

Overheard in Seville

*Bulletin of the
Santayana
Society*

No. 31
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Bulletin of the George Santayana Society

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The George Santayana Society

2013

ANNUAL MEETING

The Society's annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the December meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Eastern Division) at the Marriott Baltimore Waterfront in Baltimore, Maryland.

Topic

Santayana's Interpreters

Speakers

Beth Eddy

Worcester Polytechnic Institute

“Henry Levinson’s Santayana: Trickster and Interpreter”

Matt Flamm

Rockford University

“David Dilworth on Santayana”

Glenn Tiller

Texas A&M – Corpus Christi

“Santayana’s Absolute Idealist: Timothy Sprigge”

Chair

Martin Coleman

Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis

9:00 – 11:00 A.M., Saturday, December 28th

The George Santayana Society

2014

MEETING

The Society will meet in conjunction with the February meetings of the American Philosophical Association (Central Division) at the Palmer House Hilton in Chicago, Illinois.

Speakers

William Gahan

Department of English, Rockford University
“Santayana on Shakespeare”

Antonio Rionda

Department of English, University of Miami
“Santayana’s Philosophic Exile”

Commenter

Matthew Flamm

Department of Philosophy, Rockford University

Chair

Jessica Wahman

Oxford College, Emory University

Tentatively scheduled for 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Thursday, February 27th

George Santayana Society

News and Activities

Thanks to the energy and initiative of its European and North American members, it was an exciting and productive year for the George Santayana Society (GSS). In March, several papers on the theme of “Santayana’s Interpreters” were presented at the 40th annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, held at Richard Stockton College, New Jersey. A special note of gratitude goes to Herman Saatkamp for organizing and hosting the event. The session was well received, and so it is good that the theme of examining the work of Santayana’s interpreters will extend to the GSS’s annual December meeting, held this year in Baltimore.

We move from “interpreters” to new “interpretations” with the forthcoming publication of *Santayana at 150: International Interpretations* (Lexington Books), an anthology of papers presented at the Fourth International Congress on George Santayana, held October 2012 in Rome, Italy, and edited by Matthew Flamm, Jennifer Rea, and Giuseppe Patella. Also forthcoming is *Art and Morality: Essays in the Spirit of George Santayana* (Fordham University Press), a collection of essays by Morris Grossman.

This past year marks two notable firsts for the GSS: Inclusion in the group program of the Central Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, held in Chicago, 2014; and participation in the World Congress of Philosophy that took place this past August in Athens, Greece. GSS European liaison Krzysztof (Chris) Piotr Skowroński (Poland) chaired the session in which Angel Manuel Faerna Garcia-Bermejo (Spain) gave a talk on “Santayana’s Descriptive Metaphysics and the ‘Implied Being of Truth’”; Charles Padron (USA) spoke on “Santayana’s Gliding Towards Disengagement: 1912–1914”; and Richard Rubin (USA) presented his talk “Santayana’s Way of Life and Ours.” The GSS thanks Luca Maria Scarantino, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, and also Margaret Kerr-Lawson, for helping to make participation possible. The GSS expects to participate in the next World Congress in Beijing in 2018.

Whether or not you are already a member of the George Santayana Society, and whether you are a professor, a student, or simply curious about philosophy, we hope to see you at one of our meetings. All are welcome.

GLENN TILLER
President of the George Santayana Society

Literary Forms, Heuristic Functions, and Philosophical Fixations: Santayana's Emancipatory Example

In a late interview, Michel Foucault confessed: "In the end, for me there are three categories of philosophers: the philosophers that I don't know; the philosophers I know and of whom I have spoken [or written]; and the philosophers I know and about whom I don't speak [or write]."¹ For most of my career, George Santayana has been a philosopher with whom I have been long acquainted (I have been reading him since early adolescence, i.e., for about fifty years), but one about whom I have written little.² My main justification for writing about him now is the one he himself offered in *Three Philosophical Poets* when introducing his treatment of Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe: "My excuse for writing about them, notwithstanding, is merely the human excuse which every new poet has for writing about the spring. They have attracted me; they have moved me to reflection; they have revealed to me certain aspects of nature and of philosophy which I am prompted by mere sincerity to express, if anybody seems interested or willing to listen" (vi). As long as spring returns, some poets will not be able to resist turning, as a *topos* of discourse, to the transition from winter to a season of renewal and regeneration. As long as Santayana attracts readers to his thought, some of those readers will be moved not only to reflect afresh on the topics to which he has devoted his attention and eloquence, but also to offer as sincere expression as they are able to the fate of having been inspired by Santayana's philosophical writings. For me, his writings have not only attracted me and moved me to reflection; they have also revealed much, not least of all important features of human discourse and, in particular, the moral³ functions of poetic utterance. This however means that they have provided insights into philosophy itself. A word about Santayana's own philosophy is, accordingly, apposite here.

¹"The Return to Morality" (1984), in *Philosophy, Politics, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence Kritzman (New York: Routledge, 1988), 250. There are, of course, philosophers who do not hesitate to discourse about other philosophers, about whom the former know little or nothing at all. Among Santayana's numerous virtues, his unwillingness to engage in such a practice is far from insignificant.

²The exception is "A Poet's Philosopher" (*Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, volume 45, number 4 [Fall 2009]: 551-78). To paraphrase Foucault, it is good to keep philosophers *with* whom one thinks, but *about* whom one writes little or nothing at all. Santayana has been a thinker with whom I find it immensely profitable to think.

³I am using this term in what I take to be the main sense in which Santayana himself deployed it. This sense is broadly Aristotelian, thus eudaimonistic. It is also discursive and dramatic. "Moral philosophy," Santayana stresses, "is not a science. It moves exclusively in the realm of familiar discourse. The units it distinguishes are dramatic units, like those of literary psychology and historical fiction: ideas, persons, passions, destinies such as imagination presents to me when I survey my own past, or conceive the adventures of another" (LR1 Preface to the second edition, xii). For our purpose, moral philosophy as an affair moving solely in the realm of familiar *discourse* is especially pertinent.

“My philosophy is,” he stressed, “justified, and has been justified in all ages and countries, by the facts before every man’s eyes; and no great wit is requisite to discover it, only (what is rarer than wit) candour and courage” (SAF x).⁴ Far more than ingenuity (certainly far more than cleverness), what we need is the courage simply to acknowledge what stares us in the face (cf. Nietzsche; Wittgenstein).⁵ Santayana’s philosophy is, accordingly, an unblinking witness to the difficult work of candid acknowledgment (cf. Wittgenstein; Cavell).⁶ His philosophy is far less about making ingenious discoveries than acknowledging disconcerting truths. In philosophy especially, the novel and the idiosyncratic are all too likely to usurp the place of the steadfast and the commonplace. For a philosophy justified by the large facts of human experience, however, the seductions of novelty and originality need to be resisted,⁷ while the counsel of the enduring and the ordinary need to be taken with the utmost seriousness.⁸ It is far more a humane than a technical discourse.

⁴John Lachs, “Peirce, Santayana, and Large Facts.” This first appeared in the *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, XVI, 1980: 3–13; it was reprinted as Chapter 10 of *Mind and Philosophers* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1987).

⁵In *Twilight of the Idols*, Friedrich Nietzsche observes: “Even the bravest among us rarely has the courage for what he really *knows*. . . .” In *Culture and Value*, edited by G. H. von Wright and translated by Peter Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), Ludwig Wittgenstein beseeches the divine: “God grant the philosopher insight into what lies in front of everyone’s eyes” (63).

⁶“Knowledge is,” Wittgenstein asserts in *On Certainty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), “in the end based on acknowledgment” (#378). See also Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations*; also Cavell’s “Knowing and Acknowledging.” The latter can be found in *Must We Mean What We Say?* [Updated Edition] (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1976); also in *The Cavell Reader*, edited by Stephen Mulhall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

⁷In *Reason in Science*, Santayana notes: “Natural science consists of general ideas which look for verification in events, and which find it [there]. The particular instance, once noted, is thrown aside like a squeezed orange, its significance in establishing some law having once been extracted” (LR5 71). It is noteworthy that C. S. Peirce employs a variant of this metaphor: “Science will hold scientific experiences [i.e., specific and, for the most part, unusual experimental phenomena] more capable of systematic marshaling to great ends than civilian [or commonplace] facts. Young America will call familiar phenomena squeezed lemons, whatever they had to teach already learned, things to be left behind in pressing on to things new; and it will recall dazzling inventions sprung from recondite experiences, gunpowder, mariner’s compass, steam engine, electric telegraph, India rubber, anaesthetics, sewing machine, telephone, electric light” (*Collected Papers*, 6.565). For Santayana no less than Peirce, however, familiar phenomena are far from so many squeezed lemons — or oranges — from which all the juice has been sucked: they are rather inexhaustible sources of philosophical insight, if only they are approached with sufficient imagination and humble acknowledgment.

⁸Even so, the irreducibly personal character of a philosophical system, even one such as Santayana desired to articulate, cannot be denied. See Kathleen Wallace, “Philosophical Sanity” in *Metaphilosophy* (1986), 17, 1, 14–25. This character of such a system is at least implied when Santayana points out, “No one would be angry with a man for unintentionally making a mistake about a matter of fact; but if he perversely insists on spoiling your story

Santayana goes so far as to assert, “My theory ought to be intelligible to poets and artists who have not bothered with modern philosophy, a radically subjective and sophistical thing.”⁹

Though not at all obviously the case, Santayana’s attempt to align poetry with religion is part of this endeavor. One might say — at least I am inclined to suggest — that, for Santayana, the function of philosophy is, at least in part, spiritual or more broadly religious,¹⁰ while the form of religion itself is, at bottom, poetic or metaphorical. For the function of philosophy is in large measure the education of desire and impulse, whereas the form of religion is the institution and elaboration of symbols and especially stories¹¹ directly bearing upon such education. Neither this function nor this form is possible without stripping away the illusions distorting our vision of self and world. Indeed, our happiness largely depends upon our capacity to strip away these illusions. If there is happiness in disillusion (see, e.g., IPR 249–50; LR1 195) and if indeed the only sustainable happiness for a rational animal is, to a greater degree than we tend to acknowledge, a distillation of our disillusionments, then the discipline of disillusionment is critical for the cultivation of such happiness.¹² Such discipline indeed defines one of the principal objectives of poetic discourse, as envisioned by Santayana in his most characteristic role (that of a moral philosopher). It also defines one of the main goals of spiritual enlightenment (or religious maturity). The “discipline of expression” is inextricably tied to that of both disillusionment and attention (cf. Iris Murdoch’s *The Sovereignty of Good*), so poetic utterance is itself properly understood only in explicit reference to these interwoven forms of spiritual discipline. Of course, the emancipation resulting from such discipline is what matters, first and foremost. Freedom from fanaticism and superstition along with freedom to attend without distraction to (at the very least) the dramatic entanglements of the human psyche are alone what justify such discipline. Poetry in several distinct (though arguably connected) senses is part of the story of such emancipation, as Santayana unfolds this narrative.

Indeed, he takes great pains to clarify the elusive meaning of this Protean term. In one of its principal meanings, *poetry* signifies, at least in Santayana’s lexicon, simply a mode or species of discourse (Santayana, LR4, Chapter 6; cf. Irving Singer’s

in the telling of it, you want to kick him; and this is the reason why every philosopher and theologian is justly vexed with every other” (*Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1922], 129).

⁹“Apologia Pro Mente Sua,” in *The Philosophy of George Santayana*, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (La Salle, IL: Open Court), 500.

¹⁰Spirituality, piety, and charity in precisely Santayana’s sense are to varying degrees woven into the very fabric of his philosophy. For an illuminating treatment of each of these, see Henry Samuel Levinson’s *Santayana, Pragmatism, and the Spiritual Life* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

¹¹“Religions are,” Santayana suggests, “the great fairy-tales of the conscience” (“A General Confession,” in Schilpp, 8).

¹²See Jessica Wahman, “Illusions and Disillusionment: Santayana, Narrative, and Self-Knowledge” in *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 17, no. 3 (2003): 164–75.

George Santayana: Literary Philosopher).¹³ It is distinguished from other forms of discourse by certain formal features (see especially IPR; also Philip Blair Rice's "The Philosopher as Poet and Critic"),¹⁴ moral functions (including heuristic functions),¹⁵ and its pivotal role in the complex economy of human happiness.

The genus (namely, discourse) in which he places poetry is a topic on which he deftly *touches* in countless writings, but never systematically explores in any one text. For example, *Realms of Being*, including *The Realm of Essence* (the volume devoted to the *intuition* of essence), encompasses domains of discourse in which the topic of discourse itself surfaces, time and again. Indeed, the intuition of essences is also a topic about which Santayana eloquently discourses, even more elaborately than that of discourse itself. What he says of dialectic might also be said more generally of discourse: "the whole world of dialectic . . . is meant, not intuited" (RB 114). Essence hardly exhausts the meaning of meaning, just as intuition does not serve as the name for how meanings are grasped in reference to their presuppositions and implications.¹⁶ The whole world of discourse is *meant* and this means (!) that the medium of discourse is itself the context¹⁷ in which the tropes and *topoi* so indispensable for understanding the flux of existence and the shocks of experience are themselves made *topoi*, calling for tropes.¹⁸ In addition to understanding the

¹³ "Poetry, like demonstration, would not be possible," Santayana notes, "if intuition of essences could not be sustained and repeated in various contexts. The poet could not otherwise express cumulative passions nor develop particular themes" (SAF 122). But what makes us able to sustain and reiterate the intuition of any essence is not so much intuition as discourse. But, "if discourse were always a pellucid apprehension of essential relations, its existence would be little noted" (SAF 123). Thought and, thus, discourse become "obvious when things betray it; as they cannot have been false, something else must have been so": the acknowledgment of error hence entails that of discourse itself, discourse being "no part of essence" but a fact of our existence (SAF 123). Even so, the "witnesses to the existence of spirit are. . . the same as those to the existence of discourse; but when once discourse is admitted, the existence of spirit in it becomes self-evident; because discourse is a perusal of essence, or its recurring presence to spirit" (SAF 275).

¹⁴ In Schilpp, 265–91.

¹⁵ While Santayana's own emphasis tends to be on the expressive function of poetic discourse, a case can be made for poetic utterance having a heuristic function. Poetry is designed to goad and guide inquiry – to suggest possibilities, envision alternatives, sharpen sensibility, and deepen our felt sense of both actual things and their inspiring idealizations. The expressive and heuristic functions are not inherently opposed to one another. For an illuminating treatment of the expressive function of philosophical discourse, see John J. Stuhr in this issue (*Overheard in Seville* 31 [2013]: 20–28).

¹⁶ In "Animal Faith and the Art of Intuition," Sterling P. Lamprecht astutely observes: "The function and rôle of discourse are not, by its own unaided powers, to establish matters of fact, but to explore implications and develop meanings; and discourse must join forces with something beyond itself if it would become effective inquiry and eventuate in discovery of truth" (Schilpp, 122).

¹⁷ Santayana does in fact assert: "The medium is always immediate" (RB 117). But the medium can occasionally be mediated, i.e., self-mediating or self-mediated.

¹⁸ One such trope is the figure implicit in the expression "wingéd words." Cf. Emerson's "The

flux of existence and the shocks of experience, discourse is the context in which the meaning of its opposite (intuition) can be unfolded. As it turns out, *Realms of Being* offers at least makeshift maps of a vast terrain (the encompassing realm of human discourse). Given the detail and aid of these maps, however, one cannot but rue the fact that Santayana did not devote more systematic attention to our discursive practices. *Realms of Being* is a rich resource for insightful remarks regarding these practices both in their fine detail and full sweep.

So, too, *The Life of Reason* is a monumental achievement, not least of all because the medium of his reflections is occasionally a topic of those very reflections. It is accordingly no surprise that, given Santayana's own treatment of discourse (largely a seemingly random series of sidelong glances), his commentators have offered so little in the way of a detailed, comprehensive exposition. This is nonetheless unfortunate, since Santayana is, as much as anything else, a philosophical author who is not only attuned to the *discursive* dimension of human life but also attentive to the distinctive features of our various discourses. This is nowhere more evident than in his attention to the defining traits of poetic discourse: it is indeed impossible to read Santayana without realizing that, for him, our lives can be themselves poetic compositions and, moreover, poetry is for countless people a vital affair. In brief, life can be poetic, just as poetry can be vital.

The role of the poet is however conceived broadly by him, for poetry always tends to carry in Santayana's discourse echoes of the archaic, inclusive meaning of *poiesis* (making in all of its manifestations). It is indeed a title accorded to what is most cherished by Santayana, including psyche and spirit.¹⁹ "The psyche is," he pronounces in *The Realm of Matter*, "a poet, a creator of language" (RB 352). By means of language, the psyche is also the creator of much else, including the various forms of reflexive understanding so critical for the harmonious integration of the complex impulses, dispositions, and commitments of the human animal. Regarding the psyche in all of its roles, the accent of course falls on life. "The

Poet": "all symbols are fluxional; all language is vehicular and transitive, and is good, as ferries and horses are, for conveyance, not as farms and houses are, for homestead" (Boston: James Munroe and Co., 1844), 37.

¹⁹"The actor is," Santayana stresses in "Apologia Pro Mente Sua," "the psyche in which the spirit lives; and it is this animal psyche that *acts* even in the spirit. The spirit merely perceives and endures that action, become for it emotion and light. The more this cognisance of self and of the world gains upon the animal interests of the particular psyche, the nearer that psyche will come to putting those Evangelical Counsels in practice and the greater saint the man will be" (Schilpp, 570). Later in this essay, he adds: "This reconciliation of spirit with nature does not rest . . . merely on moral grounds. It is inherent in my theory of the origin and place of spirit in nature. It follows from my materialism. So long as life is only tactile and digestive, it seems to remain unconscious; but when physical sensibility stretches to things at a distance [and it can do so only by recourse to symbolization] and action can be focussed upon them, impressions become signals and reports, and a sense develops for the whole field of action, in which distinct movements and qualities begin to be discerned. Spirit from the beginning has the whole world and all events for its virtual object. The particular psyche that has bred this spirit has done so in the act of adapting action to distant things; this field of action then appears to the spirit, with that psyche and the body it animates strangely central and powerful in the midst of that field" (572).

whole of life is a predicament, complex and prolonged; and the whole of mind is the cry, prolonged and variously modulated, which that predicament wrings from the psyche" (352). Such a cry, artfully sustained and modulated, can become inherently, thus arrestingly, poetic. Spirit in its emergence from psyche can contemplate the textures and tonalities of human cries, artful and otherwise. "After the spirit is born, and in the midst of business has begun to take note silently of the actual aspects and essences of things, the psyche may extend her action with more circumspection, in what we call the arts" (352). The capacity for discernment (the ability to note the actual aspects and essential traits of things and events) enhances the endeavors of makers (cf. Dewey's *Art as Experience*): the cook modifies the dish after tasting it in the course of cooking, just as the painter stepping back from the canvas adds and subtracts in light of what the vantage of distance discloses about the work in progress. "Thus the spiritual function of the psyche is added to her generative and practical functions, creating a fresh and unprecedented realm of being, the realm of spirit" (354).

While the entangling alliances of the psyche stand in sharp contrast to the aloof detachment of spirit, there is neither ontological monstrosity nor irresolvable moral conflict between psyche and spirit. "So that the dependence of spirit on animal life is no brutal accident, no inexplicable degradation of a celestial being into the soul of a beast. All the themes and passions of spirit . . . celebrate the vicissitudes of a natural psyche, *like a pure poet* celebrating the adventures of lovers and kings" (RB 354; emphasis added). The pure poet is more or less compelled to celebrate what that discerning individual cherishes or simply witnesses. No genre of poetry is more prevalent than the poetry of celebration, though that of memorialization is no less evident in the millennial history of human utterance.²⁰

Animated by a variety of motives (not solely by our impulses to celebrate or memorialize what we have encountered and observed), the psyche proves itself to be instinctually poetic. In Santayana's own discourse, however, the psyche is reflexively poetic, for therein she comes to know herself as such. In *The Realm of Essence*, for example, he asserts: "Homer was better inspired in speaking of winged words than those philosophers who call words sounds or movements of the larynx" (RB 117). Discourse "is flight, it is signification" (117).

"Dialectic is," in Santayana's judgment, "the conscience of discourse" (RB 100). In contrast, the intuition of essences is the often lavish reward of our spontaneous captivation by a fugitive figure having its being in being inherently notable to some intuitive sensibility. The conscientious control exerted by the human psyche over imputed meaning stands in marked contrast to the capricious delight taken in intuited essences. Metaphorical descriptions of discourse (e.g., "wingéd words") are more illuminating than literal ones (e.g., sounds produced by the larynx and allied organs). So, too, the ineffable intuitions afforded by our discursive elaborations are (for Santayana, at least) as valuable in their way as the elaborated insights generated by our conscientious control over the implications of our imputed meanings (in a word, those insights generated by *dialectic*).

²⁰ See, e.g., Nicholas Wolterstorff's *Works and Worlds of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

In a different sense than the one used so far, the dialectic of intuition and discourse is central to Santayana's project. As I have already intimated, he has discoursed at length about intuition, while in this and countless other connections he exhibits an intuitive understanding of the vital significance of human discourse. What intuition is to spirit, discourse is to psyche. "Discourse is a most superficial function of the self. . . ." (SAF 149). But it is, at the same time, a pervasive and transformative facet of the psyche: the human self discourses as effortlessly and irrepressibly as it breathes. The seemingly isolated moments of intuition are, in actuality, the intricately interwoven strands of discourse. In actuality, intuitions of essences are episodes in the life of psyche, however much such intuition might transport the embodied self beyond the here and now. Meanings as they emerge and operate in the life of psyche are far more matters meant than essences intuited: the intelligence and intent²¹ bound up with *taking* an essence as a sign or symptom of an existent or event (to some degree) takes that essence out of its own realm and places it squarely in the realm of matter.

Even so, we might grant that the essence of discourse is intuited. But the presuppositions and implications of what discourse *is* call for discursive identification and elaboration; that is, they cannot be intuitively apprehended. Hence, while the essence of discourse might be intuited, its existence must be posited. Indeed, animal faith posits a belief in discourse no less than a belief in experience²² or substance. In the course of going beyond the indubitable truths of a consistent skepticism, Santayana posits a belief in discourse *before* a belief in either experience, selfhood,²³

²¹ "Now in discourse there is," Santayana observes, "more than passive intuition; there is intent. This element also implies spirit, and in spirit as man possesses it intent or intelligence is almost always the dominant element" (SAF 275). "In intent, in belief, in emotion, a given essence takes on a value which to pure spirit it could not have. The essence then symbolises an object to which the animal is tentatively addressed, or an event through which he has just laboured, or which he is preparing to meet" (SAF 276). An animal, especially one such as the human animal, "naturally has as many signs for an object as he has sensations or emotions in its presence. These signs are miscellaneous essences . . . and they are alternative or supplementary to one another, like words in different languages" (SAF 175). Our intelligence has apparently evolved out of our capacity to interpret and utter signs in response to the sensations and emotions resulting from our encounter with objects and our participation in the movement of things.

²² Following the chapter on "Essence and Intuition" and preceding the one on "Belief in the Self" in SAF, Santayana devotes himself to "Belief in Experience." He opens this chapter by recalling: "I have now agreed to believe that discourse is a contingent survey of essence, partial, recurrent, and personal, with an arbitrary starting-point and an arbitrary direction of progress" (134). That is, the positing of experience begins by recalling the positing of discourse.

²³ "A self . . . is the first object which I should posit if I wish the experience of shock to enlarge my dogmas in the strict order of evidence" (SAF 146). But the self posited for this purpose cannot be "pure spirit," that is, "a merely formal and transparent" self (147). "A self somewhat more concrete," Santayana insists, "is involved in discourse." So, he feels the need to "thicken and substantialise the self" he believes in (or posits), "recognising in it a nature that accepts or rejects events, a nature having a movement of its own, far deeper, more continuous and more biased than a discoursing mind: the self posited by the sense of shock is a living psyche" (147). Indeed, pure spirit and discoursing mind are, in their actuality, made possible only by a living psyche.

or substance. The spiritual discipline of skepticism, emerging out of the organic tendencies of psyche itself, must be integrated with the exigencies of organic life, even (or, more precisely, especially) if the self-discipline of skepticism and the self-affirmation of spirit become defining commitments of some individual psyche. “The existence of things is assumed by animals in action and expectation before intuition supplies any description of what the thing is that confronts them in a certain quarter. But animals are not sceptics, and a long experience must intervene before the problem arises which I am here considering, namely, whether anything need be posited and believed in at all” (SAF 133).

“Thus belief in the existence of mental discourse (which is a sort of experience), whilst of course not demonstrable in itself, is involved in the validity of any demonstration” (SAF 120). What can be logically demonstrated ultimately depends on what must be humanly (i.e., animally) posited.

In *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, then, the positing of discourse signals a return, from the rigorous elaboration of the skeptical position, to psyche and thereby to the realm of matter.²⁴ “As a matter of fact, the active ego is an animal living in a material world.” Moreover, “both the ego and the non-ego exist substantially before acquiring this relation of positing and being posited. The instinct and ability to posit objects, and the occasion for doing so, are incidents in the development of animal life” (SAF 184).

But the incidents in such a life need not be wholly incidental. They can be gathered and transformed as the substance of art, used here much like poetry (i.e., in an extremely broad sense).²⁵ In this sense, artful production and performance are (as already noted) integral parts of the complex economy of human happiness. The art of happiness involves at least as much as anything else the felicitous harmony of the defining preoccupations of human reality (science, art, religion, society). That is, the art of happiness encompasses the delicate achievement of a happy harmony among all the human arts.

For the human animal, however, art “implies moral benefit: the impulsive modification of matter by man to his own confusion and injury I should not call art, but vice or folly” (RB 353). For this creature, discourse “is not a play of essences but a play of attention upon them; which attention is no impartial exercise of spirit but a manifestation of interest, intent, preference, and preoccupation. A hidden life is at work” (SAF 137). This makes of discourse the work of psyche.

As already noted, the animal faith by which the human psyche is guided posits the *existence* of discourse. The act of positing discourse is complex, for it involves (among other things) “*the discourse of an observer*” (SAF 173). “The attitude of the child’s body also *identifies the object for him, in his own subsequent discourse*” (SAF 174). “Knowledge of discourse in other people, or of myself at other times, is,” Santayana takes care to explain, “what I call literary psychology” (SAF 173–

²⁴This is the return *enacted* in the very text of SAF: “Thought [in general] can be found only by being enacted” (SAF 254). The discovery of thought, as it is made in SAF, is, at bottom, an enactment.

²⁵Just how broad this sense is can partly be gathered from Santayana’s claim that there is even in science “an element of poetry, pervasive, inevitable, and variable” (“A General Confession,” in Schilpp, 14).

74).²⁶ Knowledge is always discursive, never intuitive. Moreover, it *is* “knowledge because it has compulsory objects that pre-exist” (SAF 172). These objects compel acknowledgment. Knowledge as Santayana uses the term “expresses in discourse the modified habits of an active being, plastic to experience, and capable of readjusting its organic attitude to other things on the same material plane of being with itself” (SAF 172).

“There is,” Santayana notes, “a much louder witness to the fact that discourse exists and is no part of essence, but rather a function of animal life; and this witness is error” (SAF 123). Our *experience* of error — of actually making a mistake (taking the candle so delightful to our eyes to be something delightful to touch) — attests more powerfully than anything else to the existence of discourse.²⁷ While the realm of essence is an error-free zone, that of matter, of which psyche is a part, is a hazardous zone in which an error-prone animal such as a human being is never totally safe from the consequences of its mistakes. In other words, discourse defines a domain in which errors are not only possible but also virtually inescapable. In any event, the discovery of discourse is rooted in our experience of error. The experience of error is, however, a relatively small price to pay for the remarkable capacity for discursive discoveries (discoveries only made possible by discourse). Implicitly, the very experience of error is at least a tentative first step beyond a mistaken imputation; and the identification of an error always carries within itself, to some extent, an impetus toward the correction of that error.

The discovery of discourse (however made) is one thing, the differentiation of the forms of discourse quite another. The broadest distinction is that between poetry and prose. Prosaic discourse is discourse in which the qualitative dimensions of signs play a negligible role, whereas poetic discourse is that in which these dimensions play a critical role. In prose, signs are self-effacing; in poetry, they are self-assertive. For instance, the implicit, imperfect rhythm inherent in all linguistic discourse is, in poetry, made more prominent and perfect. The lines of a Shakespearean sonnet are, for example, ones in which a formal pattern of recurrent accentuations is critical. But, then, one of Santayana’s own sonnets also serves this illustrative purpose. On this occasion, however, consider these lines:

what if a much of a which of a wind
gives the truth to summer’s lie;
bloodies with dizzying leaves the sun
and yanks immortal stars awry?
Blow king to beggar and queen to seem
(blow friend to fiend: blow space to time)
— when skies are hanged and oceans drowned,
the single secret will still be man

what if a keen of a lean wind flays
screaming hills with sleet and snow:

²⁶ See Jessica Wahman’s paper in this issue (*Overheard in Seville* 31 [2013]: 29).

²⁷ “Here was a sort of pragmatism. . . . The human mind is a faculty of dreaming awake, and its dreams are kept relevant to its environment and to its fate only by the external control exercised over them by Punishment, when the accompanying conduct brings ruin, or by Agreement, when it brings prosperity” (“A General Confession,” in Schilpp, 14).

strangles valleys by ropes of thing
 and stifles forests in white ago?
 Blow hope to terror; blow seeing to blind
 (blow pity to envy and soul to mind)
 — whose hearts are mountains, roots are trees,
 it's they shall cry hello to the spring

what if a dawn of a doom of a dream
 bites this universe in two,
 peels forever out of his grave
 and sprinkles nowhere with me and you?
 Blow soon to never and never to twice
 (blow life to isn't; blow death to was)
 — all nothing's only our hugest home;
 the most who die, the more we live

e. e. cummings

The qualities of language on display in these lines of poetry foreground the difference between the self-assertive character of poetic *discourse* and the self-effacing nature of prosaic discourse.

Whatever mode of discourse is deployed, however, the life of reason is, in being the unfolding drama of human psyches in their fateful entanglements with one another but also with the natural world, more than blind striving about which those psyches are oblivious. It is a more or less deliberate exertion imaginatively envisioned. The myriad exertions of the human psyche call for deliberation no less than the encompassing life (within which such diverse strivings make their singular contributions) lends itself to imaginative portrayal.

“The life of reason is accordingly a subject to be treated imaginatively, and interpreted afresh by every historian with legitimate variations” (SAF 110). This is so, in part, because the life of reason is, at bottom, nothing other than that of imagination itself. The sensuous or perceptual imagination is, however, inextricably tied to the discursive imagination. The play of attention is possible only because of the resources of our discourses. Discourse is not the play of essences, but the play of attention. Santayana’s account of the intuition of essences is ineluctably an extended discourse, while his own discourses are a rich resource for unsuspected intuitions.

In no discourse is this play more arresting, elevating, or illuminating than in poetry. In poetic discourse, the work of psyche and the play of spirit are harmoniously married, insofar as two such disparate factors can be brought into harmonious union. The life of reason is the indefatigable attempt to institute, preserve, and enhance the requisite harmonies of a truly integrated life.

Poetic discourse as an integral part of a rational life is, in effect, a largely unacknowledged array of secular rituals. The aptness or propriety of calling these rituals *secular* is, however, far from evident. If something fulfills a religious function, then it *is* a religious practice. This would appear to make “secular” rituals truly religious practices. The activities named matter far more than the names invoked, though the undeveloped implications to be derived from this or that specific name clearly point to the importance of names. However we designated these activities, love demands to be celebrated; death and other forms of loss to be mourned; natural alterations and social transformations to be acknowledged; traditional ideals to

be reconsecrated and novel ones to be baptized; the natural world in both its vast indifference to, and providential support for, human endeavor to be seen without illusions; wars to be cursed as much as heroes celebrated, atrocities more generally to be confronted; the most transient event to be rendered indefinitely memorable and the most tenacious memory to be seen as historically precarious. The loss of this person, in these circumstances, is (for certain persons) in its experiential immediacy the very first death of the very first human ever. How can this singular loss in its experiential immediacy be brought home?

Santayana's understanding of poetry immediately thrust us into a labyrinth — the enveloping domain of human discourse. In turn, his remarks about discourse, as scattered and indeed varied as they are, point in multiple directions, all of them toward one or another of his principal preoccupations: the life of reason; the realms of being; the posits of animal faith and the dissolutions of a chastening skepticism (or, the exigencies of the psyche and the exaltations of spirit); the suasion of Platonism and the tenets of naturalism; the conjunction of poetry and religion; the disjunction of essence and existence; the eventual achievement of ambivalence toward Romanticism and the unwavering espousal of classicism; the unblinking acknowledgment of the actual world as a material matrix out of which contingent existents fly forth; and the irrepressible idealizations born of our passionate attachments. Our condemnations of the world are always uttered in the name of ideals having their locus in, and relevance to, that world itself. Part of the function of the poet is to remind us of just this facet of our fate, as critics of the world. Such a reminder is critical for the cultivation of piety in Santayana's sense.²⁸ As critics of the world, we exhibit our indebtedness. In the words of Robert Frost, the poet is one who is engaged in "a lover's quarrel with the world."²⁹ From the perspective of Santayana, however, the philosopher, precisely as one who is animated and oriented by a sense of piety, is also engaged in such a quarrel.

The formal features of poetic discourse were not the ones that captivated Santayana's philosophical attention or critical imagination.³⁰ Though certainly not inattentive to these features, they were at most secondary, often even tertiary. The *functions* of such discourse were rather those to which he returned, time and again. A largely implicit or undeveloped account of discourse in general provides the more or less remote background against which a nuanced account of poetic discourse stands out. A finely articulated account of religion, however, provides a more proximate background. The tensions between the perspective of the human organism in its historical entanglements and that of a contemplative spirit in its utter detachment

²⁸ "Piety," Santayana insists, "must never be dislodged: spirituality without it is madness. We must be content with the benefits and insights that the times afford, and suffer reflected light from other ages or from better minds to lighten a little our inevitable darkness" ("Apologia Pro Mente Sua," in Schilpp, 572). See also Chapter 10 of *Reason in Religion* (LR3). Cf. Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* (*Middle Works of John Dewey*, volume 14, 19).

²⁹ "The Lesson for Today" in *Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, and Plays*, edited by Richard Poirier and Mark Richardson (New York: The Library of America, 1995), 322.

³⁰ In "The Elements and Function of Poetry," however, Santayana takes pains to identify what presumably he takes to be the most important formal features (or "elements") of poetic discourse (IPR 151–72).

are as acute here as anywhere else in Santayana's thought. If I am disposed to see the life of psyche as (in part) a life of discourse and, in turn, the life of discourse as itself a process of experience, I am mindful how much this disposition is likely to make of this philosopher of discourse something less than his own discourses disclose. In the end, however, I take my task to be akin to that of Santayana: it is not so much to think *about* my exemplary predecessors, but to think *with* them (cf. *Thinking with Whitehead* by Isabelle Stengers). And, in my judgment, there is no question that regarding the topic of poetry and, more generally, discourse it would be hard to find a more exemplary inquirer than George Santayana. Simply in reading him, we discover what poetic prose, even in a strictly philosophic context, can be (see Santayana's "Apologia," in Schilpp, 598–99). Reading what he has to say about poetry and discourse, moreover, we encounter orienting insights unmatched even by most of those who have subjected these Protean terms to systematic analyses. These insights enable us to think *with* him about topics at the center of his — and our — concern.

In the end, discourse is itself experiential, just as experience is (in a sense) discursive.³¹ Our *experience* of discourse cannot but be enhanced and indeed transformed by our encounter with this master stylist; just as our philosophical *understanding* of our discursive practices, from strictly logical demonstration to formally poetic utterance, cannot but be opened and deepened by this encounter. My hope on this occasion is simply to have collated a number of relevant texts and, then, to have suggested how these scattered passages add up to a more or less integrated account of human discourse in its irreducibly diverse forms, with special attention having been paid to poetic discourse. But the distinction of these forms is ultimately a *functional* (hence, not a formal) distinction. Santayana is unafraid to trace out the implications of his functional analysis of these discursive forms. The essence of poetic discourse is, *functionally*, identifiable with that of religious discourse. However much the essence of each mode of discourse might be a matter of intuition, the identification of the one with the other is a discursive achievement. In general, the realm of essence betrays itself at every turn as a domain of discourse in which the very identity of any essence whatsoever — also the *act* of identifying an essence as such — takes place only in the same discourse. Even the highest prerogatives of spirit must pay homage to the instinctual life of the psyche. The contemplative stance of a detached spirit is never anything more than the temporary achievement of an entangled organism. Poetry is a site in which the vistas afforded to spirit are dramatically juxtaposed to the dramas into which the psyche is so fatefully thrown by its own passions, actions, attachments, and disillusionments. The *drama* of this engagement between spirit and psyche implies that the context in which discourse must be located is always the life of psyche. Discourse no less than psyche falls most squarely in the realm of matter. Psyches and the circumstances into which they are thrown are such stuff as dramas are made on; spirit and the degree of detachment obtainable spontaneously by intuition and laboriously by skepticism suggest the position of the spectator, not the engagement of an actor in a drama. But spectators

³¹ Experience is itself poetic in nature. "My sense of animation in nature, and all my notions of human experience, are," Santayana suggests, "dramatic poetry, and nothing else" (SAF 249).

can themselves be figures (or characters) in a drama, just as the spectacle to which they are attending can be itself a drama.

Poetry opens vistas and, as a result, affords us opportunities for contemplation, occasions for *theoria* severed from the exigencies of action (see, e.g., Chapters 56 and 57 of Santayana's *Little Essays*). But it opens vistas ultimately for the psyche, spirit being but a provisional role of the human psyche mostly attainable in highly favorable circumstances. At bottom, poetry is a mode of discourse and, as such, poetry is an occurrence (in both its composition and audition) in the life of psyche. Discourse itself exhibits, to some degree, a life of its own, even if that life is utterly dependent on the life of psyche. The life of discourse no less than discourse itself is a matter to be posited by the animal faith of the human animal. Indeed, discourse is discourse only by virtue of its temporality, that is, by virtue of a development in which inheritance underwrites a destiny while subsequent developments have the retroactive power to redefine the significance of the earliest phases, even the inaugural moment, of an ongoing process (cf. Dewey, "Time and Individuality")³²

It is time for all the heroes to go home
if they have any, time for all of us common ones
to locate ourselves by the real things
we live by.

Far to the north, or indeed in any direction,
strange mountains and creatures have always lurked —
elves, goblins, trolls, and spiders: we
encounter them in dread and wonder,

But once we have tasted far streams, touched the gold,
found some limit beyond the waterfall,
a season changes, and we come back, changed
but safe, quiet, grateful.

Suppose an insane wind holds all the hills
while strange beliefs whine at the traveler's ears,
we ordinary beings can cling to the earth and love
where we are, sturdy for common things.³³

William Stafford

³²This can be found in *Later Works of John Dewey*, volume 14 (Carbondale, IL: SIU Press, 1991), 98–114; also in *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, edited by Richard J. Bernstein.

³³A poem such as this helps us to appreciate one of Santayana's own autobiographical remarks regarding his poetic talent: "Even if my temperament had been naturally warmer, the fact that the English language . . . was not my mother-tongue would of itself preclude any inspired use of it on my part; its roots do not quite reach to my centre. I never drank in childhood the homely cadences and ditties which in pure spontaneous poetry set the essential key. I know no words redolent of the wonder-world, the fairy-tale, or the cradle" ("Preface" to *Poems* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923], vii–viii). In contrast, there can be no question that the roots of English reach the very center of Cummings.

The possibility of loving *where we are* and, indeed, *what we are* needs to be defended, just as the difficulty of doing must be acknowledged.³⁴ One of the tasks of poetry, as envisioned by George Santayana, is to inculcate piety — a sense of gratitude and reverence, loyalty and solicitude, for the sources of our existence. This task falls short if it does not extend to loving the common things of daily life, those things by which the precarious career of a fallible animal is rendered, as much as possible, steady and sturdy. Is it any surprise then that the task of poetry encompasses, so often, the celebration of the quotidian? Such poetry is, however, primarily one of things, not words or images (see Santayana's "Apologia," in Schilpp, 599; also Colapietro's "A Poet's Philosopher"). A critical function of poetic utterance is, without question, to evoke nothing less than things and events in their densely sedimented significance.³⁵ "The purest discourse is (without noticing it)," Santayana insists, "an experience, and the blindest experience (also without noticing it) is a discourse" (SAF 140). Poetry is that mode of discourse in which things have their say³⁶ but also one in which discourse asserts itself.³⁷ It is, moreover, manifestly

³⁴This difficulty is bound up with those inherent in detachment and disillusionment. "Your detachment will not be spiritual unless it is universal; it will then bring you liberation at once from the world and from yourself. This will neither destroy your natural gifts and duties nor add to them; but it will enable you to exercise them without illusion and in far-seeing harmony with their real function and end. *Detachment leaves you content to be where you are, and what you are. Why should you hanker to be elsewhere or someone else?*" ("Apologia Pro Mente Sua," in Schilpp, 571; emphasis added).

³⁵"A real thing, when all its pertinent natural associates are discerned, touches," Santayana insists, "wonder, pathos, and beauty on every side; the rational poet is one who, without feigning anything unreal, perceives these momentous ties, and presents his subject loaded with its whole fate, missing no source of worth which is in it, no ideal influence which it may have" (LR4 114).

³⁶In "Apologia Pro Mente Sua," Santayana reveals that upon re-reading his poetry he often had a new inspiration, "the best things being perhaps my second thoughts, as also in my prose; but that is because my mind works by making variations on a given theme or congruous extensions. I tend to repeat myself like a refrain; I do not pass to something else that suggests itself by chance. In a word, I move in the realm of essences, not in that of accidents. One reason for this may be limitation of experience but another reason may be the intensity of what experience I have. And *my poetry is for that very cause* not a poetry of words or concepts, but *a poetry of things*; for if according to Virgil things have their tears, so they have their poetry: and by 'things' I understand events and interests as well as objects" (Schilpp, 599; emphasis added). For an example of what Santayana intends by "the poetry of things," see *Il Postino* (1994), a film directed by Michael Radford, one portraying the poet Pablo Neruda in exile. The postman makes a recording of the sounds of the island where he lives and also where for a time Neruda resided (at least in this fictionalized depiction). These sounds are examples of "the poetry of things." And for Santayana such poetry is fundamental: The "real poetry of the poem lies in its subject-matter, as seen in a vision. . . . Of course, if you don't feel the poetry of things, you will not feel it in some verbal reflection of it caught by a poet; but I am a true poet in feeling that poetry, and the critics are not good critics if they fail to perceive it" ("Apologia Pro Mente Sua," in Schilpp, 599).

³⁷Santayana is explicit on this point: the medium asserts itself. "That the medium should so assert itself . . . is no anomaly, the cognitive function being an ulterior one to which ideas are, by no means obliged to conform" (*Reason In Art* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905], 106).

an experience, often because it is a series of shocks. While poetic utterance may in some respects be the “purest discourse,” it is in the lives of poets and their readers noticed to be an experience. Finally, it discloses to us the significance of things and events,³⁸ in an experientially immediate manner. When the play is ended and the enchanting world of an engrossing drama dissolves back into empty stage, we are reminded of just how partial, perspectival, and ethereal was the drama in which we were lost. This reminder, however, should not efface the experience of the play itself. For our experience of our own often narrow, confusing, and unstable lives can be rendered more voluminous, luminous, and even sturdy by our experience of poetic discourse. Our experience of literature generally can be a reminder of this possibility, indeed, nothing short of a realization of this possibility.³⁹ But Santayana’s writings in particular bear eloquent witness to this ubiquitous possibility and, in doing so, fulfill a poetic function.

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³⁸ “Experience, at its very inception, is,” Santayana claims, “a revelation of *things*; and these things, before they are otherwise distinguished, are distinguishable into a here and a there, a now and a then, nature and myself in the midst of nature” (SAF 189). Experience as it is taken up into discourse allows for countless distinctions. What needs most of all to be recalled here is that, for Santayana, experience is “a fund of wisdom gathered by living” (SAF 138). It is *Erfahrung*, the distillation of *Erlebnis*. For a helpful discussion of this important distinction, see Ben Highmore’s *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002), especially 66–71. Discourse is essential for the process of gathering experience precisely in those forms from which insights can be secured (wisdom being at bottom the consolidation of insights derived from experience).

³⁹ Cf. Jessica Wahman’s “Literary Psychology and Philosophical Method”; also John Stuhr’s “Philosophy, Literature, and Dogma: The View from Somewhere” in this issue (*Overheard in Seville* 31 [2013]: 20–28, 29–38).

Philosophy, Literature, and Dogma: Santayana and the View from Somewhere

I do not pretend to place myself at the heart of the universe nor at its origin, nor to draw its periphery. I would lay siege to the truth, only as animal exploration and fancy may do so, first from one quarter and then from another, expecting the reality to be not simpler than my experience of it, but far more extensive and complex. I stand in philosophy exactly where I stand in daily life; I should not be honest otherwise.¹

—Santayana, “Preface,” *Scepticism and Animal Faith*

Viewed from a sufficient distance, all systems of philosophy are seen to be personal, temperamental, accidental, and premature. They treat partial knowledge as if it were total knowledge. . . . In a word, they are human heresies. . . . I can imagine a man becoming a philosopher without being a heretic. . . . It [doing so] lies in confessing that a system of philosophy is a personal work of art which gives a specious unity to some chance vista in the cosmic labyrinth. To confess this is to confess a notorious truth; yet it would be something novel if a philosopher should confess it, and should substitute the pursuit of sincerity for the pursuit of omniscience.²

—Santayana, “Philosophical Heresy,” *Obiter Scripta*

People live differently from other people. They speak different languages, have different friends and families, wear different clothes, seek different kinds of shelter, eat different foods, use different tools, make different music, play different games, tell different stories, find different things sad and funny, take on different habits and exhibit different vision and also different blindness, undertake different inquiries, set forth different assertions and theories, take different things as obvious and natural, pursue different passions and realize fulfillment in different loves, suffer different fears and pains, fight different battles, worship different gods, and imagine different ideals. They also develop and pledge allegiance to different philosophies. Sometimes these differences appear as an immense resource and profound wealth, remarkable triumphs of life and will and spirit in different times and different places. At other times these differences may appear as resilient roadblocks, parochial barriers to common enterprises, shared community, and a wider beauty, greater justice and larger truth.

To repeat: People live differently from other people. These differences extend to, and include, philosophy or, more accurately, philosophies. People hold, defend, and develop different philosophies. The long history of philosophy makes this evident, and even a short poll of persons who come across this essay would yield further evidence. The philosophies of Aristotle, Jesus, Augustine, Hobbes, Zera Yacob, Spinoza, Mulla Sadra, Kierkegaard, Marx, William James, Santayana, Ayn Rand, and Derrida: These are *different* philosophies.

¹George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1923), v–vi.

²George Santayana, “Philosophical Heresy,” *Obiter Scripta* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 94, 100.

How should these and so many other differences among philosophies be understood? The answer to this question depends in large part on how one characterizes these differences. Consider two possibilities. First, differences in philosophies might be understood as different perspectives on the world. That is: There is a world, a single world, the same world, that different people see differently. There is, on this view, one world seen differently. Those who characterize differences among philosophies in this way are, or tend to be, monists about reality — there is just one reality, one world, one actual state of affairs — and monists about truth — there may be many different and conflicting claims about reality but there is at most only one claim that is true, that gets some particular set of things right, that captures how some particular things are. This way of characterizing differences among philosophies (or, for that matter, differences among views that have little to do with philosophy) generates two massive undertakings: An ontology enterprise dedicated to distinguishing what is real from what is only apparent or experienced, and an epistemology industry dedicated to distinguishing what is true from what only seems, or is experienced as, true.

If they are to function effectively, this ontology enterprise and this epistemology industry, beginning as they do with different philosophies, must find a way to move beyond, to transcend, these different perspectives on the world. They must move toward and take up what Thomas Nagel called “the view from nowhere.”³ Nagel, presumably writing at some place and at some time, described his book and its project:

This book is about a single problem: how to combine the [subjective] perspective of a particular person inside the world with an objective view of the same world, the person and his viewpoint included. It is a problem that faces every creature with the impulse and the capacity to transcend its particular point of view and to conceive of the world as a whole. . . . I find it natural to regard life and the world in this way. . . . To acquire a more objective understanding of some aspect of life or the world, we step back from our initial view of it and form a new conception which has that view and its relation to the world as its object. In other words, we place ourselves in the world that is to be understood. The old view then comes to be regarded as an appearance, more subjective than the new view, and correctable or confirmable by reference to it. The process can be repeated, yielding a still more objective conception.⁴

Noting that our ability to occupy this “view from nowhere” has “obvious limits,” Nagel continues:

But since we are who we are, we can't get outside of ourselves completely. Whatever we do, we remain subparts of the world with limited access to the real nature of the rest of it and of ourselves. . . . The radical form of this recognition is philosophical skepticism, in which the objective standpoint undermines itself by the same procedures it uses to call into question the prereflective standpoint of ordinary life in perception, desire, and action. . . . In general, I believe that skepticism is revealing and

³Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴Nagel, 3–4.

not refutable, but that it does not vitiate the pursuit of objectivity. . . . In any case, we seem to have no choice but to make the attempt.⁵

Now, I do not share Nagel's view that thoughtful persons have no choice but to seek the view from nowhere, or even a view increasingly close to the view from nowhere. I do not think that philosophers have no choice but to strive to become Nowhere Men and Women, or that philosophy needs to be consigned to Nowhere Land (thank you, Lennon and McCartney).⁶ The way to escape trying to think and live from nowhere is to reject this demand's motivating but unsupported assumption: that there is a subjective/objective or subject/object dualism in matters about the nature of truth or the nature of reality.

Perhaps a second possible way to characterize philosophical differences provides a way to avoid pursuing or, worse yet, pretending to have acquired, the view from nowhere. Consider this second possibility. Differences in philosophies might be understood as different *expressions* of different lives. That is: There are different experiences and different lives that are expressed in different ways. Those who characterize differences among philosophers in this way are, or tend to be, pluralists—either radical empiricists like James for whom plural, different experiences constitute plural worlds (and not just plural worldviews) or non-reductive materialists like Santayana for whom plural, different expressions in philosophies (as well as in arts and religion and society and science and common sense) are so many different personal expressions in the natural world that gives rise to, and for a lifetime briefly sustains them all.

This way of characterizing differences among philosophies (or, for that matter, differences among views that have little to do with philosophy) also generates two large undertakings — though ones that have little to do with traditional, now professionalized ontology or traditional, now professionalized epistemology. The first task is meta-philosophical and constitutes a reconstruction (if you like John Dewey's language) or confession (if you prefer Santayana's) of philosophy's self-understanding. This task amounts to recognizing different philosophies as different personal works of art and imagination, and so: giving up ontology and epistemology for aesthetics; giving up the vocabulary of disagreement for the vocabulary of difference; giving up the view from nowhere for the view from somewhere — plural somewheres; giving up the supposed sharp divide between thought and feeling (and the valorization of reason) for the realization, as James explained, that rationality is a sentiment; giving up the sharp divide between logic and rhetoric (and the valorization of icy argument and proof) for (the human warmth of) story telling and picture painting and play acting; giving up the sharp divide between all other kinds of writing and philosophy for a recognition of philosophies understood as autobiographies, diaries, dramas, genealogies, novels, poems, and so on; and, giving up, as James noted, the one for the many and, in so doing giving up, as Santayana observed, dogma for sincerity.

⁵ Nagel, 6–7.

⁶ John Lennon and Paul McCartney, "Nowhere Man," *Rubber Soul* (Parlophone, 1965 and Capitol Records, 1966).

I have pursued this task by suggesting elsewhere that it is helpful to understand philosophies as fashions⁷ and by developing an expressivist account of philosophy.⁸ I won't repeat that work here, but I do want to note that both James and Santayana supply substantial resources for this view. James understood different philosophies as expressions of different temperaments, and claimed they arose from, and in, different moods, and sensibilities, and dispositions rather than supposedly objective, view-from-nowhere-premises or supposedly impersonal factors. So, for example, in tune with Santayana's call for philosophy to become the pursuit of sincerity, James observed in "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy" in *Pragmatism* that:

Of whatever temperament a professional philosopher is, he tries when philosophizing to sink the fact of his temperament. Temperament is no conventionally recognized reason, so he urges impersonal reasons only for his conclusions. Yet his temperament really gives him a stronger bias than any of his more strictly objective premises. . . . There arises thus a certain insincerity in our philosophic discussions: the potentest of all our premises is never mentioned. . . . What the system pretends to be is a picture of the great universe of God. What it is — and oh so flagrantly! — is the revelation of how intensely odd the personal flavor of some fellow creature is.⁹

Similarly, in *A Pluralistic Universe*, James claims that the different systems in the whole history of philosophy reduce themselves to "just so many visions, modes of feeling the whole push, and seeing the whole drift of life, forced on one by one's total character and experience, and on the whole *preferred* — there is no other truthful word — as one's best working attitude."¹⁰

And Santayana too, I think. There are few philosophers more attuned to the different, multiple philosophies and the ephemeral ways of fashioning homes in the world than George Santayana. In his "Marginal Notes on Civilization in the United States," he writes:

The heartiness of American ways, the feminine gush and the masculine go, the girlishness and high jinks and perpetual joking and obligatory jollity may prove fatiguing sometimes; but children often overdo their sports, which does not prove that they are not spontaneous fundamentally. Social intercourse is essentially play, a kind of perpetual amiable comedy; . . . The atmosphere of sport, fashion, and wealth is agreeable and intoxicating; certainly it is frivolous, unless some passion is at work beneath, and even then it is all vanity; but in that sense, so is life itself, and a philosopher who is really a philosopher will not quarrel with it on that account.

⁷See, for example, my "Only Going So Fast: Philosophies as Fashions," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (2006): 147–64. I expand this account in my *Pragmatic Fashions*.

⁸See Vincent Colapietro's discussion of the "discipline of expression," the nature of poetic utterance, and the ways this involves a labyrinth of discourse in "Literary Forms, Heuristic Functions, and Philosophical Fixations: Santayana's Emancipatory Example" in this issue (*Overheard in Seville* 31 [2013]: 8).

⁹William James, *Pragmatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975 [1907]), 11, 24.

¹⁰William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977 [1909]), 14–15.

What else than vanity could life possibly be in the end? The point is that it should be spontaneous, innocent, and happily worked-out, like a piece of music well-played.¹¹

This view of life as sport and business, as fashions and frivolities, as spontaneous vanities, includes “the privilege of reflection.” Santayana writes:

What better thing is there for a man than to remember now and then that the stars are laughing at him, to renounce his allegiance to his own preferences and passions and by understanding to enter into those of other men? We can't play at life without getting some knocks and bruises, and without running some chance of defeat. But our best moments are the breathing spells.¹²

To understand philosophies as fashions is to see a pluralism sufficiently thoroughgoing as to accommodate plural, different ontologies — be they materialistic or epiphenomenal, dualistic or idealistic, process or pragmatic, and so on. It is to understand Santayana's notion of matter in functional terms, as he himself did when he defined matter as “the butt of action” or the “sum of all dynamic and possibly conflicting agencies in the world,” the sum of all fashionings.¹³

This view of different philosophies as different personal works of art generates a second large undertaking. I want to pursue here that undertaking in somewhat more detail. Let me introduce this undertaking by means of a question. I am going to state this question in a very general and abstract manner, and I will then work to make it, and my answer to it, more specific and concrete. Here is the question: How should philosophers write? Put this generally, it is tempting to respond with an equally general answer: It depends; it depends on context, on purpose and audience and medium and subject matter and talents and many other things. I think this contextualism is correct. It makes little sense to demand that philosophy in general take the form, for example, of aphorism alone, or manifesto alone, or only numbered propositions.

How should philosophers write? Let me make this question a little bit less general and abstract. If one holds with James that philosophies are expressions of personal temperaments or with Santayana that philosophies are personal expressions, personal works of art, how should one write? If a philosopher — say you or me — wanted to acknowledge how he or she felt the whole push and saw the whole drift of life, how would such a philosophy be written? If, as Santayana wanted, a philosopher wanted to pursue sincerity rather than omniscience, how should he or she write — i.e., write sincerely?

Here is a passage by Santayana that, like many passages by Santayana, I have always found immensely illuminating. At the very end of the dialogical “Epilogue” to *The Last Puritan*, Santayana writes the following:

“However, suppose I am wrong about the facts. Shall I tear the book up, or will it do as a fable?”

¹¹ George Santayana, “Marginal Notes on Civilization in the United States,” *The Dial* 72 (1922): 556.

¹² George Santayana, “Walt Whitman: A Dialogue,” *The Harvard Monthly* 10, no. 3 (1890): 91.

¹³ George Santayana, “Americanism,” *The Idler and His Works*, ed. Daniel Cory, in *Santayana on America*, ed. Richard Colton Lyon (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1968 [1957]), 213.

“As a fable you may publish it. It’s all your invention; but perhaps there’s a better philosophy in it than in your other books.”

“How so?”

“Because now you’re not arguing or proving or criticizing anything, but painting a picture. The trouble with you philosophers is that you misunderstand your vocation. You ought to be poets, but you insist on laying down the law for the universe, physical and moral, and are vexed with one another because your inspirations are not identical.”

“Are you accusing me of dogmatism? Do I demand that everybody should agree with me?”

“Less loudly, I admit, than most philosophers. Yet when you profess to be describing a fact, you can’t help antagonizing those who take a different view of it, or are blind altogether to that sort of object. In this novel, on the contrary, the argument is dramatised, the views become human persuasions, and the presentation is all the truer for not professing to be true.”¹⁴

How should philosophers write if they are to avoid prescribing a doctrine as unquestionably true or uniquely authorized, if they are to avoid making assertions supposedly certain, universal, or complete? How should philosophers write if they are to avoid being dogmatists? Hmmm . . . how might it be possible to answer this question without being (or becoming) a dogmatist, without insisting, if only indirectly, on laying down the law?

I confess: I’m not sure. Here’s how some of this seems to me, someone who usually can’t stop with a smile until it has grown into a laugh at philosophical systems, someone drawn to books with titles like *The World as I Found It* and *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* and *A Pluralistic Universe* rather than *The View from Nowhere* or *The Nature of Reality* or *The Critique of Pure Reason*, someone alive here and now, and someone who suspects experience outstrips language and that animal faith outstrips knowledge.

A sincere confession that philosophies are personal works of art, expressions of particular persons in particular times and places, is *under-determined* with respect to literary genre. This confession does not direct us to write, for example, only autobiographies or dialogues or diaries or dramas or essays or novels or poems or science fiction or screen plays or travelogues or blogs or monographs or journal articles. None of these literary forms has cornered, or will corner, the market on honest personal expression. It is probably even possible to write a short book titled *The View from Nowhere* as long as one makes clear that the view from nowhere is itself a view from somewhere, and that this somewhere is just one chance vista in a cosmic labyrinth. But if an understanding of philosophies as personal works of art does not direct us to just one literary genre, so too it leaves open all genres, including ones not yet created, as live possibilities for philosophy. In American philosophy alone, for example, there is no reason to think that works by Douglass and Whitman and Gilman and Addams and Stevens and Baldwin — and even James and Santayana — are less philosophical because they are autobiography, poem, novel, public

¹⁴George Santayana, *The Last Puritan* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 602.

address, personal story, or “Dialogues in Limbo” rather than critiques, treatises, or proofs littered with Polish notation and the rigor of inconspicuous premises.

Philosophy that is consciously and honestly expressivist, philosophy that is story rather than dogma, is marked by four characteristics. First, it is self-consciously personal. This means that it is perspectival, pluralistic, partial, and provisional: perspectival rather than universal, pluralistic rather than monistic, partial rather than complete, and provisional rather than finished. It is an irreducibly personal work of art.

Second, it is not only self-consciously personal in general; rather, it is self-consciously personal in specific. It does not simply recognize itself as a view from somewhere; it recognizes itself as a view from some particular somewhere. That somewhere may be the United States, or even Atlanta. It may be early in the second decade of the 21st century. It may be a place that is male, or white, or Midwestern, or employed, or without membership in any religion, or educated, or married, or within the academy, or one with grown children. (If this is starting to sound too personal, like too much information, for a professional academic publication, then I invite you to avoid the temptation, fed by professional habits, to go nowhere.) It may be a place that is organized by the Santayana Society. It may be at the intersection of these or many other places. The fullest statement of this point that I know is John Dewey’s analysis of “selective emphasis” and how to avoid the “fallacy of selective emphasis” in the first chapter of his 1925 masterpiece, *Experience and Nature*:

Selective emphasis, choice, is inevitable whenever reflection occurs. This is not an evil. Deception comes only when the presence and operation of choice is concealed, disguised, denied. . . . Honest empirical method will state when and where and why the act of selection took place, and thus enable others to repeat it and test its worth. . . . Choice that is disguised or denied is the source of those astounding differences of philosophic belief that startle the beginner and that become the plaything of the expert. Choice that is avowed is an experiment to be tried on its merits and tested by its results.¹⁵

Here Dewey’s demand for honesty parallels Santayana’s plea for sincerity. It also exhibits a temperamental difference between the two philosophers: Santayana stresses that philosophies as personal works of art are the expressions of chance vistas; Dewey stresses that this expression contains within it critical resources for the not-left-to-chance fuller realization of the chance ideals of that chance vista.

Third, if philosophy is to express a particular vista or temperament, if it is to be a personal work of art, it must be imaginative. It must be a work of the imagination and not simply a chronicle or recording. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Santayana called this “literary psychology” — “the art of imagining how [animals] feel and think” — and its value is a matter of imagination, creativity, and art — the art of thinking (as distinct from the science of thought).¹⁶ He stated:

Thought can be found only by being enacted. . . . I can only surmise what it [experience] might have been, and rehearse it imaginatively in my own fancy. It is an object of literary psychology. The whole of British and German philosophy is only literature.

¹⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981 [1925]), 34–35.

¹⁶ *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923), 252–54.

In its deepest reaches it simply appeals to what a man says of himself when he surveys his adventures, re-pictures his perspectives, analyses his curious ideas, guesses at their origin, and imagines the varied experience which he would like to possess, cumulative and dramatically unified. . . . But not one term, not one conclusion in it has the least scientific value, and it is only when this philosophy is good literature that it is good for anything.¹⁷

The “poets and novelists are often better psychologists than the philosophers,” Santayana added. And recent studies indicate that he was right. In fact, as one report recently concluded, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than nonfiction, which is designed to persuade through argument and evidence. Some studies show that when we read nonfiction, we read defensively, we read ready for combat, we read with our shields up. We defend what we are and take on all who would attack or confront what we already believe. But when we are absorbed in a story, as some authors have noted, we drop our intellectual guard and become open to new habits of belief. As English professor Jonathan Gottschall put it: “We are moved emotionally, and this seems to make us rubbery and easy to shape. But perhaps the most impressive finding is just how fiction shapes us: mainly for the better, not for the worse. Fiction enhances our ability to understand other people; it promotes a deep morality that cuts across religious and political creeds.”¹⁸ Beyond the local battles of the culture wars, virtually all storytelling, regardless of genre, increases society’s fund of empathy and reinforces an ethic of decency that functions at a deeper level than politics. These stories, Santayana wrote, “make a romance of our incoherence”:

As the loom shifts, or gets out of order, the woof is recomposed or destroyed. It is a living, a perpetual creation; and the very fatality that forces me, in conceiving my own past or future, or the animation of nature at large, to imagine that object afresh, with my present vital resources and on the scale and in the style of my present discourse — this very fatality, I say, reveals to me the nature of discourse everywhere, that it is poetry. But it is poetry about facts, or means to be; and I need not fear to be too eloquent in expressing my forgotten sentiments, or the unknown sentiments of others. Very likely those sentiments, when living, were more eloquent than I am now.¹⁹

How should philosophers write, if they are to avoid being dogmatists, if they are to write sincerely and honestly? Santayana has set the bar high. Such philosophy must be self-consciously personal, it must be somewhere rather than nowhere. Such philosophy must be marked by self-knowledge, it must understand the place that is its particular somewhere, and it must understand the purpose that has called it forth and measures its success or failure. And, such philosophy must be imaginative, it must create, must re-fashion, a story that imagines feelings and thoughts. The question here is not whether philosophy, or at least any philosophy of experience, will or will not be literature.²⁰ It is literature — autobiography, poetry, drama. The only question is whether or not it will be dogmatic literature.

¹⁷ *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, 254.

¹⁸ Jonathan Gottschall, “Why Fiction is Good for You,” *Ideas*, *Boston Globe*, 29 April 2012.

¹⁹ *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, 261.

²⁰ In her “Literary Psychology and Philosophical Method,” Jessica Wahman, tracing the bifurcation of rhetoric and argument, claims literary psychology is a kind of storytelling and that giving explanations is tied to the practice of composing dramatic storylines. (29, 33).

Epilogue

“However, suppose I am wrong about all this, about differences among philosophies, about the literary character of philosophy, and about the appeal of different enactments and stories to different temperaments in different chance vistas. Shall I tear up this presentation to the Santayana Society, or will it do as a confession?”

“As a confession you may present it. It’s all your invention, though largely of a piece with the philosophy in your other work.”

“How so?”

“Because now you’re not arguing or proving or criticizing anything, but painting a picture, offering a suggestion, writing a poem, always speaking in the first person from where you find yourself. Still, the trouble is that you are not receptive to the prestige of the infinite and so allow your poetry to drift, without religion, ‘without an expression in worship and dogma.’²¹ Thus you try to recruit others to that chance vista you occupy, vexed that your inspirations and those of others are not (yet) harmonious. Not content with describing a fact, you strive to remake that fact.”

“Are you accusing me of pragmatism? Do I demand that everybody should strive with me?”

“Not everyone, I admit. But when the view that different philosophies are different personal works of art is itself shown to be just another personal work of art, it may become possible to see a poetry in action — and another in silence.”

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²¹ See George Santayana, “The Elements and Function of Poetry,” in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, vol. 3 of *The Works of George Santayana*. Ed. Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. and William G. Holzberger (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 171.

Literary Psychology and Philosophical Method

The title of this essay invites three related questions: What is literary psychology? What is Santayana's method of philosophical investigation and expression? And what kind of light can the answers to these questions shed on the problem of philosophical method in general? The common thread in my responses to each of these questions involves the role of narrative in knowledge. I will claim that: 1) literary psychology amounts to a kind of storytelling; 2) Santayana's own philosophical style more resembles that of a narrator than it does a debater, a fact that invites us to consider the role literary psychology plays in his own work and in our appreciation of it; and 3) Santayana's claims about literary psychology and philosophy in general suggest that the explanations we give, whether as professional philosophers or everyday people making sense of the world, are inextricably tied to the practice of composing dramatic storylines designed to invoke the sympathetic imaginations of our interlocutors. Ultimately, I plan to examine how particular narratives (especially in philosophy of mind) influence and can alter the nature of the questions we pose to ourselves and each other as well as the responses that we generate to those questions.

The Problem — What's at Stake?

Before getting into the details of Santayana's analysis of literary psychology, it is important to consider the nagging problem motivating the topic of my paper, namely, the ongoing intramural debates about what counts as philosophy. (This consideration, of course, begs the question of whether these debates are intramural — perhaps they are *inter-mural* — and I suppose people will take different stances on the matter depending on what they consider the parameters of philosophy to be.) I do not plan to solve that problem here, but an investigation of its origins may shed light on the contentiousness of my claim that philosophy is a kind of dramatic storytelling about the world and the beings who people it, and can, hopefully (if my own thesis about the virtues of investigating the philosophical stories we tell ourselves is correct) shed some light on what would count as a legitimate answer to the sorts of objections that come my way.

The issue of philosophical method is no recent problem: it is, in fact, as old as Western philosophy itself. As early as Plato's "Apology," we find Socrates making distinctions between the misleading but persuasive power of flowery rhetoric and the truth-telling rationality of his own straightforward speech. Plato continues to hammer away at storytellers throughout his work, going so far, famously, as to eject from his Kallipolis the poets who stir up people's emotions with falsehoods. Today, as inheritors of a tradition that continues, by and large, to value reason over emotion (though this is by no means universal, and the dichotomy has been challenged over the course of philosophical history as well as concertedly in recent years within particular quarters), we learn to teach critical thinking as the act of persuasion by reason and to distinguish this act from the undesirable forms of persuasion by force and emotion. Such instruction implies that the "force of reason" is superior to other

means of influence, both epistemologically and morally, though we frequently — at least at the introductory levels of instruction — leave this tacit claim uninvestigated and gloss over the commonalities among our various ways of being moved to belief and action so that we may stress their differences.

If we fast-forward from ancient Greece to the end of the last millennium and the beginning of this one, we see a continuation of the distinction between rhetoric and argument in disputes between continental and analytic philosophers on the issue of philosophical method. The analytics accuse the continentals of having no arguments and of depending almost exclusively and entirely on (frequently inscrutable) rhetorical flourish, and the continental philosophers claim that the analytics fail to see the limitations of their own logic because they ignore the historical, ethnic, and just plain human assumptions — the cultural stories — that color the apparent clarity and distinctness of their propositions. If this were merely an academic exercise, one perhaps significant to the practice, politics, and economics of the profession, we might be content to acknowledge its import within this constrained sphere, but the debate has actually escaped the academy and suffused itself in broader American culture, where, at the same time, it fans the flames of the academic dispute. In 2004, Karl Rove was quoted as criticizing his opponents for being a part of the “reality-based” community as opposed to his own community of empire with the power to create its own reality.¹ Rove’s argument has been seen by some philosophers as a legacy of both deconstruction and historicist interpretations of truth and thus as evidence of everything that is wrong and dangerous about postmodern continental philosophy and emotion-stirring rhetoric-based methodologies in general. What is needed, the claim goes, is strict adherence to the rigors of logic and scientific method in order for us to be protected from the dangerous, manipulative, and above all, irrational forces of imperialism. Even as I write this, the “reality-based community” is having a field day over what Jon Stewart of “The Daily Show” has called “the avalanche on Bullshit Mountain,” that is, the failure of Fox News to correctly predict the recent presidential election.² Clips of shocked election night pundits stunned by the fact that their “felt” version of reality promising a Romney victory just didn’t come through in real numbers, real time, and real voting bodies calls to mind C.S. Peirce’s distinction between the scientific method of fixing belief and all the others, science being the only one to depend on something independent of what humans would like to be the case and the former methods well articulated

¹Ron Suskind, “Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush,” *New York Times*, October 17, 2004, accessed November 16, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/17/magazine/17BUSH.html?_r=0.

²Jon Stewart, “Post Democalypse 2012 — America Takes a Shower — Karl Rove’s Math,” clip from “The Daily Show,” November 7, 2012, 3:52. <http://www.thedailyshow.com/watch/wed-november-7-2012/post-democalypse-2012---america-takes-a-shower---karl-rove-s-math>. Frank Rich (*New York Magazine*) and Rachel Maddow (MSNBC) have offered similar commentaries about the battle between data-driven scientific fact and Republican prejudicial fantasy, and are generally celebrating the triumphal revenge of the reality-based community. Frank Rich, “Fantasyland,” *New York Magazine*, November 9, 2012, accessed on December 20, 2012, <http://nymag.com/news/frank-rich/gop-denial-2012-11/>; Rachel Maddow, “The Rachel Maddow Show,” November 7, 2012, 12:58, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/26315908/ns/msnbc_tv-rachel_maddow_show/vp/49736294.

by FOX News's Megyn Kelly when she asked Karl Rove (of all people) regarding his predictions that Romney would somehow pull through as the winner: "Is this just math you do as a Republican to make yourself feel better, or is this real?"³

All this is very funny (to some, at least) and certainly does say something important about better and worse ways of justifying our beliefs. However, if we assume that the difference between imperialist power-mongering and scientific investigation is a simple dichotomy of manipulative emotional rhetoric and calm and objective rational argument, we fail to understand the complex interplay between the various facets of human cognition and expression and the ways they are brought to bear on the wide variety of our methodologies. (I would further assert that if we view one way of doing philosophy as simple manipulation and the other as pure rational deduction, we badly misunderstand both the continental and analytic practices.) Most importantly, the valorization of persuasion by rational argument invites the question of what the "force" is that is involved in the power of reason and why we should bow to it rather than to our emotional fears and attachments when our reason and emotions conflict. Modern philosophers are famous for locating this power in the intuitive certainty of some beliefs and the demonstrative certainty of the claims that follow from them, but as several pragmatist philosophers have pointed out, intuitive certainty, logical connection, and all the rest of our rational processes are inextricable from and ultimately depend on subjective feelings and sensibilities. Peirce points out that Descartes, the great celebrator of clarity and distinctness, never made a distinction between something being certain and seeming so;⁴ William James introduces his essay "The Sentiment of Rationality" by claiming that the philosopher "recognizes rationality . . . by certain subjective marks with which it affects him";⁵ and Santayana asserts that "rationality depends on distinguishing the excellent; and that distinction can be made . . . only by an irrational impulse."⁶ All three mean to show that reason is not some self-evident guarantee of its own correctness but a psychological function by which human (and some other) animals strive to attain something good for themselves. The evidence of reason's success is in its actual ability to secure these goods; otherwise we wouldn't value it as much. Our inability to conceive otherwise — frequently, the characterization of intuitively certain propositions — can hardly, by itself, be an argument for something being the case on the plane of existence.

In short, the controversy behind the claim that philosophy, and all knowledge, involves narrative and dramatic elements can be tied to the historical bifurcation of rhetoric and argument, with the not-to-be trusted emotions on one side and the

³Stewart, 1:56.

⁴C. S. Peirce, "How to Make our Ideas Clear," in *The Essential Peirce, Vol. 1 (1867–1893)*, ed. Nathan Houser and Christian Kloesel (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1992), 125.

⁵William James, "The Sentiment of Rationality," in *The Works of William James: The Will to Believe*, ed. Frederick H. Burkhardt, Fredson Bowers, and Ignas K. Skrupskelis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 57.

⁶George Santayana, *The Life of Reason, or, The Phases of Human Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 7.

always-reliable reason on the other. Philosophers want arguments, it is believed, because emotion leads people to believe propaganda, and logic deals with “just the facts.” But if this is a false dichotomy, if all knowledge — as I will argue — involves the kind of imagination, creativity, and drama that stirs our ratio-emotional complex of cognition, then the problem for philosophers is to consider how rhetorical style functions in explanations so that we can better assess when it works well and when it leads us astray.

Literary Psychology and Santayana’s Method

While rhetoric can be intentionally misleading in cases where it means to distract an audience from relevant information, it can also be an essential element of storytelling that puts otherwise isolated facts into a meaningful context and inspires us to see things from a different perspective. Nowhere is this art more appropriate than in describing the experiences of other people. In *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, Santayana defines literary psychology, in a chapter by the same name, as “the art of imagining how [animals] feel and think”⁷ and traces its significance across several spheres of investigation, from behavioral (what he calls “scientific”) psychology and history to natural science more generally and especially to modern and contemporary philosophy. Because, as he claims, the lived experiences of others are not available to us directly as perceptual objects, we must interpret other people’s subjective lives by way of their words and actions, and this interpretive power depends on our own individual emotional capacities for sympathy and the varying scopes of our imaginations. As such, literary psychology is a kind of storytelling where we place others in the role of protagonist and imagine ourselves sharing their experiences. And while the ability to construct in our own minds what life might be like for another is most obviously relevant to the writer and reader of poetry, literature, or theatrical works (to which we might add the talents of the performer and the audience), literary psychology nonetheless plays an important role in less obviously imaginative and creative spheres.

The significance of literary psychology to so-called objective knowledge⁸ is perhaps most evident in the link between it and scientific psychology because the actions of others can only fully be understood by considering the ideas, beliefs, and feelings we take to be connected to those actions, whether through our inference or by reports from the subjects themselves.⁹ However, the kind of connection that takes

⁷George Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955. Reprinted from the 1923 edition.), 252. Hereafter, this work will be cited parenthetically according to the standard abbreviation “SAF.”

⁸I refer to objective knowledge as “so-called” not to deny the possibility of objective knowledge, but to avoid the usual connotation of objectivity, which assumes the existence of non-perceptival, trans-human knowledge.

⁹Eliminative materialism is one of the few theoretical positions in philosophy of mind to reject this claim and assert that folk psychology is misleading as an account of behavioral causes. But as it tends to be the outlier, and mainstream psychology seeks to explain beliefs and desires scientifically rather than eliminate them, I am treating my point as uncontroversial for the purposes of this paper.

place between “this art and that science” (SAF 252) is not limited to psychological practices; rather, it is fundamental to all accounting of human behavior (as represented today by so many social sciences) and even to explanations of natural activity more generally, though Santayana appropriately warns that the farther we get from animal life the more precarious our imaginative constructions are likely to be as indicators of truth. Although literary psychology’s modes of dramatic expression and sympathetic resonance distinguish it as a method from systematic observation of perceptually available objects, scientific understanding nonetheless depends heavily on our imaginative capacities. Not only do we need literary psychology to make sense of both sociological data and the meanings behind historically significant material — we impute beliefs and motivations to social groups and to writers of letters, contracts, treaties and other documents — the art lies at the very basis of our ability to make sense of the world, for “[e]ven 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” (SAF 258, my italics). The task of the scientist, indeed any knowing perceiver, is not limited to noting and recording observations; it involves at least two narrative activities: first, the observer takes what she perceives and constructs a coherent tale to make the phenomenon comprehensible, in other words, she places it within a relational context and a causal story; second, and just as fundamentally, in order for her observations to be more than private reverie, she must communicate what she has observed to others in a meaningful way. The articulation of experience depends on symbolic communication—the words and other signs that form survey results, historical analyses, laboratory reports, and, most relevant to philosophical purposes, both phenomenological descriptions and arguments for the necessary and sufficient conditions for a given concept. And the ability to share our perspectives on a given matter requires that we express ourselves in such a way that others will understand us; that is, that they will be imaginatively inspired to interpret our symbols in a manner similar to our own intent. Thus, Santayana notes “[discourse everywhere] is poetry about facts” (SAF 261). All communication is an effort to describe one’s own experience so that it may spark a similar experience in others, which means that all bodies of knowledge depend, in part, on the stories we tell to make sense of our worlds.

If it is the case that everything from our most basic efforts at communication to the most technical sciences involves the art of literary psychology, then the question arises how the method is implemented in philosophy, including Santayana’s own work. While I am hardly the first to raise the issue of Santayana’s methodology (Irving Singer’s book on Santayana’s literary qualities¹⁰ and Angus Kerr-Lawson’s piece on the absence of argument in Santayana’s writing¹¹ come to mind), I want to approach the problem from a somewhat different angle. I am less interested here in giving an account of Santayana’s style, whether through its relation to literature, say, or to philosophical analysis, or to categorize his method by comparison with

¹⁰ Irving Singer, *George Santayana, Literary Philosopher* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹¹ Angus Kerr-Lawson, “On the Absence of Argument in Santayana,” *Overheard in Seville* 22 (2004): 29–35.

other philosophers, and more curious to see how Santayana's claims about literary psychology, his own work, and the virtues of philosophy in general illuminate what we take ourselves to be doing as philosophers. These reflections can, in turn, suggest a rationale for the extant variety of philosophical methods and explore how philosophy connects with the different practices of literature, logic, and the natural sciences.

As an epistemological introduction to Santayana's ontology, *Scepticism and Animal Faith* amounts to an instruction on how to read his *Realms of Being*, a work of broad scope in an age where philosophy was becoming increasingly narrow, precise, and specialized. Santayana justifies his subject matter — an account of natural reality itself — by undermining the legitimacy of the quest for certainty (as do his pragmatist contemporaries) and characterizing his own philosophy as a poetic depiction of his sense of the world. He cautions the reader against taking his claims too absolutely and implies a multiplicity of possibly worthwhile perspectives, as where he states "I do not ask any one to think in my terms if he prefers others" (SAF vi), as well as the modesty of his own ambitions: "I am an ignorant man, almost a poet, and I can only spread a feast of what everybody knows" (SAF ix). To be sure, Santayana does not mean to denigrate himself in comparison to other philosophers; rather, his goal is to let the air out of what he takes to be their pretensions to certain knowledge. When he claims that "[t]he whole of British and German philosophy is only literature" (SAF 254) he means that accounts of experience cannot be the exact sciences that some theorists want them to be, for individual experiences are not publicly available things to be measured, and all experiences are had by individuals. Phenomenological investigation is the imaginative extension of one's personal reflections onto experience "in general," which Santayana points out does not exist but can only be thought as an abstraction. Logical claims based on this method are hasty generalizations indeed, but as narrative depictions of what life is like for a given thinker, descriptions we are invited to share in to the extent that we recognize the imagery, philosophies of experience can make for significant works of literary psychology.

If a philosopher of experience is a literary psychologist (some honestly, others dishonestly so), then it seems worthwhile to inquire in what way Santayana could be thought of as such a philosopher, especially because he compares himself to a poet and distinguishes his work from the natural sciences, to which he defers as the proper sphere for material knowledge. While Santayana does claim all of nature, rather than the "strain of experience," for his subject matter, his four ontological categories are, he insists, not metaphysical entities but "categories of things which [he finds] conspicuously different and worth distinguishing, at least in [his] own thoughts" (SAF vi). These categories — matter, essence, spirit, and truth — are his poetic terms for expressing his worldview, and he characterizes those who may agree with him as "friends in the spirit."¹² This notion of philosophical agreement as a kind of friendship — one limited in scope to like-minded fellows — distinguishes itself from the more frequent one in which a thinker aims to compel all others by the dint of his own logic. Santayana, in this way, shows himself to be more of a narrator

¹² Santayana, *Realms of Being* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), xvii. Hereafter, this work will be cited parenthetically according to the standard abbreviation "RB."

than a debater in the sense that his aim is to explain his viewpoint rather than to prove it is right. To be sure, Santayana provides his rationale for seeing the world as he does, but, as Angus Kerr-Lawson notes, he glosses over key elements where doubting philosophers looking to be convinced would insist on more evidence.¹³ Kerr-Lawson gives his own detailed account of why this style of argumentation fits Santayana's own epistemology and clashes with more pervasive strains, but just as importantly, these elisions help us to view Santayana as a kind of literary essayist and his narrative style as a reflection of what he takes the better aims of philosophers to be — exercises in self-knowledge:

By the philosopher . . . both the homeliest brew and the most meticulous science are only relished as food for the spirit. Even if defeated in the pursuit of truth, the spirit may be victorious in self-expression and self-knowledge; and if a philosopher could be nothing else, he might still be a moralist and a poet. He will do well to endow his vision of things with all the force, colour, and scope of which his soul is capable. Then, if he misses the truth of nature, as in many things is probable, he will at least have achieved a work of imagination. In such a case the universe, without being mapped as a whole in the fancy, will be enriched at one point, by the happy life enacted there, in one human focus of art and vision [RB, xvi].

As a good pragmatist, Santayana believes that our arguments for what we take to be the better analyses, categorizations, and narrative tales hinge on their consequences for our ability to lead fulfilling lives. Furthermore, as there are multiple possibilities for living good lives, there should also be multiple good characterizations. The philosopher's task is not to give the one right description of reality but to enrich the world with his own uniquely expressed perspective, hopefully one which is both sound and wise in that it does not fly in the face of experienced facts. The philosopher reflects on other fields, like science and literature, not in order to *do* science or to *write* literature, but to use their insights to attain greater understanding about life's meanings and to suggest reconstructions of meanings that can in turn influence the other fields.¹⁴ Philosophers are literary psychologists insofar as they imagine not only what other human beings feel and think but new and constructive ways for making sense out of what they experience.

Case Study: Narrative in Philosophy of Mind

As a way of thinking about the role literary psychology plays in something as seemingly impersonal as natural science, consider these two excerpts on scientific knowledge by Albert Camus and George Santayana, respectively:

[Y]ou tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain the world to me with an image. I realize . . . that you have been reduced to poetry. . . . So that science that was to teach me everything ends up in a

¹³ Kerr-Lawson, "On the Absence of Argument in Santayana," 29.

¹⁴ I do not mean to suggest here that one *person* has to play the role of the philosopher while other particular individuals are scientists or novelists, etc. This may too often be the case, but anyone who takes this kind of reflective stance in relation to her discoveries in other fields may be said to be functioning as a philosopher.

hypothesis, that lucidity founders in metaphor, that uncertainty is resolved in a work of art.¹⁵

And

[I]n that vast, vibrating, merciless realm of matter I am, as it were, a stranger on his travels. The adventure is exhilarating, and may be profitable, but it is endless and, in a sense, disappointing; it takes me far from home. I may seem . . . to have gained the whole world and lost my own soul [SAF 258].

Though in the original context each passage is intended to illuminate a somewhat different point, taken together, they refer to a relationship between knower and known in which the strange and inhuman is made familiar through poetic imagery, and the farther we venture from our accustomed perspectives, the more alien reality can seem to be. Whatever the world is like, it is not designed to conform to our sensibilities. Rather, in knowledge we bring our sensibilities to bear on an otherwise foreign, or at least indifferent, existence by painting pictures, spinning stories, and constructing homey metaphorical comparisons that align that existence with the scale of our common sense experience.

Given the notion that rhetorically inspired familiarity is an important component in the possibility of knowledge, it helps to examine ways in which the kinds of explanatory stories we tell affect the questions we ask and the answers we give. Narrative paradigms can be viewed as pragmatic successes and failures by the extent to which an explanatory story solves a given problem or blocks progress by introducing seemingly insolvable puzzles. As an example, I want to briefly consider the trenchant dualist-reductionist arguments in philosophy of mind, to show how the construction of nature as mechanism produces blind spots in our understanding, and to examine how the introduction of a different story, that of living organism, is changing the discussion in some circles.

Jennifer Hornsby, in discussing Richard Rorty's historical analysis of the Cartesian mind-body problem, notes that a problem common to substance dualists and monists alike is the acceptance of a physicalist view of nature: the dualist shows how mentality does not have physical properties and so posits a non-physical substance, while the monist rejects Descartes's mental substance as an incoherent concept and is left with his characterization of nature as a machine. The problem, in this case, is that the equation of the natural with the physical and the physical with the mechanical is not called into question as a problematic description of the natural world for the purposes of understanding consciousness as a natural phenomenon. Hornsby notes: "Resistance to a Cartesian view of mind need not be resistance to the whole idea of the phenomenon of mind, but only to a conception of the mental informed by a particular view of what the natural world can contain."¹⁶ In other words, we can have a wholly natural conception of the mind, that is, we can account for mental life without reducing it to physical mechanical properties if we alter our story of what sorts of things count as natural.

¹⁵Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), 15.

¹⁶Jennifer Hornsby, *Simple Mindedness: In Defense of Naive Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 41.

One philosopher who is currently making a case for a different kind of story about the mind in nature is Alva Noë. In support of what is being called the theory of “extended mind,” Noë notes that the attempt to reduce mind to brain is born of an uncritical acceptance that all rigorous science treats nature as a mechanism and that our subjectivity is a hindrance to a properly impersonal conception of nature. However, he notes, this is an incorrect characterization of the sciences, for they utilize different kinds of stories for different kinds of purposes, not all of which are found in or solved by physics. The solution to the so-called mind-body problem, he notes, lies in taking up a different perspective: “There is a way forward for [a science of the mind]. The solution comes when we recognize that there is a rigorously empirical alternative to mechanistic detachment on the one hand and mere personal intimacy on the other. This is the perspective of biology.”¹⁷ Objects of inquiry for the life sciences are organisms, and organismic behavior only becomes comprehensible when interpreted as the actions of beings with particular interests, that is, with some kind of intentionality. Physics and chemistry can help to explain *how* an organism achieves its goals but by themselves cannot account for *why* these activities are undertaken: Biology, in short, cannot reduce to physics. As Noë argues, “[y]ou can’t both acknowledge the existence of the organism and at the same time view it as just a locus of processes or physicochemical mechanisms. And once you see the organism as a unity . . . you are, in effect, recognizing its primitive agency, its possession of interests, needs, and point of view.”¹⁸ The physicalist story leaves something out of the explanation of nature that both science and common sense teach us is part and parcel of it. The philosopher of mind who wants to give subjective life a naturalist and non-reductionist account does not need to eschew science but to embrace a different scientific paradigm. Where the mechanistic story presents seemingly impenetrable problems for intentionality (philosophers are forced to posit new substances, declare commitments to mysterianism, or deny the reality of consciousness as significant in its own right), a story involving organisms with interests in self-preservation provides at least the rudimentary tools needed for seeing mind as a wholly natural phenomenon. This is not a rejection of the mechanical story, but an acknowledgement of it as a narrative schema that is useful for some purposes but not others. The issue here isn’t which is the correct account of nature, which one has transcended the human perspective and captured reality itself, but which is the right sort of narrative for the job, which one gives a satisfactory response to the kinds of questions that are posed.

As a final note, in rejecting the mechanistic notion of nature as an exact and literal account of reality we can make a further case for the role of literary psychology in natural science and for the general soundness of assuming the subjective lives of other beings, even though we cannot be certain of exactly what they entail. The problem of “knowledge of other minds should perhaps better be understood as a kind of moral commitment to other minds,”¹⁹ that is, as one of the meaningful assumptions we make that is confirmed by the world we inhabit and which makes social life among

¹⁷ Alva Noë, *Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009), 25–26.

¹⁸ Noë, 41.

¹⁹ Noë, 36.

sentient beings more worthwhile. The ability to imagine motivations for the actions of other living beings becomes a strength for doing science rather than a liability to it. We do need to be critically aware of our tendencies to anthropomorphize — we are well warned not to assume that everything that affects us thinks like us or is intentionally motivated — but at the same time, because there is no reason to assume nature is an automatistic machine, we do not need proof that humans are not zombies and animals are not robots in order to treat them as sentient beings with their own interests. In order to come up with useful stories about a world full of mechanisms and peopled with organisms, buffeted by forces and guided by intentions, literary psychology will be an indispensable asset in constructing sound theories and wise philosophies.

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Review of *George Santayana's Philosophy of Religion*

George Santayana's Philosophy of Religion: His Roman Catholic Influences and Phenomenology

Edward W. Lovely (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012)

Last December a welcome new book on Santayana's philosophy was published, *George Santayana's Philosophy of Religion: His Roman Catholic Influences and Phenomenology* by Edward W. Lovely (Lexington Books, 2012). Lovely's book invites a dialogue with philosophers of religion, as well as established Santayana scholars. He argues for an un-proclaimed but evident "phenomenological method" in Santayana's philosophy, and thoughtfully highlights its uniquely naturalistic account of spirituality that speaks more than ever to today's religiously inclined. Outside of contemporary fundamentalist religious factions (which, as Lovely acknowledges, Santayana's thinking wisely and justifiably condemns), Santayana's philosophy speaks to two crucial groups of the religiously inclined in contemporary life: those "disillusioned" by the mockery made of religion by political culture wars, and those religiously committed "who would find spiritual solace by drawing closer to the symbols and discipline of organized religion" (212). These features alone make Lovely's book worthwhile, and yet there are other respects in which his book ought to invite fruitful critical consideration from Santayana scholars.

As stated, Lovely's main objective in the book is to make a case for Santayana's "phenomenology," regarding which he provides interesting comparative suggestions, ones that offer many interesting possibilities for future consideration. The book's third chapter, in which the case is made, cautions that it is "only a beginning" and "a [future] more extensive scholarly effort is required (and invited) to rigorously define the nature of Santayana's phenomenological bent" (83). Lovely is careful to note that the evidence for phenomenological aspects in Santayana's thinking is "subtle . . . abbreviated," but is willing to submit the bold conclusion that Santayana's mature philosophy is an "unstructured phenomenology of the spirit" (118). Lovely reaches this conclusion by way of comparative associations between Santayana's conception of *essence* and of what he views to be kindred conceptions in the work of Whitehead, Peirce, Heidegger, and James. These interesting comparative exercises build into a fairly in-depth cross comparison of the thinking of Santayana and Husserl, wherein Lovely identifies the important differences and similarities in their respective treatments of the "intentional object" of consciousness. At one important point Lovely cites a passage from *SAF* that reflects Santayana's understanding of knowledge and intentional signification as it relates to the intuition of essences. Santayana's claim, readers of his philosophy will appreciate, is that there can never be "two givens" or two distinct essences present to intuition — intuition is pure in its solipsistic reduction of consciousness to the present moment, to a complete, bare present; any relational move on the part of consciousness that involves "comparisons of givens" is a move in the direction of *intent* — that is, in the direction of knowledge.

Lovely's interesting move is not only to connect this account of Santayana's with a crucial aspect of Husserl's notion of "eidetic intuition," but to use that connection as provocation to attribute to Santayana's philosophy a phenomenology — albeit an importantly different one from that of Husserl. Lovely takes cues from Anthony Woodward, and also from Herbert Spiegelberg whom he points out draws an "instructive parallel" between Santayana's ultimate skepticism and Husserl's phenomenological reduction. Both Santayana and Husserl conceive of the objects of consciousness — essences — as being incapable of recognition except through critical discrimination removed from the contexts of knowledge claims in natural world relations. For Santayana of course that critical discrimination points to the ultimately "untenable" posture of skepticism and the necessity of returning (with renewed understanding) to animal faith, whereas Husserl draws different conclusions (well summarized by Lovely). The similarities between Santayana's thinking and that of those Lovely compares are perhaps tenuous, but are enough, he contends, to point the way to establishing something like a phenomenology in Santayana's thinking.

The question of course is what sort of phenomenology? Admitting that his case is only provisional, and that much more work must be done to "fill the gaps," Lovely suggests that in order to find a suitable kin to Santayana's understanding it might be best to look at Heidegger's rejections and re-casting of aspects of Husserl's phenomenology. Heidegger, Lovely points out, rejects the idealistic transcendental attitude supporting Husserl's phenomenology, the very same that makes any comparison with Santayana's strongly naturalistic point of view highly problematic. Heidegger's "unstructured phenomenology," Lovely offers, according to which phenomenology "is more a general attitude toward thinking and 'seeing' than an exclusive method" may be the opening path to Santayana's own naturalistic phenomenology (118).¹

As to what makes Santayana's point of view "phenomenological" at all, Lovely relies strongly both on Santayana's notion of literary psychology and the related "pathetic fallacy" which alleges that even the most clear and distinct perceptions of natural realities are dramatic embellishments. These themes in Santayana's writings commit him to a notion of conscious experience (unsurprisingly) very much like that of William James, whereupon all of the material of consciousness is irretrievably impressionistic and yet, paradoxically, is the only access one has to truth and related claims of reason. Phenomenology, Lovely nicely defines, "seeks to recover that relationship between what Husserl would call *evidence* (*Evidenz*) and claims for truth, which are unattainable in the 'naïve' natural attitude" (108). Santayana's phenomenological method then, to the extent that one can be attributed to him in the absence of his having claimed to possess one, consists in his own attempts to recover the relation between dramatic consciousness (spirit) and its claims for truth.

Certainly, and as Lovely well acknowledges, such a phenomenology can be said to be at play in Santayana's earliest most important philosophic work, *The Life of*

¹I cannot resist here expressing my own interest in this line of connection. Independently of my reading of Lovely's book and in rather different sorts of contexts it has occurred to me that the ontological orientations of Heidegger and Santayana have much more in common than has been commonly assumed. This is a passing digression which I must yield to the remaining review.

Reason, a book confessed by the author himself to have been inspired by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.² The question is whether that same phenomenological approach abides throughout Santayana's philosophic maturity. To make this case Lovely relies very heavily, and it seems to me at points too heavily, on Santayana's "skeptical method." Here I shall just touch on this question concerning Lovely's analysis of Santayana's skepticism, before briefly identifying a few further interpretive curiosities that would be interesting to be able to discuss with the author.

For the most part, Lovely well recognizes the role of skepticism in Santayana. *SAF*: "There is little question that this Cartesian modeled exercise has a two-fold purpose for Santayana — that is, the anti-foundationalist obviation of the epistemological shortfall of the Cartesian process of skeptical reduction and dualistic model, and the extension of the method to the sole knowable discernment of *essence*" (58). By my reading this is correct, only it leaves out what to me is an equally important feature of Santayana's skepticism, one that seems to need greater emphasis than is provided in Lovely's larger account. It seems to me that Santayana's skeptical "method" in *SAF* and elsewhere is an ironic pose — one in which he is calling and raising the stakes of modernity. On the one hand, his intent, as Lovely recognizes, is to carry out the skeptical method Descartes put forth in directions and to conclusions that undermine foundationalist rationalism. But while skepticism, according to Santayana, leads to the discovery of essence, that consequence is, from the standpoint of Cartesian skepticism, something of an unintended benefit. The happy fact that skepticism is one of multiple "approaches" to essence belies the fact that it comes at the cost of dialectical retrenchment. As Santayana puts it in *RB*: "This approach to essence through scepticism is by no means the only one possible, even for a critic of knowledge. Scepticism can impugn only such knowledge as is a form of faith . . ." (RE, RB, 3).

It seems to me that Lovely sometimes conceives Santayana's skepticism less provisionally than it was intended to be, and to thereby over-estimate its relative importance in the scheme, especially, of Santayana's mature philosophy. Lovely puzzles at the fact that "On the one hand, [Santayana] would claim that philosophy has been too preoccupied with the problems of skepticism and on the other chose to fall back upon the skeptical method in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*" (57). Lovely's language here and elsewhere suggests that he detects an unresolved tension in Santayana's invocation of skepticism because at the same time as Santayana adopts it methodologically, he seems to want to be rid of it. In a related vein, Lovely equates Santayana's understanding of dialectical retrenchment with Husserl's "bracketing" (88). The latter suggests, I think somewhat misleadingly, that Santayana places a kind of supreme critical importance on skepticism (akin to that Husserl places on the *epoché*).

But to me Santayana's point about modern philosophy is that skepticism is a methodological misstep: "Strange," he writes on the matter, "that as modern philosophy transfers the visible wealth of nature more and more to the mind, the mind should seem to lose courage and to become ashamed of its own fertility."³

² See Santayana's "Preface to the Second Edition" of *The Life of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922).

³ George Santayana. "Locke and the Frontiers of Common Sense" in *Some Turns of Thought in*

Skepticism, Santayana argues at some length, is an “illiberal retrenchment” of thinking into subjectivity that sets philosophic criticism on an opposite path from that of reason and sanity about natural life. Anyone engaging modernity must therefore engage skepticism, but only as a mode of purgation setting one back on the path of animal faith. This feature of Santayana’s skeptical method raises significant challenges for those associating it unqualifiedly with Husserl’s method of *epoché*, challenges that I am unsure have been fully confronted by Lovely. (It would be very interesting to hear from a Husserl scholar on this point.) So, just to summarize the critical point for possible future consideration: to the extent that Santayana can be understood to invoke skepticism in his mature philosophy as a means of developing the naturalistic phenomenology to which Lovely wants to attribute him, I would think it necessary both to better clarify the exact role of said skepticism in Santayana’s philosophy, and to state with better precision the obviously different role it plays in his thinking than it did in modern philosophies, and also compared to Husserl’s method of *epoché*.

There are other interpretive curiosities in Lovely’s book one might raise for future discussion. One regards his interpretation of Santayana’s treatments of religious subject matter. Citing Santayana’s *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, *The Realm of Spirit*, and *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels*, Lovely characterizes Santayana as a “competent, albeit non-theistic, theologian” (186). This characterization is leveraged by multiple endorsements of H. T. Kirby-Smith’s take on “Santayana’s God” in a 2002 article of this *Bulletin* (“Santayana’s God”). The appeals to Kirby-Smith’s interpretation of Santayana are so exclusive that the reader cannot help wondering whether the case is somewhat strained. Granting, in any case, that establishing Santayana as a “theologian” is not Lovely’s main objective, the claim is unique enough to possibly warrant more support than is provided.

In another direction, though not unrelated, Lovely engages in a profitable struggle to convey Santayana’s understanding of spirit and spirituality, though this reader walks away probably as undecided as ever on the thorny question of whether Santayana advocates a specifically “spiritual life,” or whether by contrast he is content to gesture at various moments constituting the “life of spirit.” I doubt whether there is much at stake in settling the latter question, but it is one, as Lovely acknowledges in his book, that scholars such as Levinson, Kerr-Lawson, Lachs, and Brodrick have enlivened (intentionally or not) in different interesting ways. Lovely himself defers quite openly to Lachs’s interpretation, according to which “Every type of consciousness belongs in the realm of spirit, but only intuition free of intent or animal faith is truly spiritual.” (151, Lovely quoting Lachs’s *Animal Faith and Spiritual Life*, 268.) “Spirituality” according to Lachs’s reading of Santayana is the cultivation of unique moments of consciousness, those where consciousness is free of ties to the world. Is such spirituality a free play of imagination? Enraptured reverie? Aesthetic transfixion? Liberation from moral constraints? Deweyan consummatory realization? It appears to be all of these things, so those with a religious point of view insisting on a restrictively moral sense of spirituality are not going to find Santayana’s account satisfactory. This is the central issue for anyone trying to bring Santayana’s view of spirituality into conversation with contemporary sensibilities.

For me the most interesting and profitable discussion of this matter, particularly on the relation of morality to spirituality, has come from Thomas Alexander in the 2000 edition of this *Bulletin* in his piece titled "Beauty and the Labyrinth of Evil . . .". Alexander's article together with the accompanying response from John Lachs ("Spirituality Without Moral Concerns") bring into rich focus what is at stake in the question of Santayana's understanding of spirituality. Regrettably, though it speaks to issues directly of interest to Lovely, Alexander's essay is not discussed in his book.

Lovely's consideration of these matters occurs in what is arguably the most involved and ambitious chapter of the book, "The Coherent Nature of Santayana's Philosophy of Religion." Other than the noted omission, the chapter displays admirable attention to extant scholarly interpretations of related key features of Santayana's philosophy. In one important context Lovely appropriately highlights Santayana's "Ultimate Religion" piece composed for the tercentenary celebration of the thought of Spinoza. He acknowledges the respects in which Santayana's understanding of spirit diverges from Spinoza; Santayana accepts with Spinoza the "epiphanic" character of moments of spiritual realization, the achievement of a "new freedom" or liberation from the terrible powers of the world. And yet Santayana rejects Spinoza's account of the ultimate meaning of such moments: they are not fulfilled in any kind of intellectual love of God. The remainder of Lovely's chapter then struggles to articulate exactly what Santayana's view is as to the fulfillment of these spiritual moments. Lovely attempts to reconcile important features of Santayana's thinking that bear on the question of spirituality, including his strong moral relativism and his simultaneous insistence that a person is "spiritual when he lives in the presence of the ideal" (146, quoted by Lovely from Santayana's *Life of Reason*, 264). Are essences "ideals?" Are there "moral essences?" Lovely hedges somewhat on these questions (as I confess I would have to if pressed to answer them on behalf of Santayana satisfactorily). Lovely concludes that "*essences are ideal* (in a descriptive sense) in that in a 'pure' contemplation of *essences* . . . we are intuiting a 'formal' or 'ideal' reality" (147). Again, although there is much in this crucial chapter that is of significance to the advancement of the question of spirituality in Santayana's thinking, a more direct articulation of what is at stake in regards to the tradeoff between morality and spirituality, such as is found in the Alexander piece referenced, would have been helpful.

One could raise a few lesser quibbles about language, such as regards the author's multiple characterization of Santayana as "having a metaphysics." The issue, the author will no doubt concur, is that Santayana himself insists that he *has* no metaphysics. One gathers that Lovely recognizes this, but sees it as a kind of hyperbole (Particularly the famous potato peeler line from *SAF*)? If so, I diverge from him on that. This question is not however central to Lovely's aims in the book so I leave it as stated, along with other terminological questions I might raise, expecting that the Society meetings will find a slot to develop these important questions that Lovely excellently provokes.

There is much more for the sake of space I have left unconsidered in the present review. The richness and range of Lovely's book makes it ideal for an author-meets-panel discussion, one that would need to include an expert or two on phenomenology, Husserl, and/or Heidegger. Here I offer just a few final words of praise for

Lovely's book, each having to do with the fifth and final chapter, titled "Aspects of Santayana's Legacy to Religion in the Third Millennium." The chapter touches on a variety of themes related to its title, ranging from the case for "constructionist theology" in Santayana's thinking, to the relation of his thinking to process theology, to the implications of his epiphenomenalism considering contemporary advances in neuroscience. Lovely engagingly plays with different ways Santayana's thinking could be of relevance to our burgeoning age, characterizing it as a "delicate balance of orthodoxy and liberalism." He raises the interesting example in contemporary Roman Catholic culture of the "Cafeteria Catholic," apparently a facetious term for the practicing Catholic who rejects certain dogmas of the Church as untenable. The examples of such dogmas listed by Lovely fit the "liberal" side of the balance he claims Santayana's views would accommodate: "prohibition of women in the priesthood, personal confession, and prohibition of birth control." These are very interesting provocations. Could the phenomenon of the "Cafeteria Catholic" suggest an opening for Santayana's intermixture of love of religious symbolism and ritual, respect for orthodoxy, and meantime moral relativism? A worthy provoking question to be sure. Equally interesting and thought provoking, Lovely concludes his book with an association of Herman Hesse's vision of religion and the Santayanan religious outlook. That section could stand for significant expansion and may easily lend itself to a follow-up book.

It is refreshing to discover a new book on Santayana attempting to find areas of connection beyond those already established. If it does not accomplish this goal one cannot blame the author. Besides Santayana and American philosophy scholars, this book contains provoking insights of interest to scholars of the phenomenological tradition, of Husserl and Heidegger, and philosophy of religion.

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Richard Colton Lyon: 1926–2012

Richard Colton Lyon of Austin, Texas, passed away on December 11, 2012, at the age of 86. Lyon was born on June 20, 1926, in North Hollywood, California, and spent an idyllic boyhood in Vermillion, South Dakota. His father, Clarence, was a professor of speech and theater arts at the University of South Dakota. In 1939, when Lyon was 13, the family moved to Austin, a city that had always held an allure for Clarence Lyon.

Lyon graduated from Austin High School in 1943, and enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin. The young Lyon possessed a naturally deep and resonant speaking voice, and as a college freshman he was a radio announcer for KTBC, the new radio station in Austin owned by Lyndon Baines Johnson. In 1944, Lyon was drafted into the U.S. Navy, and during World War II he served as an Armed Forces Radio announcer. He returned to UT after the war, and in 1951 he completed his undergraduate studies in philosophy. He then received a Fulbright scholarship to study philosophy at Clare College at Cambridge University in England. On May 24, 1952, he married his sweetheart from Austin, Arline Denny McTee, at All Hallows Church by the Tower of London. Theirs was the first American wedding to take place at the church since 1797, when John Quincy Adams married Louisa Catherine Johnson.

It was during his time at Cambridge that Lyon first embarked on what would become his lifelong academic passion: the study of the life and works of George Santayana, the Spanish philosopher, essayist and poet. Lyon met Santayana twice, both times in Rome, and the two corresponded over the years. During his career, Lyon wrote a number of papers and books on Santayana, including “Santayana on America,” in 1968, and the introduction to the critical edition of Santayana’s autobiographical *Persons and Places*, in 1986.

Lyon received his master’s degree in 1956 from the University of Connecticut, Storrs, and was a Carnegie Fellow in American Studies at the University of Minnesota, where he received his Ph.D. in English in 1964. From 1962 to 1968, he was a professor of English at the University of North Carolina. He established the American Studies department at UNC. It was in Chapel Hill that he instilled in his family a love of college basketball, specifically the UNC Tarheels. He left North Carolina in 1968 to become the first Dean of Faculty at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. At Hampshire, he served as Dean of the college, and taught American Studies.

Lyon retired from Hampshire College in 1989, and returned to Austin, where he lived on Lake Travis, living out his days reading, writing, and enjoying life on the lake.

Lyon was the father of four boys, and he seldom missed an opportunity to take his sons on adventures small and large. In the latter category was a month of primitive camping on Waldren Island in the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington.

Yet above all, Lyon was known among colleagues, friends, and family as an intellectual’s intellectual. He was seldom without a book or newspaper in his hands, and when he lectured, he would often leave lay audiences grasping for the meaning

of his words. One legendary public address, a commencement speech at Hampshire College in the early 1970s, was analyzed for meaning by family and friends for many years afterwards.

He is survived by his wife of sixty years, Denny Lyon, of Austin. He was preceded in death by his sons, Christopher and Matthew. He is survived by his sons, Jeremy and Alexander, both of Austin, and three grandchildren, Weston, Michael, and Zoë.

JEREMY LYON

Memorial Minutes for Morris Grossman

Morris Grossman, Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Fairfield University, died on December 12, 2012, at the age of 90. He was one of the longest-standing members of SAAP. An early meeting of the Society was held at Fairfield, and there was a reception at Morris's Fairfield apartment—an occasion on which I first met the colleagues who became my friends over the 40-plus years I have been a member myself. Morris became one of the dearest of friends.

The facts of Morris's life are simple (though I would like to mention that in looking up these facts I discovered that one Morris Grossman was a well-known mobster in the early days of the twentieth century, killed in a mob hit; I think the contrast of this Morris Grossman and our colleague would have been one that amused him!). To return to our Morris, he was born in New York City and grew up in Manhattan; his dad was a physician, his mom a fluent speaker of Yiddish (a language whose music and nuances Morris always enjoyed.) Morris had a brother (recently deceased) and sister (currently residing in Pennsylvania) with whom he was very close. He continued his close family feelings with nephews and nieces, and enjoyed the warmth of this extended family—for the most part! He was educated at Stuyvesant High School, and received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from Columbia University. His Dissertation, defended in 1960, was “Santayana as Dramatist and Dialectician: A Critical Estimate Made with the Help of Unpublished Manuscripts.” This exploration of Santayana was the basis of much of Morris Grossman's later published works.

As Martin Coleman has already elegantly developed Morris Grossman's views of Santayana and has gracefully summarized Morris' philosophic leitmotif:

An undeniable thematic unity runs through the last forty years of Morris Grossman's work in which he explored the importance for philosophy, art, and life of preserving the tension between that which may be unified and that which is disorganized, random, and miscellaneous. He examined this tension in literature, artistic performance, economics, statecraft, and human rights; in religion, drama, sculpture, philosophical methodology, biography, and human attitudes toward mortality; in the work of Gotthold Lessing, Lewis Carroll, Peirce, Tolstoy, James, Sartre, and Beardsley; and most regularly in the work of George Santayana.

I shall not try to repeat Coleman's contribution. Rather I shall try to discuss Morris in other terms: contributor to American philosophy in so many ways, pianist, composer, lover of music and poetry, ironic and contrarian commentator, and extraordinarily generous friend.

Let's start with his wonderful, irritating, often self-deprecating irony. In a review of Richard Smyth's *Reading Peirce Reading*, Morris quoted Smyth saying “*It will be recalled* (Morris's italics) that Schiller's work was inspired by the failure of the French Revolution and by the great question which that failure posed to the friends of the revolution.’ (p. 275) Truth to tell, it had slipped my mind!”

As was typical of Morris, his ironic comment is part of a review in which the point made was both critical and supportive. He is irritated by Smyth's assumptions, but impressed by his work, and both views come out well in the review.

Morris Grossman commented on so many lesser thought-of figures, and enlarged our understandings in the process—remember his paper, at SAAP, on the power of the rhetoric of Gouverneur Morris in shaping the Constitution? I think it was the only time I remember Gouverneur Morris being discussed as a philosopher at our conferences!

Morris contributed many papers at SAAP, many reviews of books relevant to American Philosophy, many articles on American philosophers as well as articles on music, on musicians, on art, on morality, on reading, on irony, on interpretation. It was always interesting to read his material: sometimes irritating, as he intended; often a delight; always informative.

He was also an excellent pianist—taking great pleasure in music listened to and music played. He composed pieces, set some Emily Dickinson poems to music, conducted a choir on occasion, and thought deeply about the music he loved. His music was very much a part of who he was.

It was particularly delightful to have been his friend: unfailingly generous, helpful, and warm. And funny! When we were discussing the perils of growing old, Morris wrote me: “Maybe Proust had it right ... I have cookies, and I even have memories.”

We will long remember Morris Grossman, may he rest in peace.

MARJORIE MILLER

Delivered at the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, Saturday, 9 March 2013, at the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL CHECKLIST TWENTY-NINTH UPDATE

The items below will supplement the references given in *George Santayana: A Bibliographical Checklist, 1880–1980* (Bowling Green: Philosophy Documentation Center, 1982), prepared by Herman J. Saatkamp Jr. and John Jones. These references are divided into primary and secondary sources. Except for the book reviews and dissertations, the following articles and books are classified according to their years of publication. Readers with additions or corrections are invited to send these to Kristine Frost, Santayana Edition, Institute for American Thought, 902 West New York Street, ES-0010, Indianapolis, IN 46202–5157, USA, or by email to santedit@iupui.edu.

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

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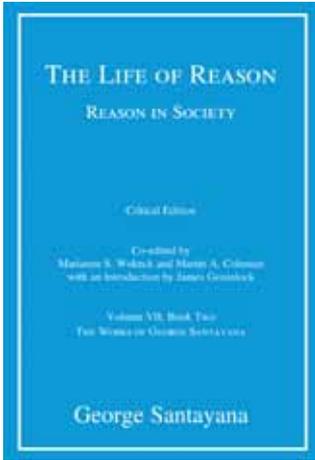
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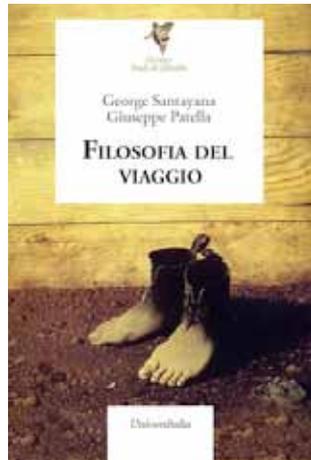
The Life of Reason: Reason in Society
George Santayana
The MIT Press
2013

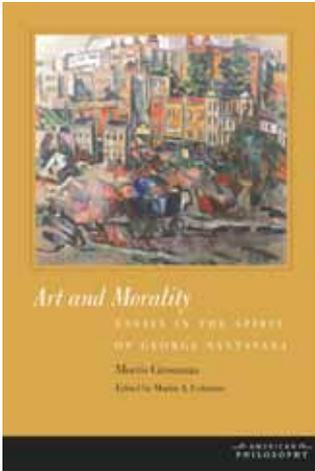
The critical edition of *Reason in Society*, Book 2 of *The Life of Reason*, Volume VII of *The Works of George Santayana* features an introduction by James Gouinlock and a scholarly apparatus including a list of variations found in the posthumously published one-volume edition of *The Life of Reason*.

Filosofia del Viaggio

George Santayana, Giuseppe Patella
Università di Roma—Tor Vergata
2013

Filosofia del Viaggio (Philosophy of Travel) presents for the first time in Italian Santayana's early essay "The Philosophy of Travel" along with an essay by Patella on what might be called Santayana's Travelling Philosophy. The book appears on the 150th anniversary of Santayana's birth and honors the cosmopolitan spirit of the philosopher's life and work.





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

Morris Grossman

Edited by Martin A. Coleman

Fordham University Press

2014

The guiding theme of these essays is the importance of preserving the tension between what can be unified and what is disorganized, random, and miscellaneous. It is the tension between aesthetic consummation and the press of morality to navigate conflicts and make choices. Grossman maintained that the best philosophy like the best art preserved this tension, and he read Santayana as exemplifying this virtue in his embrace of multiple perspectives.

Santayana at 150: International Interpretations

Edited by Matthew C. Flamm, Jennifer A. Rea,
and Giuseppe Patella

Lexington Books

2013

An anthology of authors from both sides of the Atlantic celebrating the life and thought of George Santayana and demonstrating the continuing life and relevance of his work. The book includes considerations of the major themes of his philosophy—materialism, naturalistic ethics, and aesthetics—and of the influence exerted on Santayana's work by his life circumstances and geographic surroundings, especially of Rome.

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

Manuscript Style

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Overheard in Seville

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

Some Abbreviations for Santayana's Works

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

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

