Dance

The same must be said for our dislikes. Take the case of dance. Here's what Santayana wrote about it:

[M]ost dances, even the savage ones, are somewhat ridiculous.... There are indeed dances so ugly that, like those of contemporary society, they cannot be enjoyed unless they are shared; they yield pleasures of exercise only, or at best of movement in unison. (LR4 401)

There is perhaps something in this of provocation for its own sake—Santayana's iconoclastic mockery of the social conventions of his day. Taking into account this possible provocation and also my own exaggeration of Santayana's view of the genre in my opening remarks, it is still clear that Santayana's enthusiasm for dance was not high. But what did Santayana have as models? Waltzes and *Swan Lake*, perhaps?—ballroom dancing and classical ballet? As for ballet, Martha Graham would have agreed with him that it is by and large ridiculous. But, in 1905, he did not have the advantage of her choreography. The Ballet Russe had not yet been organized and *The Rite of Spring* was eight years away. Not only did he not yet

<sup>1</sup> Portions of this article were presented at the George Santayana Society session at the meeting of the Society for Advancement of American Philosophy in March 2016. The author thanks Martin Coleman for his astute and helpful comments, which prompted several revisions in the current version, and Henry Shapiro for his painstaking review of nearly every phrase.

have Diaghilev and Martha Graham, but he was missing more than a century of experience: Busby Berkeley, Agnes de Mille, Fred Astaire, George Balanchine, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Katherine Dunham, Gene Kelly, Alwin Nikolais, Murray Louis, Bob Fosse, Pina Bausch, and—for God's sake—the Nicholas Brothers in the film *Stormy Weather*. There's a clip on the Internet. If you haven't seen it, Google it immediately the first chance you get.

### Current perspective

So from our perspective—when I say "our," I mean educated people of Western culture in the early twenty-first century, which is not to say that everyone today has the same tastes, and certainly we have jihadists<sup>2</sup> and Baptists who somehow haven't caught on to dancing; but, from this narrow stance of mine that I know many of you share—Santayana, who had no access to YouTube, was culturally deprived.

It would be ill-mannered to condemn Santayana for not being our contemporary. We don't denounce Galileo for thinking that the tides are caused by changes in the earth's rotation; Descartes for thinking the pineal gland, right in the center of the brain, is the seat of the soul; or Einstein for thinking that the cosmological constant was a great blunder, even though most physicists today find it extremely useful.

Science progresses and art and philosophy in their own ways do, too. Yet, the word 'progress' is ambiguous, as it may mean advancement or simply movement through phases. For better or worse, tastes change. In what follows, I take a close look at Santayana's judgments about literature and photography. In a future essay, I plan to deal with Santayana's comments on music. Much of Santayana's assessment of particular works or genres of art does stem from his late-nineteenth-century Bostonian education, his descent from freethinking Spanish gentry, and his disinclination toward family life. His theoretical writings on art are also somewhat stifled by this background. Yet, in the midst of rendering a curious pronouncement, Santayana often made an observation that is dead on.

Even if he lacked the sensibility to appreciate much of what we today find worthwhile, in *Reason and Art* and some of its allied works Santayana made observations that John Dewey would draw out, alter, and even twist around completely in producing his own more nuanced and accepting work, *Art as Experience*, which appeared nearly thirty years later in 1934. To illustrate this, I examine three areas of tension in how one regards artistic products: art as a mirror of life versus an interpretation of life, scope versus suggestiveness, and representation of perfection or ideals versus representation of experiences. These three areas were all explicitly identified by Santayana, who emphasized interpretation, scope, and vision of the ideal. In drawing the contrast between Santayana's position and a more open, accepting one, I use Dewey's *Art as Experience* as a starting point, but in a few cases I extend the contrast in ways Dewey himself did not explicitly articulate. My

<sup>2</sup> 'Jihadists' was the term I used in Portland. A reliable source tells me that not all jihadists shun dance. Many do dance. It is the Wahhabists who don't dance and not all of them are jihadists (i.e., those who believe in an armed struggle against the non-Muslim world). The Wahhabists, in turn, are one of several *salafist* movements, many of which prohibit dancing. Besides, there are many Baptists who dance.



purpose is not to compare Santayana and Dewey on art (as I have elsewhere<sup>3</sup>), but to use Dewey's positions and views derived from them to illustrate what Santayana emphasized. In the case of comparing art as a mirror versus art as an interpretation, I bring in the views of the poet W. H. Auden.

## Santayana on specific art forms

### Literature

Language, Santayana indicated, is an advance over music. Music elaborates feelings, but its ideas are only musical ones. Language adds symbolic reference to things in the world. But language has features that are irrelevant to its meaning: the sound of words, their look on the page, odd similarities that make wordplay and puns possible. So literature, which combines the adventitious aspects of words with representation, holds an intermediary place between music and science. Science endeavors to strip away the extraneous elements of representation and "disclose the bleak anatomy of existence" (LR4 82). Poetic language then is "language at its best. Its essential success consists in fusing ideas in charming sounds or in metaphors that shine by their own brilliance" (LR4 106). Prose marks an advance over poetry, because it emphasizes determinate objects and events more than it does language itself. In prose, language is an instrument to convey imaginative representations of experience and (if I might add something Santayana does not explicitly call attention to) the rhythms of prose are achieved by orchestrating the rhythms of events rather than those of language. If prose were purely instrumental, however, it would be self-effacing. Or, as Santayana put it:

Prose, could it be purely representative, would be ideally superfluous. A literary prose...must convey intelligence, but intelligence clothed in a language that lends the message an intrinsic value, and makes it delightful to apprehend apart from its importance in ultimate theory or practice. (LR4 103)

Literature cannot be purely representative partly because its delightful packaging is often irrelevant to what it conveys, but the deeper reason is that literature does not replicate existence, but interprets it. This deeper notion addresses one of the three forms of tension that I am highlighting (mirror versus interpretation). The importance of interpreting reality returns when Santayana's assessment of photography comes into focus. The main issue with regard to literature is that the pure scientific representation of reality is impossible. Reason, which endeavors to be "universal in its outlook and sympathies" (LR4 109) is always exercised from a particular perspective. It is, therefore "essentially human and, in its momentary actuality, necessarily personal" (LR4 109–110). So it follows that:

If a poet could clarify the myths he begins with, so as to reach ultimate scientific notions of nature and life, he would still be dealing with vivid feeling and with its imaginative expression. The prosaic landscape before him would still be a work of art, painted on the human brain by human reason. (LR4 111)

This brief discussion of literature, so far, has been rather abstract. It becomes concrete when we consider Santayana's analysis of particular works. In his essay on *Hamlet* (1908, OS 41–67), for example, he found that the problem with its main

character is that for all his intelligence, wit, nobility, and sensitivity, he never figures out how to live. The play, in the end, is an "exquisite monument to the failure of emotional goodwill, and of intelligence inclined to embroider rather than to build" (OS 66) and this masterpiece "is a picture of incidental unfitness, of genius wasted for being plucked quite unripe from the sunny places of the world" (OS 67).

The issue here is failure of intelligence to analyze its circumstances so as to render life valuable. For Santayana, the justification of art is that it presents a kind of perfection not found in other aspects of life:

In æsthetic activity we have...one side of rational life; sensuous experience is dominated there as mechanical or social realities ought to be dominated in science and politics...Art has met, on the whole, with more success than science or morals. Beauty gives men the best hint of ultimate good which their experience as yet can offer. (LR4 171–172)

Striving from nature toward some rational ideal is the overriding theme of the *Life of Reason*. Santayana's analysis of *Hamlet* shows that, for Santayana, depicting the vibrancy and fullness of life is not enough. There needs to be a lesson. This idea is central to the third area of tension (ideals versus human experience) in that for Santayana it is more important to render a glimpse of perfection than of life as it is lived.

The second area of tension (scope versus suggestion) comes to the fore in Santayana's comparison of Homer and Shakespeare in *Reason and Art*. In Homer, a name and its accompanying epithet may have a "sensuous glow" that initially renders it poetical. But it may also be the name of a region or an ancestor. "In other words," wrote Santayana, "it is a signal for widening our view and for conceiving the object, not only vividly and with pause, but in an adequate historic setting" (LR4 113).

Next, he compared this broadened view with what he found in Shakespeare:

Macbeth tells us that his dagger was "unmannerly breeched in gore." Achilles would not have amused himself with such a metaphor, even if breeches had existed in his day, but would rather have told us whose blood, on other occasions, had stained the same blade, and perhaps what father or mother had grieved for the slaughtered hero, or what brave children remained to continue his race. Shakespeare's phrase is ingenious and fanciful; it dazzles for a moment, but in the end it seems violent and crude. (LR4 113)

This passage prepares us for Santayana's conclusion that "scope is better than suggestion." Before discussing this, it might be worth noting that Santayana's bias toward Homer so influenced his reading that he ended up misapplying his own criterion. Not only does he misquote the line (it should be "unmannerly breech'd with gore"), but he takes it out of context. Macbeth is referring, not to his own dagger, but to those of the king's manservants, whom Macbeth is falsely accusing of the king's murder. His speech is an overwrought justification of the rage that led him to kill those grooms. So if the speech is lacking in poetic depth, that lack appears to be precisely Shakespeare's design, because others in the hall have their doubts about Macbeth's sincerity. Santayana counters this passage, not with any actual passage from the *Iliad*, but with a hypothetical utterance on the part of Achilles that Santayana alludes to without producing.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., *Overheard in Seville: The Bulletin of the Santayana Society*, no. 21, Fall 2003.

Moreover, Santayana did not take into account the difference between dramatic and poetic art. The very things he found lacking in the quoted phrase are shown in the course of the drama. Malcolm and Donalbain, the ‘brave children’ of Duncan, the man slain by the blood-stained knife, are in the room when Macbeth utters his florid defense, and are so skeptical of its veracity that they flee for their lives. We see the murders of Macduff’s wife and children before he is told of their murder and gives vent to the wrenching:

All my pretty ones?  
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?  
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam  
At one fell swoop? (Act IV, sc 3)

Furthermore, as to the suggestion of historical context and the descendants who carry on after a slaughter, Shakespeare has the witches show Macbeth so many kingly descendants of the murdered Banquo—one of whom was the Scottish King James, whose ascendance to the throne of England prompted Shakespeare to set a play in Scotland—that Macbeth cries out: “What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom?”

My argument is that, at least in this instance, Shakespeare did have the breadth and sense of context that Santayana thought he lacked. His insistence on Shakespeare’s deficit in this regard is not confined to this passage in *Macbeth*. In his essay on *Hamlet*, the failure to conceive a more adequate frame for life is connected to Shakespeare’s fundamental myopia. As Santayana wrote:

How blind to him, and to Hamlet, are all the ultimate issues, and the sum total of things how unseizable! (OS 57)

A footnote to this passage (perhaps inserted by the editors of *Obiter Scripta*, a collection published in 1936 that included this essay from 1908) refers the reader to Santayana’s comment in “The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare” (1896), an essay included in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). There, Santayana wrote:

Shakespeare’s world...is only the world of human society. The cosmos eludes him.  
... He depicts human life in all its richness and variety, but leaves that life without a setting, and consequently without a meaning. (IPR 154–155, OS 57, note)

The fundamental concept of artistic theory operating here is articulated by Santayana in *Reason in Art* just after his comparison of Homer and Shakespeare:

Scope is a better thing than suggestion, and more truly poetical. (LR4 114)

By scope, Santayana meant that the greatness and glory of art lie not merely in representing some portion of the world or human experience, but rather in “showing how many ways” the world might “serve reason and beauty” (LR4 114). This notion brings together Santayana’s choices in the three areas of tension in artistic theory. He concludes his chapter on “Poetry and Prose” with the idea that at its zenith art combines mastery with idealization:

mastery, to see things as they are and dare to describe them ingenuously; idealisation, to select from this reality what is pertinent to ultimate interests and can speak eloquently to the soul. (LR4 115)

It is clear that Santayana prefers breadth of vision to unarticulated intimations, and clarification of ideals to experience in the raw. To the question of whether art should mirror nature or interpret it, Santayana’s answer is a dialectical fusion: it must accurately reflect what exists, but in doing so render an interpretation that shows how the world might serve ideal interests. Those ideal interests are not otherworldly. Portrayal of reality includes representing what the human soul really wants (which is different for each of us) and idealization consists in recognizing how those desires can best be satisfied.

What this comes down to is that the final assessment of art is a moral one, as it is for philosophy, because philosophy and art have the same goal—seeing the world clearly so as to live in it best. Here Santayana reveals his hand. He regards Aristotle’s distinction of history, poetry, and philosophy as a hierarchy with philosophy at the top. If poetry were primarily suggestive, then it would be a discipline separate from philosophy, expressing aspects of experience that philosophy and ordinary narrative can only approximate. For Santayana, poetry is ultimately judged by its moral, which is to say philosophic, adequacy.

### Photography

Santayana held what he called “plastic representation” in the highest regard. (Before Bakelite and vinyl, the word ‘plastic’ referred to three-dimensional or moldable things). His father was an amateur painter and he himself drew cartoons for *The Harvard Lampoon*. These drawings were among his earliest published works. By the time he wrote *Reason and Art*, Santayana had theoretic grounds to back up his instinctive admiration for architecture, sculpture, and painting. Unlike dance, music, and literature, these arts make permanent changes to the physical world. But what these changes preserve is not physical. It is, to use his later vocabulary, an essence—something eternal. The plastic arts of representation (which include sculpture and painting) transform a visual image (one sort of essence) into a medium that can keep the impression indefinitely. As this is clearly what photography does, why did Santayana not welcome photography into the fold of the fine arts?

Sometime in the first years of the twentieth century, around the time that he was producing the *Life of Reason*, Santayana gave a lecture at the Harvard Camera Club. The manuscript found after his death has four pages missing. The remaining pages, nevertheless, convey the thrust of his message, which, for the Camera Club, must have been bad news: photography could never be a fine or creative art. After spending nearly half his talk analyzing the nature of the mental image and praising photography for its ability to capture that image so that it may be revisited at a later time, he concludes that because the photographic image is produced by a machine, it can never transform the original perception in a creative way:

The function of photographs and of mental images is to revive experience, but the function of creative art is to interpret experience. (AFSL 400)

Interpretation is intelligent activity, something quite different from dumb reproduction. Intelligence aims at divining the ideal, which photography can never do:

For good photographs will be beautiful when their object is beautiful...but to be ideal they would have to transform the object so as to make it a clearer response to the

observer's predetermined interests. The camera cannot have a human bias, it cannot exercise a selective attention or be guided by imaginative impulse. (AFSL 401-402)

These two assertions—that photographs cannot interpret experience and that they are beautiful only when their object is beautiful—were already refutable in Santayana's day, and the hundred and ten years since have been showered with an incessant rain of images that should drown any effort to revive them. (There are, to be sure, Philistines in any era. In 2014, just two years ago, the UK's *Guardian* newspaper published a debate between two critics, one of whom made a futile attempt to resurrect views like those of Santayana.)

The question whether the purpose of art is to mirror life or to critically interpret it is a big one, but it is not necessary to raise it at the moment, because it is easy to show that photographs do interpret experience. Consider Edward Steichen's iconic photograph of JP Morgan.<sup>4</sup> This photograph shows Morgan holding the arm of a chair, which the light strikes so as to make him appear to be clutching a dagger. The dagger and the pinpoints of light reflected from Morgan's eyes reveal him to be a mean-spirited, voracious tycoon. It is obvious to any viewer that the photo interprets the man in a way he would not find flattering. In fact, the infuriated Morgan tore up the initial prints.

Santayana's admitted ignorance about photography shows why he failed to see what is clear to anyone who has spent any time with it: the angle of the picture, the confluence of light and shadow, the degree and depth of focus, the speed of the shutter, and the many aspects of the post-capture process that are needed to make a fine print (or computer image) all contribute to what the photograph conveys to the viewer. The camera itself may not have a human bias, but the photographer can exercise selective attention and be guided by an imaginative sense of what sort of photograph might be compelling, effective, or beautiful. Quite often photographic composition involves deciding what to exclude from the frame so as to focus on what the photographer considers important. Sheldon Helfman, a painter who often bases paintings on photographs, has said in conversation that the difference between painting and photography is that in painting you have to decide what to put in, whereas in photography you have to decide what to leave out.

Furthermore, the notion that photographs are beautiful only because of what they photograph is an assertion that to anyone who has spent serious time with a camera is absurd. All the factors mentioned above affect the result. Besides, there are stunningly beautiful people who are not naturally photogenic: their three dimensional faces don't readily adapt to a two dimensional projection. But a good commercial photographer will know how to light and angle such people so as to bring out their best. Objects, too, often resist capture. It takes skill and considerable visual imagination to capture in a photograph the majesty of mountains in a way that matches the awe of being among them.

The background story of Steichen's picture brings to light something else about photography that Santayana apparently did not realize. In 1903 (coincidentally while Santayana was at work on the *Life of Reason*), Morgan commissioned a painter to make his portrait, but, as he did not want to take the time to sit for the painter, Morgan hired Steichen to take photographs that the painter could use in place of his

flesh and blood person. He sat for Steichen for just a few minutes. Steichen admitted he was not aware of the dagger effect until he developed the picture. Does Steichen's ignorance of what his mechanical device was capturing support Santayana's notion that the photograph is not a human interpretation of the world? No, because that notion leaves out a critical facet of photographic art: it is a selective process. A photographer may take hundreds of images before finding one that conforms to what he or she wishes to express. In this case, Steichen only took two pictures of Morgan, but the one with the apparent knife was clearly the one that conveyed the strongest (and morally most accurate) impression and has come to represent Morgan to the world with far more penetration than the painted portrait that Morgan had authorized.

In downgrading photography, Santayana was selectively applying his philosophy of art to a medium not even seventy years old. In retrospect, it is clear that he was attempting to use his theoretic concerns to justify an opinion that was then in vogue—an attempt that misapplied his theoretic concern for interpretation by asserting that photography fails to interpret experience, when in fact it does. This misjudgment about photography surely was an extension of Santayana's deep distrust for technology as a means of human advancement. Of course, he wrote with a pen, not a quill; traveled dozens of times to and from Europe by steamship, not sailing ship; and traveled perhaps even more by rail, an invention only a few years older than photography. Nevertheless, he was skeptical that such developments brought with them moral progress. Dewey, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, observed that ideals become real “in fact, not merely in fancy” through such inventions as “the telegraph, the telephone, first through wires, and then with no artificial medium” (RP 120–121). In his copy of Dewey's book, Santayana wrote in the margin: “Heaven made real by the radio.”

Although Santayana could not appreciate photography, photographers could, nevertheless, appreciate him. Walker Evans, the great photographer of the American Depression, had all three volumes of Santayana's autobiography in his library with notations of passages he found important. Evans liked one so much that he copied it onto the back cover of the book. It was from *My Host the World*: “The imagination is potentially infinite” (PP3 33).

### Tensions in aesthetic theory

As for the question of whether a theory can have value if it leads to objectionable conclusions, the answer with almost any philosopher of merit is highly affirmative. Aristotle in the *Politics* argues that some people are naturally fitted for slavery—a position almost no one publicly upholds today—yet his *Nicomachean Ethics* is filled with wise advice and common sense observations about human relationships. Although it is a good interpretative tactic to read a philosopher with an eye toward seeing how he or she was right, the philosopher who pushes this broadmindedness to the limit is Heidegger, who used his elaborate philosophic apparatus to justify remarks like those found in his recently translated *Black Notebooks*, where, after he had co-operated with the Nazis in their effort to strip Jewish people of the right to practice their professions, he wrote: “The Jew is self-annihilating.” In the case of Santayana, whose anti-Semitism was much milder and largely forgivable, those

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/49.55.167/>

of us who savor his elegant writing, sharp insights, and clear ontology know the value of his work. As the poet Wallace Stevens, who was profoundly influenced by Santayana, wrote:

The exquisite and memorable way in which he has always said things has given so much delight that we accept what he says as part of our own civilization. His pages are part of the *douceur de vivre*. (Stevens 187)

So what did he get right? Despite the antiquated character of Santayana's preferences, some of which are based on erroneous assumptions, his writings on art are elegant and adroit articulations of a consistent and systemic view of the place of art in life, a view which is part of a broad-ranging philosophic system. The system is complex and Santayana's outlook has both a judgmental side and a tolerant, open-minded one. In his criticism of philosophy and art, Santayana's irony can be crushing. But his philosophy as a whole preaches charitable understanding of as wide a range of viewpoints as possible, understanding where a particular idea or work is coming from, and interpreting literal depictions to get to their fundamental meaning. His approach to art is both critical and open. On the open side, art is an integrated part of life, not something consigned to museums and performance halls. Beauty in art is not a different species from beauty in the natural world. Yet, as art is a human production, it has aspects that require special attention.

Santayana's conception of the nature and value of art depends on a number of interrelated choices. The choices are not rigid ones, but matters of emphasis. The three areas of tension I have delineated help bring his choices into focus.

### Mirror versus interpretation

I do not raise the issue of whether art is a reflection of life or an interpretation to unearth the long history of literary and critical theory (starting with Plato and Aristotle's regarding works of art as mimetic) or to explore the full range of meaning of the ambiguous terms 'imitation,' 'representation,' and 'interpretation.' Its purpose here is to weigh Santayana's position on a scale of emphasis. In his lecture on photography, Santayana made interpretation a decisive criterion for determining whether an endeavor counts as a fine art. Yet Santayana did not mean that interpretation is to be at variance with the truth. Santayana's later work *The Realm of Truth* (1938) provides some clarification. To Santayana, an idea is true if it accurately corresponds to something that occurs in the world that exists. Existence consists of two realms: the realm of matter (i.e., physical existence) and the realm of spirit (i.e., conscious life). The realm of essence is the unlimited catalogue of ideas, images, impressions, and feelings. The realm of truth is that infinite part of the yet larger realm of essence that is either illustrated by the physical world or presented to the consciousness of some mind. The chapter "Dramatic Truth" makes it clear that truth about spirit need not be literal. A myth or story that describes events that are either impossible or just factually false (as any work of fiction does) may nevertheless express truths about experiences that people undergo and the aspirations they have:

Dramatic genius can afford to be unfair to the surface facts, to foreshorten, to crowd, and caricature everything....If the facts are to be dramatized, they must not be

reproduced. They must be recast selectively on a grand scale, and precipitated towards some climax in which the heart is concerned. (RB 467)

Santayana's essay on *Hamlet* and his lecture on photography show he thought that unanalyzed representation of the world is insufficient. In an essay, W. H. Auden offered a seemingly contrary view in that he insisted art is a "mirror." Nevertheless, Auden's view is partially supportive. To understand how, we must follow his argument. He wrote, first of all, citing R. G. Collingwood, that art is not magic, "but a mirror in which [people] may become conscious of what their own feelings really are: its proper effect, in fact, is disenchanting" (Auden 351). No artist "is intentionally a magician," but that does not prevent someone from using his work as magic. One of Auden's examples is an undergraduate who quoted T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" with enthusiasm:

Had the undergraduate really read his poem, he would have had to say: "Now I realize I am not the clever young man I thought, but a senile hermaphrodite. Either I must recover or put my head in the gas-stove." Instead, of course, he said, "That's wonderful. If only they would read this, Mother would understand why I can't stay home nights, and Father would understand why I can't hold a job." (Auden 351–2)

The mirror Auden describes turns out not to be a simple reflection:

By significant details [art] shows us that our present state is neither as virtuous nor as secure as we thought, and by the lucid pattern into which it unifies these details, its assertion that order is *possible*, it faces us with the command to make it *actual*. (Auden 351)

Now the word 'command' is not one Santayana would have used and, rather than condemning the "magic power of poetry," Santayana understood magic to be an integral part of poetry's effect, at least its initial effect. But Auden's "lucid pattern" that suggests that things could be better organized is close to what Santayana meant by interpretation. Auden's assertion that art correctly perceived is disenchanting has some affinity to Santayana's notion of the virtue of disillusion, found in such later works as *Scepticism and Animal Faith* and *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*. There are at least two illusions we need to dispel. The first is the illusion that our immediate intuitions of things conform to the way they really are. The second is the illusion of well-meaning supernatural influences—that the world was somehow made for us. It is the recognition found in Wallace Stevens' "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction" (a poem, the driving idea of which can be found in Santayana's *Reason in Art*):

From this the poem springs: that we live in a place  
That is not our own and, much more, not ourselves  
And hard it is in spite of blazoned days.

Nevertheless, for Santayana, the purpose of disillusion is not disenchantment, but reconciliation: learning to adjust to life as it is, which may, as Auden suggested, involve the radical but slow transformation that comes with maturity. Santayana emphasized ontological disillusion, while Auden emphasized psychological. Although these two forms of disillusion are connected to each other, Auden and Santayana differ greatly on many counts. Auden, for example, rejected Santayana's idea that the philosophy expressed in a work is of fundamental importance. For Auden, art is an exploration of what a medium can express, not primarily a means of expressing great ideas. Although they agreed that art contributes to the moral

education of the individual, the way in which it does so differs. For Auden, it was sufficient for art to show us our current state so that we shall be prompted—commanded—to change it. In his essay on *Hamlet*, Santayana made clear that just showing us life as it is is not enough.

Even though *Hamlet* “expresses a conflict to which every soul is more or less liable” (OS 61), in the end “our incoherent souls see only their own image” (OS 67). Yet this seems exactly what Auden had in mind. What more did Santayana want? The answer is found in his analysis of Hamlet’s love for Ophelia. In confusion and despair Hamlet casts Ophelia aside. Santayana’s comment is: “He is sorry, very sorry, but it does not occur to him that he can do anything or find in Ophelia a resource or inspiration” (OS 59). For Santayana it was not enough for art to *show* us what we are now; it also had to *exemplify* how we might be better. The interpretation Santayana was after was one that gave us an image of the ideal, or at least of something better.

John Dewey would have approvingly acknowledged Auden’s moral concern with improvement through self-awareness and, although he understood Santayana’s urge for the ideal, he would not have focused on it. For Dewey, the moral function of art was broader than either Santayana or Auden recognized. Dewey, like Santayana, eschewed the museum-centric idea of art and believed you had to look at lived experience first. He agreed with both Santayana and Auden that in working with the materials of art, emotions get clarified. But his emphasis was that the result of artistic production embodies the emotional quality of an experience in a medium that makes it not just intelligible, but relivable by others. So, for Dewey, the purpose of art is not so much refinement of experience, but appreciation and communication. He did not deny the instructive power of both producing and experiencing works of art, but he emphasized that the key function of art is capturing the emotional heart of experience. Now, of course, the production of what Dewey called an “esthetic object” is a kind of interpretation. But the focus of this production makes his view far more democratic than Santayana’s, in that a wider range of experiences becomes worth exploring. The moral purpose of art is not to show us to a better world, but to make us better able to appreciate the values found in the varied experiences of life.

A reading of *Hamlet* in the open manner suggested by Dewey and borrowing from Santayana’s insight is that the tragedy of *Hamlet* is not just that of a procrastinator who couldn’t bring himself to act, or of a thoughtful man tormented by doubt, but of a young man whose despair at his father’s murder by his uncle (whom his mother then married) leads him to torment his mother, rile his uncle, shun Ophelia whom he loves, and, in mistaking her father for his uncle, unwittingly kill her father in an attempt to avenge his own father—an act that leads to Ophelia’s suicide and a sword fight with her brother that leaves them both dead, along with his mother and uncle. In short, it is not that *Hamlet* failed to purify the rotten state of Denmark or love Ophelia or his mother in an appropriate manner, as Santayana seems to have preferred. It is that, in spite of his wit and intelligence, his urge to do what is right is incessantly frustrated by his circumstances, his own psychology, and his dreadful bad luck. The tragedy is that *Hamlet* is thwarted at every turn (except in getting his former friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern killed) and cut from life before he has the chance to grow in the way Santayana would have him grow. The play lets us witness that sometimes, in spite of the best efforts of the “paragon of animals”—of humanity—in spite of our “blazoned days”—life can go dreadfully wrong. Showing

such an experience in its complexity and making it into a coherent story helps us to live through our own tragedies, because the unifying nature of the story enables us to see that we are not alone.

For Dewey, the unidealized experience is as important as the perfected one. Dewey’s starting point is one laid out by Santayana in his chapter in *Reason and Art* on “Poetry and Prose.” There Santayana showed that far from despairing that we can know things only through appearances, we should recognize that the simple act of perception bestows order on the world:

To have...appearances is what makes realities knowable. Knowledge transcends sensation by relating it to other sensation, and thereby rising to a supersensuous plane, the plane of principles and causes by which sensibles are identified in character and distributed in existence. These principles and causes are what we call the intelligible or the real world; and the sensations, when they have been so interpreted and underpinned, are what we call experience. (LR4 111)

To put this in the vocabulary of the realms of being, the intuition of an essence may correctly identify an essence exemplified by the world, and a wider intuition (a more complex essence) may relate that essence to others that are also illustrated by the world. So perception translates reality into another medium—raw, ever-changing existence becomes reflected in the eternal unchanging realm of essence—the realm of ideas and appearances. Santayana also insisted that perception always has an emotional character. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey took these basic building blocks and developed the idea that the way we carve out an identifiable experience from the ongoing flux of perceptions (and actions, he was careful to add) is that it has some emotional quality that binds it together. That’s how we can say we had a memorable dinner or trip or party, played or watched a memorable game, had embarrassing, exhilarating, traumatic, or delightful experiences. This emotional quality is our first sense of order. It underlies how we begin to make sense of the world. Auden was close to this idea when he wrote that the “lucid pattern” that “unifies” details exhibits an order. If we can seize hold of the binding emotional quality by working in some medium to produce an object—a work of art—then the essence of that experience—in Dewey’s sense or gist, not Santayana’s—can live on.

### Scope versus suggestion

The transformation Dewey made by focusing on how experience can be transmitted brings us to the second area of tension in the philosophy of art, scope versus suggestion. Dewey’s approach emphasizes the suggestive nature of the artistic object. Dewey, contrary to Santayana and Auden, thought communication of experience to be of the utmost importance. Santayana, as noted in the section on literature, recognized the suggestive aspect of artistic works, but regarded that as secondary. This idea persisted throughout his later philosophy. In *The Realm of Essence* (1927) he wrote:

The function of poetry is not to convey information, not even to transmit the attitude of one mind to another, but rather to arouse in each a clearer and more poignant view of its own experience, longings, and destiny. (RB 111)

The difference is marked. For Santayana, philosophy and art have the same goal, learning how to live. The ultimate criterion for judging either is this same moral one.

Dewey emphasized art's evocative nature. Art works by embedding images in the mind that stimulate a multitude of others. Santayana, in fact, described this process exquisitely in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900):

Perceptions fall into the brain rather as seeds into a furrowed field or even as sparks into a keg of powder. Each image breeds a hundred more, sometimes slowly and subterraneously, sometimes (when a passionate train is started) with a sudden burst of fancy. (IPR 3)

Dewey built on this notion to declare that art communicates the character and nature of experience more effectively and fully than predominantly cognitive disciplines like philosophy and science (including psychology). If I may extrapolate from this, it is precisely its suggestiveness that differentiates art from philosophy (and its offspring, criticism), where the effort is to be as explicit as possible. Art, looked at this way, takes over where the sidewalk of philosophy ends, for it can walk into the forests of deepest joy and grief that philosophy can only describe from without. A well-wrought work of art is one that is rich in suggestion and avoids blatant sentimentality, bombast, or preaching. An alternative to Santayana's emphasis on the balance between what pleases immediately and what fosters self-knowledge is to say artistry consists in getting the right balance between the suggestive and the obvious.

For Santayana, because the unit of perception is an unchanging essence, the mere act of perception freezes the relentlessly changing world. To say that a work of art has scope is to say it freezes a lot, and beyond that, by employing an engulfing concept—also an essence—it gives context to what it freezes. Dewey's emphasis is not on solidifying existence. Yes, a work of art embodies experience, but it does not freeze it. Each one of us brings something to an art object and gets something from it. In the act of creation and in the act of appreciation there are multitudinous associations not directly found in the work itself. Beyond this plethora of suggestion, what is captured is the fluidity and vividness of life. Here the contrast between the two could not be greater.

Yet, Santayana and Dewey both knew that philosophy has its own suggestive side, that ideas can be as evocative as music or poetry—an attribute wonderfully described in an essay by Wallace Stevens, "A Collect of Philosophy." Santayana was one of the first to acknowledge that a philosophic system expresses personal, social, and historic circumstances. Santayana's own manner of writing reveals that he knew more than most that philosophy that does not employ suggestion—that fails to use vivid examples and illuminating metaphors—is prone to remain dead on the page, unread.

### Ideals versus human experience

Finally, we turn to the question of whether the function of art is to convey a vision of an ideal (or perfected human experience) or to depict human experience as it is. It is difficult to deny the importance of the moral assessment of artistic objects. In movies or plays or novels, we look for a balance of good and evil. The more complex the relationship between the two, the more compelling the work and the more it repays revisiting. Even where the forces of ill seem to triumph, as in many Roman Polanski films, like *Chinatown*, with their non-Hollywood endings,

we can see such depictions of the persistence of evil as reflections of what often really happens: that the effort to put things right can go awry; but, as in the case of *Chinatown*, such an ending doesn't turn the villain (the John Huston character) into a good guy—we still know right from wrong. As Santayana put it in writing about catharsis—the outpouring of grief in tragedy and music:

Catharsis...does not show us that evil is good, or that calamity and crime are things to be grateful for: so forced an apology for evil has nothing to do with tragedy or wisdom.... Catharsis is rather the consciousness of how evil evils are, and how besetting; and how possible goods lie between and involve serious renunciations. To understand, to accept, and to use the situation in which a mortal may find himself is the function of art and reason. (LR4 65)

This description shows the moral direction Santayana wanted to take. For Dewey, the moral function of art is found in its presentation of moments, occasions, or things that have intrinsic value—experiences that rather than concentrating on cognitive or practical (i.e., moral) ends, are primarily meant to be undergone for their own sake. These occasions make us more attuned to the intrinsic qualities in other aspects of life. So rather than focus on some ideal that transcends ordinary, routine struggling, the focus is to find the ideal in the familiar—to make the unexceptional exceptional. The artist Louise Nevelson, when asked why she painted the sculptures she made out of found wooden objects black, replied that she could see all colors in black. When friends found her New York neighborhood drab and disheartening, she replied she could find beauty everywhere.

This is not to ignore the painful, grueling experiences that people undergo every day. But art can convey these experiences to others and the imagination that art cultivates can be employed to find ways out of them, because the way to solve a particular human problem may require a change in the customary way of thinking through the problem.

The vision of making the everyday as close to ideal as possible is where Dewey and Santayana come together. When life is especially painful, the moral world may well be the world of fantasy (as the film *Pan's Labyrinth* shows all too well). Nevertheless, it is a fundamental goal of social progress to minimize those moments, to make the moral world as close to the real as possible. Santayana, normally no fan or promoter of social progress, concluded the penultimate chapter of *Reason in Art* with a vision of the fusion of the ideal and real that Dewey, an admirer of *The Life of Reason*, may well have found to be a worthy goal or, to use a phrase Dewey preferred, "end in view":

If knowledge were general and adequate the fine arts would accordingly be brought round to expressing reality. At the same time, if the rendering of reality is to remain artistic, it must still study to satisfy the senses; but as this study would now accompany every activity, taste would grow vastly more subtle and exacting. Whatever any man said or did or made, he would be alive to its aesthetic quality, and beauty would be a pervasive ingredient in happiness. No work would be called, in a special sense, a work of art, for all works would be such intrinsically.... Thus there would need to be no division of mankind into mechanical blind workers and half-demented poets, and no separation of useful from fine art, such as people make who have understood neither the nature nor the ultimate reward of human action. All arts would be practised

together and merged in the art of life, the only one wholly useful or fine among them.  
(LR4 214-5)

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## Comment on Richard M. Rubin's "Santayana and the Arts"

Richard Rubin's fine essay demonstrates a deep understanding of Santayana's philosophy and has the virtues of being for a new reader of Santayana a good introduction to the richness of his system while also for a long-time reader being an insightful lesson about connections in Santayana's thought. Relating Santayana's theory of art to his concrete observations and literary criticism is helpful for gaining a comprehensive understanding of Santayana's outlook; the discussion about ideals likewise draws together many pieces of the system for any reader.

The essay takes up the question of whether Santayana's reflections on art are valuable even though they seem to have led him to conclusions unsatisfactory for many to whom his perspective is otherwise appealing. Rubin considers dance, literature, and photography as art forms that Santayana got wrong. To determine what is valuable in Santayana's broader views, Rubin structures the essay around three tensions in understanding art: 1) art as mirror vs. interpretation; 2) scope vs. suggestiveness as an artistic virtue; 3) art as representation of perfection vs. representation of experiences. The valuable conclusions that stand apart from Santayana's particular judgments are that art is interpretation, its scope is most important, and it should represent perfection. This is reasonably qualified by the claim that Santayana's conclusions are not rigid or dogmatic but rather indicate his emphases in a field of many and various particular cases. And these emphases are to be guides in the activity of living, that is, in the activity of judging those things in the artistic realm of life as helps or hindrances to living well. Rubin lays this out by considering Santayana's views on literature and photography and then using the three tensions to compare Santayana views on art with those of John Dewey.

My critical comments concern the use of John Dewey's views in the essay to clarify Santayana's positions. Rubin claims that his "purpose is not to compare Santayana and Dewey on art . . . , but to use Dewey's positions and views derived from them to illustrate what Santayana emphasized" (Rubin 46). It seems a helpful goal to attempt to throw Santayana's views into relief by contrasting them with other views. But the explicit appropriation and modification of views assigned to a prominent figure introduces some risks. First, there is the risk of confusion from the outset. It is not clear what the difference is between comparing Santayana and Dewey on art and using Dewey's position as a foil to bring out the character of Santayana's position. It could be that more liberty is taken with Dewey's positions in order to draw a sharper contrast. This introduces a second set of risks, namely distortion and misrepresentation.

Rubin is more aware than most people of the complex relations of similarity and difference between the ideas of Santayana and Dewey, so I certainly do not doubt his ability to read these thinkers carefully and thoughtfully. Rather, I am questioning the helpfulness of the device he adopts to clarify Santayana's position regarding the three tensions. It is difficult to avoid comparing the positions of the two thinkers in spite of Rubin's explicit denial that this is what he is doing; and at the end of the essay I am confused about how to regard the two thinkers in connection to the issues

discussed. I am uncertain as to the significance of their disagreements when, in the end, they come together in the vision of making the everyday as close to the ideal as possible.

An example of what perplexes me is the claim, in the section “Mirror vs. Interpretation,” that “for Dewey, the purpose of art is not so much refinement of experience, but appreciation and communication,” so that “he emphasized that the key function of art is capturing the emotional heart of experience” (Rubin 54). I think this is meant to show the difference between art as mirroring vs. art as interpretation. With Dewey’s emphasis on appreciation and communication inclining him to take art as mirroring and Santayana’s position representing art as interpretation. Yet, I cannot understand how appreciation and communication on Dewey’s view is not a refinement “by the side of which transubstantiation pales” (LW1.132). Dewey’s notion of appreciation requires reflection and a re-creation of the experience of another—not the taking over of it wholesale (whatever that could mean). And communication is not conducting content through a medium so that it is mirrored in another consciousness; it is cooperation in activity and the sharing of a perspective that is itself a new experience for the communicants.

Again, this is a fine and rich essay by a knowledgeable, thoughtful, and able scholar. The section on dance led me to the internet to watch videos of performers I did not know. The section on photography is quite interesting both historically and philosophically, and the section on literature is outstanding as it details both Santayana’s blindness and brilliance. The tensions are potentially a helpful device in thinking about the dialectically complex system of Santayana’s thought. My concern is that using positions attributed to Dewey as a foil to Santayana confuses more than it illuminates. Or, put differently, the essay seems to risk imparting distorted characterizations of the work of both thinkers. While it seems reasonable to use contrasting positions to clarify Santayana’s views, assigning the contrasting positions to another figure, in this case at least, runs the risk of exaggerating the positions of both figures in the interest of sharpening the contrast. The risk of confusion is especially great because Santayana himself may often seem to have held contrasting views in his attempts to consider several different perspectives on a topic.

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## Rubin’s Reply to Coleman

Martin Coleman’s penetrating comments reveal the risks of using a framework of opposing concepts to distinguish the views of philosophers. While such a framework can sharpen the differences between the views of the philosophers, it has the danger of over-simplifying and even distorting them. In my article, I use three opposing pairs of concepts, all derived from remarks in Santayana’s writings. In using each pair, I attempt to show which side of the opposition each philosopher favored, recognizing that it is a matter of emphasis, not black-and-white choice. Coleman points out that in one of these pairs—art as a mirror vs art as interpretation—I have missed some of the subtleties in Dewey’s theory of art by placing Dewey on the side of art as a mirror. He specifically objects to my saying that Dewey is less focused on refinement of experience and more on appreciation and communication of what people actually do and undergo. The objection is that art can be considered a refinement in that it produces a new shared experience that transforms the original experiences on which it is based. This new experience can be thought of as a refined interpretation of the originals.

This objection is on target. The word “refinement” is misleading and I should have written “perfection” instead. I take pains to acknowledge the ambiguities of the terms used to frame the oppositions, especially the word “interpretation.” I introduce W. H. Auden, as an intermediary between Dewey and Santayana because, even though he emphatically uses the word “mirror,” his meaning is closer to Santayana’s idea of interpretation in that the best works of art show us to a better way to live. Although I acknowledge, both here and in the article, that Dewey’s “esthetic object” is a form of interpretation, this sort of interpretation remains quite different from Santayana’s. Dewey would have agreed that art is not just pure, unfiltered communication. He also would have agreed that art can disclose possibilities that have never been thought of before: but Dewey’s emphasis was on possibility, not on perfection.

I am sure that the general thrust of my comparison of Santayana and Dewey is trustworthy, as when I suggest that Dewey would have had a more favorable reading of *Hamlet* than Santayana did. This inference is derived from Dewey’s explicit criticism of Santayana for not appreciating Shakespeare’s depiction of “the free and varied system of nature itself as that works and moves in experience” (AE 321).<sup>1</sup> This example places Dewey closer to regarding art as a mirror of experience than as an interpretation in Santayana’s sense of teaching us how to live.

The *Hamlet* example also shows why I sometimes have elected to present illustrations written in a Deweyan vein rather than to quote directly from Dewey’s work. My exegetical energy was directed on Santayana’s work and it was sometimes useful to present a Dewey-like contrasting example, even where Dewey had not addressed a specific work directly. I am not aware of any extensive analysis of *Hamlet* by Dewey, nor, for that matter, of any work where he dealt with photography as an artistic medium. Such extrapolations of Dewey’s approach is very much in the Deweyan spirit, as Dewey did not encourage philosophers to simply repeat his words and ideas, but to address each problematic situation with questions and ideas appropriate to the matter at hand.

<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *Art as Experience, The Later Works, 1925–1953*, Volume 10: 1934, edited by Jo Ann Boydston, Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 325.



# The Stories We Tell: Review of *Narrative Naturalism*

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

Jessica Wahman (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2015)

Jessica Wahman has written a superior book. Starting with ideas found in George Santayana's later works, Wahman develops several implications of these ideas to address some recent turns of thought. *Narrative Naturalism*, as a consequence, is not an exposition of Santayana's writings, nor is it aimed primarily at Santayana scholars, but rather at the wide range of contemporary philosophers, especially those who have followed recent discussions in cognitive science. Furthermore, as she writes with a clear, straightforward style and addresses the theoretic grounding of psychotherapy, this book should also benefit practicing psychotherapists. It could also serve to introduce the generally educated reader to issues in both cognitive theory and psychotherapy—and to the ideas of Santayana, as well. If from time to time there are sections that bear rereading, it is not for want of clarity, but because of the intricacy of her analysis in these sections. Throughout the book, she makes abundant references and allusions, sometimes amusing and always literate, to a wide range of recent and historical works.

Santayana did not imagine that there is any one final philosophy. His modest acknowledgment in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* that his philosophic system is one of many ways of coming to terms with living in the world is based on his idea that the concepts and sensory impressions with which any animate creature represents things in the world to itself are not the same as the things they represent. Wahman's main thesis, which originates in this idea and in Santayana's belief that the world is independent of thought, is that all knowledge, including that produced by physical science, is in the form of a story that we make up to approximate some aspect of the world. All knowledge is partial, as it is conceived in and viewed from a limited perspective. Recognizing this partiality and the approximate nature of knowing helps us avoid what she calls "the physicalist trap"—the belief that a mechanistic physical explanation is the only correct explanation of everything.

The physicalist trap emerges from two developments in modern philosophy. The first is a program, which Wahman traces to Descartes, to derive all knowledge using mathematical concepts from a secure logical foundation. The second is the twentieth-century predominance of rejection of belief in an ethereal, non-physical mental substance (which is a rejection of a common interpretation of Descartes).

Regarding the second, Wahman, following her theme that philosophy (like all forms of discourse) constructs a story, writes, "More than one anthology in the philosophy of mind relates a tale in which twentieth century logical behaviorism and physicalism radically reorient how the Western world thinks about the mind, namely by turning it into a scientifically observable object" (41). Working from such a frame of mind, it would be hard to recognize that subjective reports constitute meaningful knowledge. Philosophy, for those who have been snared by the physicalist trap, must therefore restrict itself to explaining how scientific knowledge is possible and be wary of any purported modes of knowing other than science and the study

of its foundations. As she reminds us, the renowned twentieth-century logician-philosopher Rudolf Carnap "distinguished meaningful analysis of philosophic fact from the 'merely expressive'—read meaningless—poetics of metaphysics."

Relying solely on scientifically established knowledge is a trap because it discards the most common ways we think about things and the most ordinary forms of human expression. Wahman reports that philosophers have tried to avoid the trap in a variety of ways. Jessica Hornby remains an "ontological agnostic" (53). Steven Hornsby "dubs his pluralism 'anti-naturalist'" (53). Galen Strawson develops a "panpsychic physicalism" (55). David Chalmers conceives of a "psychophysical" reality in which consciousness is a fundamental concept that can be studied independently of physics because it has its own set of governing laws (153). Wahman then rides in on Santayana's horse, pointing out that all these theories are simply alternative narratives—narratives that happen to miss something important.

Santayana did not regard consciousness (which he preferred to call 'spirit') as a completely separate form of existence. Instead, he regarded the features of consciousness viewed internally as alternative descriptions of the same reality viewed from a scientific perspective.<sup>1</sup> He carried skepticism to its extreme, doubting even his own existence and finding himself left with only a view of world—a view that itself is not anything existing, but simply a picture that Santayana called an essence. The essence that fills one's mind at any given moment is typically a combination of images and ideas—themselves essences—bound into a single non-existing complex essence. The upshot is that there is no way to prove that anything exists, and thus there is no logical foundation for belief. Nevertheless, our situations as animals needing nourishment and protection force certain beliefs upon us. As Wahman puts it: "Santayana's grounding of knowledge in an inevitable belief or trust in an existence transcendent to experience flips the issue from what cannot be proven to what we cannot help but believe" (58).

For Santayana, the first things we believe in are neither atoms, stellar systems, nor biological molecules—the objects of scientific analysis—but rather things close to our commonplace needs like food, a place to sleep, and other people. The way we come to know other people is through a process Santayana called "literary psychology," which is the imaginative reconstruction of the minds of others (or your own mind when you engage in self-reflection). We use literary psychology not just in creating and reading literature, but also in everyday life. It is how we understand language, for example. We don't conduct double-blind experiments to figure out what other people are saying.

Wahman says that the narratives of literary psychology are no less accurate (and in some cases more accurate) than those of supposedly objective science. She quotes

<sup>1</sup> Wahman characterizes Santayana's philosophy as a *monism*. This label may be a surprise to Santayana scholars as Santayana clearly said that existence falls into two categories: matter and spirit—an apparent dualism. Nevertheless, the rhetorical choice is understandable because Wahman is addressing an audience that for the most part believes that consciousness must have a material cause. Santayana believed in this dependence as much as any contemporary cognitive theorist. Her choice of 'monism' serves as a reminder that labeling a philosophic position should never be a shorthand substitute for what the philosopher actually said. Terms like 'monism,' 'pragmatism,' and 'realism' mean drastically different things in the works of different writers.

Santayana who said that even scientists in reporting the data of research rely on the imagination to convey what they have observed: “Even in the simplest perceptions on which scientific psychology, or any natural science, can be based, there is an essence present which only poetry can describe or sympathy conceive” (18, SAF 258). Santayana goes even further and says that coming to grasp anything, including the natural processes of physics, chemistry, and biology, requires “sympathetic imagination” (SAF 106).

Wahman emphasizes the critical importance of literary psychology in cognitive studies. To determine how some process in the brain results in a subjective experience, the researcher needs a subjective report—a product of literary psychology—to correlate the study of brain physiology with what it is supposed to produce. Contrary to those cognitive theorists who speak dismissively of “folk psychology,” Wahman argues that folk psychology is needed to tell them what they are studying.

That literary psychology can yield true reports can be understood by considering Santayana’s realm of truth. Wahman tells us, “Santayana can be considered a realist with a correspondence theory of truth” (58). Correspondence, in Santayana’s sense, means that beliefs are true if they correspond to what exists, has existed, or will exist; but the ideas and sensory impressions with which we represent things and events have no need to resemble those things and events. They merely need to report them accurately. For Santayana, however, existence has two components: physical reality (the realm of matter) and moments of spirit. Santayana describes each such spiritual moment as the intuition of a single essence. Truths can be rendered in imaginative works that capture the emotional salience of an experience with no need to adhere to the literal facts. To convey what he called “dramatic truth,” Santayana said it is often better to “foreshorten, crowd, and caricature everything” (RB 467). Furthermore, Wahman argues that all truths are conveyed by a constructed narrative and “when we investigate what it would mean for one kind of assertion to be nothing but expressive and another to be literally true, we find that, to varying degrees, each are expressive and no truths are literal” (131). That no truths are literal and that all knowledge is a story relating some part of the truth does not mean that anything goes. The world is stubbornly independent and, though any fact may have an infinite number of correct descriptions, the fact still is what it is.

The most innovative part of *Narrative Naturalism* is Wahman’s discussion of the psyche and how it helps explain the effectiveness of psychotherapy. ‘The psyche’ is Santayana’s term for the material aspect of conscious life. The reference of the term is wider than just the central nervous system, as it applies to the whole and all the parts of whatever generates life in an animate creature and which sometimes results in awareness. Even plants might be said to have psyches—the sum of the physical processes that promote their growth, flowering, and whatever awareness they might have (such as sensing the direction of the sun or, in the case of carnivorous plants, the presence of prey).

The psyche is one of the most problematic facets of Santayana’s philosophy. It has produced considerable discussion among Santayana scholars. It is in part Santayana’s insistence that all action originates in the psyche, because spirit has no efficacy, that has led John Lachs, who for the most part is deeply sympathetic with Santayana, to reject the idea that rational deliberation can have no positive effect on human life. Santayana’s inveterate pessimism about the ability of people to act

intelligently and about the prospects for most people to live rational lives infused his metaphysics. This infusion is clearest in his insistence on the impotence of spirit.

There is, however, a seeming contradiction in that Santayana repeatedly wrote that self-knowledge is the key to learning to live well. How could any form of knowledge bring about positive change if spirit—the center of awareness and therefore the home of knowledge—is incapable of doing anything? Angus Kerr-Lawson wrote that Santayana was rather vague on this matter (Kerr-Lawson 28). Nevertheless, Kerr-Lawson makes an effort to resolve the issue by arguing that if the concept of spirit is restricted to awareness only, then all the functions we associate with conscious activity are functions of the psyche—the body—and not of spirit itself. These functions include reason, reverie, and memory regarded as processes that yield conscious results, not as the results themselves (Kerr-Lawson 33–34). Following this Kerr-Lawson interpretation, I would parse Santayana’s vocabulary to say that an idea is an essence, the thought of the idea is an instance of the realm of spirit, and that the reasoning that produces the thought is a cerebral (i.e., psychic) event that is part of the realm of matter. Wahman fleshes out an interpretation of Santayana very much like Kerr-Lawson’s. Her extended explication of Santayana’s notion of the psyche especially helps to understand the process of psychotherapy.

Wahman brings psychotherapy in line with Santayana’s ideas by arguing that the positive result of all forms of psychotherapy is some form of self-knowledge. But the self that one has knowledge of is fundamentally the psyche. But the psyche cannot know itself directly, but only through its manifestations in consciousness—in the realm of spirit. So even self-knowledge, and therefore psychotherapy, is “a kind of literary psychology” (112) in which we reconstruct who we are. Wahman brings up Sigmund Freud several times and asserts: “both Santayana and Freud note that the paradox contained in knowledge of the unconscious is that it has to be made conscious” (123). Freud himself acknowledged that all of what Santayana would call his literary psychological descriptions—for which Freud used such terms as ‘the unconscious,’ ‘the id,’ ‘the superego,’ and ‘the Oedipus complex’—are metaphorical representations of what at bottom is a physiological process. By emphasizing Santayana’s definition of the psyche, Wahman’s analysis is a strong reminder of the material nature of Freud’s unconscious. The physiological nature of the psyche means there is no subliminal person inside censoring what comes to the surface and disturbing consciousness with hidden desires, but that the censoring and disturbing are all the stirrings of the complexities of human neurobiology. This analysis brings Santayana’s concept of the psyche quite close to Freud’s. In *The Ego and the ID*, Freud speculated that philosophers would object that anything unconscious could not properly be considered psychical, as he surely did (4), because philosophers would associate the term ‘psychical’ with conscious thought. Freud published this in 1923, the same year Santayana published *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, where he explicitly identified the self with the material psyche (SAF 147–149).

This alignment of Santayana with Freud has the great value—regardless of how you assess Freud’s descriptions of the structures of the psyche or his conclusions about specific patients—of demystifying Freud’s imaginative construction of how human development shapes the mind. Furthermore, because literary psychology can yield deep insights into the workings of the mind, the alignment re-envisioned Freud’s conclusions as stemming from a legitimate path of investigation.

The conscious spirit cannot directly will psychological changes. You cannot change your personality directly any more than you can will a faster heartbeat or sexual arousal. To speed your heart or to become aroused you must place yourself in situations that evoke the appropriate changes in your body. Similarly, to change your outlook, your emotional responses, or your habits, you (perhaps with the help of a therapist) must challenge your psyche to project into consciousness ideas about yourself you had not consciously thought of before (Wahman 111 ff).

Wahman then compares Santayana's ideas with those of three psychotherapists: Otto Rank, Jonathan Lear, and Ernest Becker. Rank's idea that the individual creates a world fits with Santayana's idea that the imagination underlies all knowing—the imagination that renders Wahman's constructed narratives. Rank also believed that the primary goal of therapy is to teach a person to “adjust ... to himself” by reconstructing his ideals to fit his nature (120). Lear talks about how experiences are assimilated (“swerved”) into a person's “core fantasy” until experiences are so at odds with the fantasy that it causes a neurotic disturbance (a “break”), and the goal of therapy “is to help ‘loosen the neurotic structure’ so as to facilitate new, less punishing interpretations” (121). Wahman sees this process as the reconstruction of narratives in the face of reality. Becker has the individual psyche running “inner newsreels” with “its self in the starring role” (122). Wahman takes this as an illustration that “any understanding of material reality [in this case, the psyche] must be translated into formal essences in order to be viewed by the spirit” (123). She then argues that both “scientific accounts of the psyche” and “moral and literary tales” constitute theoretic systems and that both should be included in the narrative—the newsreel—you construct to live by. This blending of stories facilitates the combining of medications with talk therapy. In other words, part of person's story may be that he or she has a diagnosable condition that requires medication to maintain a desired level of functioning. Wahman concludes with surprise that, for all his emphasis on inner narrative, Becker regards a sense of wonder and “stirring toward beauty” as irrelevant to psychoanalytic concerns (123), whereas Santayana finds moments of wonder and beauty to be among the most self-revealing of experiences.

Here Wahman begins to separate Santayana's concerns from those of the psychotherapists. If I may suggest a supplement to her fine and illuminating analysis, the argument could be carried even further. Having shown a way to align Santayana and the therapists ontologically and epistemologically, the next step might be to show their striking difference in emphasis. Wahman asks, “why does insight help us to learn about and adapt to life as much as do our scientific accounts of our biological being?” (115). The question may be rephrased as: what sort of self-knowledge is most important to have and how does it help us? The issue that the therapists—whether Freudian, cognitive, behavioral, or whatever—are overwhelming concerned with is rooting out some problem—finding some repressed memory, some unproductive thought pattern, or some constraining habit that prevents you from conducting yourself as you desire. Santayana's concern in reading literary texts or religious stories was always to ask what do they mean when their fanciful or superstitious aspects are stripped away. Similarly, his focus in understanding an individual would be a literary psychological investigation to read through a person's overt desires to find out what the person really wants. A Santayanan-based therapy would have you concentrate on getting past your immediate desires to find out what

your genuine goals are, and then to get beyond those tentative goals to discover your overriding passion. This emphasis helps explain Santayana's ironic (though oddly sympathetic) reading of Freud in his essay “A Long Way Round to Nirvana,” where Santayana took Freud's notion that the end of life is death (meaning the goal) and played with meaning of ‘end’ by writing that death is the end of life the way “the end of an evening party is to go to bed” (TTMP 98). The psychoanalyst in Wahman's account who comes closest to Santayana is Otto Rank, who focused on readjusting the ideals embedded in the super-ego. But with all the therapists the main thrust is to fix problems. This may explain why Becker stopped short and failed to follow Santayana into seeing the therapeutic value of aesthetic appreciation. With Santayana the emphasis is on finding out what moves and pulls you most. The world is not you and was not made for you; but if you know where your heart really lies, you can avoid being distracted by peripheral yearnings and focus on what in the world can serve your fundamental passion and so that the spirit in you can find that world to be a genial host.

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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](mailto:santedit@iupui.edu).

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# Angus Kerr-Lawson Prize

## George Santayana Society

The George Santayana Society (GSS) is pleased to offer a prize for outstanding scholarly writing in honor of Professor Angus Kerr-Lawson. The prize is offered in tribute to outstanding contributions made by Kerr-Lawson to Santayana scholarship published in *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the George Santayana Society*. Any scholar not more than five years out of graduate school is invited to compose an essay of approximately 6,000-8,000 words engaging the thought of George Santayana. Authors may address any aspect of Santayana's thinking, including (but not limited to) other figures and concepts in the American tradition (and beyond); themes such as materialism and naturalism, realism and Platonism, literature and art; and/or issues connected to American intellectual history and American culture.

The winner will be awarded \$300 and will be invited to present the winning paper before the George Santayana Society at its annual Eastern APA gathering in January 2018. Additionally, the winning paper will be published in the subsequent edition of *Overheard in Seville: Bulletin of the George Santayana Society*. Runners-up may also be invited to submit their entries for Bulletin publication. The winner and runners-up will be notified in September, 2017. Authors should prepare submissions for blind review and send them electronically in Word format to: mflamm@rockford.edu. The subject line of the email should read: "Kerr-Lawson Prize Submission, [author's name]." Deadline for submissions is May 21, 2017.

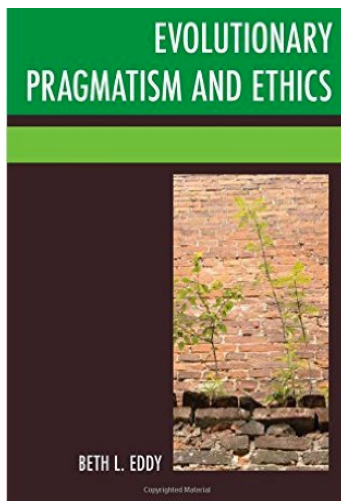
## Recent Books

*Evolutionary Pragmatism and Ethics*

Beth L. Eddy  
Lexington Books  
2015

Eddy considers the work of pragmatists such as William James, George Santayana, Jane Addams, and John Dewey as a basis from which to detail an evolutionary perspective that rejects the moral implications of social Darwinism.

Contents include, "John Dewey in Conversation with Huxley and Santayana on Evolution and Ethics."



## Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works

Page numbers in articles 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>	RE	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>	RT	RB Bk. II
LGS	<i>The Letters of George Santayana</i>	RT	<i>The Realm of Truth</i>
LP	<i>The Last Puritan</i>	RS	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>	RS	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 may 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.

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Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as e-mail attachments to [gssedit@iupui.edu](mailto: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 (available online at [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)).

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.

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