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Speaking Freely: Santayana on Philosophical Practice

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Abstract

George Santayana came into philosophy just as it was being professionalized in the United States. His profound distaste for what this meant was underwritten by his own conception of what a philosophical life might be like. For him philosophy was neither intellectual combat nor an ongoing assault on absolute truth. Rather, philosophy, like all arts, was an act of spirit —one whose aim was both self-expression and self-knowledge. Indeed, for him, self-expression carried on in the right attitude was perhaps the most important single avenue to self-knowledge. Considering Santayana's conception of a philosophical life provides an opportunity for us to reflect on what we have done to philosophical practices in the 125 years of professionalization and to imagine what we might do to improve in the coming years.

Keywords: Courage, Philosophy, Poetry, Self-Expression, Santayana, Spirit

Resumen

George Santayana se hizo filósofo precisamente cuando en Estados Unidos la filosofía se estaba profesionalizando. Su profunda aversión hacia lo que eso supuso se apoyaba en su característica concepción de lo que debería ser una vida filosófica. Para él la filosofía no era ni un combate intelectual ni un continuo asalto a la verdad absoluta. Como en el arte, la filosofía

era más bien un acto del espíritu —cuyo objetivo era tanto la autoexpresión como el autoconocimiento. En realidad para él la autoexpresión, llevada a cabo con el talante adecuado, era tal vez la única, y más importante, avenida hacia el autoconocimiento. Abordar la concepción santayaniana de la vida filosófica nos ofrece la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre qué se ha hecho con la práctica filosófica durante los 125 años de profesionalización e imaginar en qué se puede mejorar en los años venideros.

Palabras clave: coraje, filosofía, poesía, autoexpresión, Santayana, espíritu

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> The truth that is requisite for the honour and peace of spirit is not omniscience but the absence of delusions; and this, where humility exists, does not demand infinite information. [Santayana 2009, p. 403]

I begin with a confession which I offer as a simple fact and not as an apology. I am a reader of George Santayana's work but I am not a scholar of it. Thus I write here under the influence of his thought but not as his representative. Santayana's philosophical outlook has already been widely assessed by scholars such as John Lachs, Angus Kerr Lawson, Daniel Moreno, Martin Coleman and many others. My aim is simply to focus on some of Santayana's remarks concerning a philosophical life and to see where they might lead. Amidst the pseudo-clarities and cheap rigor of much twentieth century analytic thought, Santayana's writing stands out as a moment of redemption. As philosophy was professionalized in the United States and Europe, some thinkers—Bertrand Russell among them—set out to determine what was and what was not genuine "philosophy." What followed was an institutionalizing of these arbitrary designations of philosophical authenticity throughout the twentieth century. Santayana's work did not fit the mold; he came at philosophy a bit sideways. He did not seek the one system that might consume and subsume all others. Yet he wrote a system.

He did not reject truth altogether and argue for mere subjectivity. But he did argue that philosophy was a personal endeavor that was limited precisely because human animals live in finitude. The upshot is that he developed an outlook on the philosophical life that is remarkably different from the practices we professional philosophers have routinized in the last century—it is a refreshing outlook, one that brings a living energy back to thinking and writing. For this reason alone it is worth exploring as a way of casting light on some of the shortcomings of professional philosophy in the twenty-first century; it is also worth considering because it offers us an alternative way of thinking about what it is we do.

For Santayana, philosophy, poetry, music, and arts in general are features of what he called spirit. "This world of free expression," he said, "this drift of sensations, passions, and ideas, perpetually kindled and fading in the light of consciousness, I call the *Realm of Spirit*" [Santayana 2009, p. 152]. Our task is not to get in the way of our own free expression. We need to adopt an attitude and enable an environment such that spirit may enrich our lives and our cultures. Spirit also has the ability to liberate us to the extent that this is possible in our natural world. We must give rein to imagination and creativity, and we must, in our artistic expression, avoid being co-opted by whatever forces that might seek to control us. For example, liberation will not occur, Santayana claims, if the "poet still takes thought for what he shall eat or drink, what people will think of him, or how he may persuade them to reform their ways" [Santayana 2009, p. 364]. Philosophy, then, as one mode of spirit's agency, can be liberating and inspiring; but we must not let it be controlled by external forces. "The whole life of imagination and knowledge comes from within," Santayana argues, "from the restlessness, eagerness, curiosity, and terror of the animal bent on hunting, feeding, and breeding . . . [Santayana 2009, p. 100]. If we speak freely and honestly from within, we may have opportunity to add to the cultural history of philosophy. The philosophical exercise of spirit is ongoing and is never foreclosed by any particular philosophi-

cal story; we must each take up our own version of philosophizing. For Santayana, spirit "is continually being born again" [Santayana 2009, p. 361].

Santayana was a confessed materialist when considering substance. Out of this all else comes. We are animals with natural aptitudes—there is nothing mystical nor magical in the workings of spirit. Its exercise is simply one of the ontic functions of which the human animal is capable. Philosophy and poetry are from us; we create them; they do not fall from heaven. If they appear magical or miraculous, it is because they have hit upon some natural goods and beauties along the way. As Santayana notes, "Miracles belong to that natural sphere, and manifest the hidden sympathies and harmonies between its parts" [Santayana 2009, p. 369]. In philosophy, as in poetry, we should aim at finding, creating, and exhibiting these sympathies and harmonies. They provide insight, meaning, and value for our lives. Philosophy is thus for Santayana one mode of spirit's expression; it comes from the ego but, as I will develop later, should not be egotistical. To pursue the harmonies, we should not be engaged in the kind of intellectual entrepreneurship we have developed in the contemporary academy. This is but one of several faults Santayana found with modern and contemporary philosophy.

Santayana found philosophy as practiced in the west wanting in a variety of related ways. His first concern, a concern he shared with pragmatist Charles Peirce, was philosophy's insistence on a geometric or deductivist method. Both the Scholastics and the moderns began their philosophies with a priori claims and then employed some version of deductive logic to work out the details. This kept things clean and controllable, and ensured that nothing could be derailed by actual experience. Despite Hume's worries and despite the development of statistics in the nineteenth century, philosophy in Santayana's day—idealist and mechanist alike—was still focused on finding first principles from which to derive a conceptual scheme of the universe. Even Herbert Spencer's speculative evolutionism was ultimately a closed intellectual system that cared little for the facts

of experience. Santayana responded to this deductivist practice in *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, arguing that "it is not by deduction from first principles, arbitrarily chosen, that human reasoning actually proceeds, but by loose habits of mental evocation which such principles at best may exhibit afterwards in an idealized form" [Santayana 2009, p. 56]. In short, to ensure logical organization and consistency in their thought, philosophers turned away from their own experiences—the very experiences that philosophy purportedly set out to understand and describe. In Santayana's words, they "sinned against the facts" [Santayana 2009, p. 156].

Out of this commitment to deductivism, philosophers blindly followed a number of maxims that made little sense of human life and experience. One that Santayana believed to be a particular nuisance was Occam's Razor. As he saw it:

> *Occam's Razor,* for instance, or economy as a criterion of truth, is the weapon of a monstrous self-mutilation with which Biritsh philosophy, if consistent, would soon have committed suicide. Only if all ideas were condemned to be blind and ugly, like a secret telegraphic code, would there be a human advantage in having the fewest and baldest ideas possible . . . . [Santayana 2009, p. 244]

The economy of our world and of our experience is, as Henry Thoreau and many others have shown, complex, chaotic, and precarious. It does not fit the idealized models of the deductivists. As Martin Coleman aptly notes, for Santayana, "philosophical understanding is not a means to mastering the universe and cannot deliver us from human fatalities such as loss, disease, and death; nor is it the elimination of disagreement, because philosophy does not aim at a final doctrine or complete statement of the nature of things" [Santayana 2009, p. xlv].

Philosophies of deduction, by their very nature, leave us with skeletal structures of the cosmos and our place in it, and provide inevitably thin accounts of life, the universe, and their relations. As

William James suggested, conceptualizing the world sanitizes it and entails losing the perceptual thickness that characterizes much of our experience. Thus, by beginning with a priori principles and by logically deriving an account of the world from them, modern philosophers, and British philosophers in particular, created a speculative and inadequate account of human experience. This was one of the central concerns of the American pragmatists and of Santayana's teacher William James in particular. Peirce, James, and Dewey were interested in working with accounts of experience that were generated abductively from lived experience itself and that were not the result of logical machinations that avoided or cleaned up the litter of our actual existence. Santayana stated James's lesson on this score as follows:

> Even then what I learned from him was perhaps chiefly things which explicitly he never taught, but which I imbibed from the spirit and background of his teaching. Chief of these, I should say, was a sense of the immediate: for the unadulterated, unexplained, instant fact of experience. [Santayana 2009, p. 12]

And for James this unadulterated experience did not appear in logically neat forms and categories. In Santayana's words: "Existence, I learned to see, is intrinsically dispersed, seated in its distributed moments, and arbitrary not only as a whole, but in the character and place of each of its parts" [Santayana 2009, p. 13]. Finding ways to speak about this existence without resorting to abstracted and thin descriptions became one of Santayana's central philosophical tasks.

Santayana worked under the specific tutelage of James but he also worked under the general influence of R. W. Emerson. This led him to consider a further corollary of the deductivist approach to philosophy. Because he believed it to be experientially sound and basically common-sensical, Santayana adopted Emerson's notion that we humans are all "representative"—each of us has a view of

ourselves and a perspective on the cosmos but none of us has an all encompassing or final view. If we think carefully of philosophy in the twentieth century, we note a tendency of philosophers to operate with what we might call an arrogance of the present. Each new idea in philosophy, however minute, was supposed to replace or supersede some previous idea; each new idea arrogantly becoming the new absolute. Philosophy, like many other disciplines, became entrepreneurial in its practices with philosophers competing for some trivial sense of importance in the world of professional philosophy. At the level of systematic thought in modernity, each new system was intended to provide a final story, one that outdid or encompassed previous systems. This was true as well for the combat among idealists at the end of the nineteenth century. Santayana remarked in 1915 what still seems true in many cases: philosophers "crave totality in their views and authority in their sentiments. Nevertheless, their views have no totality" [Santayana 2009, p. 47]. In short, philosophers in the west have long been engaged in a fool's errand; it is precisely because we are finite and representative that our thoughts will never be absolute. As Santayana put it, "absolute truth is undiscoverable just because it is not a perspective. Perspectives are essential to human apprehension . . ." [Santayana 2009, p. 153]. Blinding themselves with a desire for totality and absolute truth, philosophers have missed the very heart of their task—to speak freely from their own perspectives and to express their experienced worlds as artfully as possible. As Coleman suggests, for Santayana, "any human production, no matter how penetrating and honest, will be partial relative to the vastness of the universe" [Santayana 2009, p. xli]. I would note here also that it is not the content of belief but the *way it is believed* that creates the appeals to totality and absoluteness. One can be an absolutist whether one is an idealist, a positivist, an empiricist, or a Heideggerian.

In the nineteenth century the deductivist focus on totality, absolute knowing, and analytic clarity led to a final concern for Santayana: the so-called "scientizing" of philosophy. As philosophy

and western culture generally turned to science for "truth" and began to relinquish attachment to deductivist systems, they did not relinquish a quest for absolute certainty. Despite science's abductive and statistical approaches to inquiry, and despite the inherent fallibility of the human inquirer, many believed science could still yield absolute or final truths concerning the cosmos. The telling irony of this shift from deduction to science was that confirmation theorists well into the twentieth century were still trying to squeeze certainty of knowledge out of inductive methods. Perhaps the deathknell of this way of thinking was sounded by A. J. Ayer when he announced in the 1930s that by the end of the twentieth century most philosophical problems might be fully and finally resolved. Santayana never denied the efficacies of science but he clearly noted the scientizing of philosophy as a fundamental illusion: "Philosophy fell into the same snare [as history] when in modern times it ceased to be the art of thinking and tried to become that impossible thing, the science of thinking [Santayana 2009, p. 105]. Moreover, the scientizing simply furthered the British empiricist development of pseudo-experience such that,

> the most pertinent effect of this appeal of science to a romantic psychology was the *hypostasis of an imagined experience*, as if experience could go on in a void without any material origins or occasions, and as if the entire course could be known by miracle, as the experiences of the characters in a novel are known to the author. [Santayana 2009, p. 106]

In the end, Santayana relied neither on a priori, deductive systems nor on inductive inquiry of a scientific sort to carry on a philosophical life. He simply attempted to return philosophy to the art of thinking where one could speak freely about the relations of life and world, but speak without appealing to or claiming finality or absoluteness. The conditions for this art are what I turn to next.

If philosophy is not a competition to provide a final systematic picture of the world, what is left to do? Santayana gave answer at

length in his essay "Philosophical Heresy." One way to become a philosopher

> 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.
>
> The first requisite for such a philosophy would be to renounce all claim to be a system of the universe . . . . It would concentrate all its attention on personal experience, personal perspectives, personal ideals. [Santayana 2009, p. 47]

Santayana's use of "confession" here is instructive. Contemporary philosophers for the most part play the role of "professors"— expounders of truths that will eliminate or contravene competing views. Professors, as a matter of habit, speak at or to people; they generally do not listen well. Philosophical confessors speak with others forthrightly about what they feel and think. Confessing requires the very sincerity that Santayana finds rare among philosophers. To confess is to "come clean"— it is not to convince someone of the superiority of one's own views. Thus, becoming philosophical on Santayana's terms requires a deep shift in attitude and orientation. Poets and philosophers alike must begin *in medias res*, just where they are, and our pursuit of or interest in truth must be engaged with an awareness and acceptance of our inability to reach any finality. Santayana described his own approach to philosophy as follows:

> 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. [Santayana 2009, p. 51]

Coleman nicely describes Santayana's notion of philosophy as "a sense of the universe and the ways of human living" [Santayana 2009, p. xlv]. This may involve a "system" of thought but only so far as that system is a feature of one's personal artistry. The aim, as Coleman reminds us, is "sincerity rather than omniscience" [Santayana 2009, p. xli]. This sincerity must underwrite the art of self-expression that Santayana identified with a philosophical life. And self-expression, as we noted, must engender self-knowledge, and it should provide enrichment for one's own and for one's culture's life. Instead of trying to convince the world of the absolute truth of one's own views, a philosopher should look to speak freely in the hope of finding kindred spirits and enriching their lives as well as her own.

> By the philosopher, however, both the homeliest brew and the most meticulous science are only relished as food for the spirit. Even if defeated in pursuit of truth, the spirit may be victorious in self-expression and self-knowledge; and if a philosopher could do 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. [Santayana 2009, p. 155]

As the art of thinking, philosophy should be seen in the light of other arts. Most of us are content, for example, with our shared affinities for jazz, classical, country, or rock and roll music in their various species. And most often we look for what is insightful in various genres of painting; we don't just say that impressionism, for example, is truer than expressionism. Whatever our life tasks, most all of us enrich our daily lives with music and arts of various kinds—they provide us interest, meaning, and orientation. Santayana thinks of philosophy similarly and considers the philosopher's finite life in this vein:

> The function of mind is rather to increase the wealth of the universe in the spiritual dimension, by adding appearance to substance and

> passion to necessity, and by creating all those private perspectives, and those emotions of wonder, adventure, curiosity, and laughter which omniscience would exclude. [Santayana 2009, p. 154]

In his preface to *Realms of Being*, Santayana gave account of his own philosophical life. It is notably and radically different from how most professional philosophers would describe their vocation.

> As for me, in stretching my canvas and taking up my palette and brush, I am not vexed that masters should have painted before me in styles which I have no power and no occasion to imitate; nor do I expect future generations to be satisfied with always repainting my pictures. Agreement is sweet, being a form of friendship; it is also a stimulus to insight, and helpful, as contradiction is not; and I certainly hope to find agreement in some quarters. Yet I am not much concerned about the number of those who may be my friends in spirit, nor do I care about their chronological distribution, being as much pleased to discover one intellectual kinsman in the past as to imagine two in the future. [Santayana 2009, p. 156]

This is a decidedly different notion of human philosophical endeavor than the one that developed among idealists in the late nineteenth century and that governed the professionalizing of philosophy in the twentieth century. The APA notably disallowed discussions of philosophy of education in its initial meetings because it was not considered "real" philosophy. In more recent years similar judgments have been made against environmental philosophy, business ethics, and even the work of Heidegger and William James. On Santayana's view there is no talk of excluding some folks as non-philosophers; there is no attempt to compete with others for an absolute perspective even though criticism is one feature of philosophy; and there is no talk of winning or losing some contest for the title of "most important philosopher." For Santayana, philosophical criticism must always come from some place in particular; we can-

not operate as gods. To critique another's work, one must have a perspective. As we noted, the absolute standpoint is not a perspective, and surely not a perspective achievable by a human animal.

The shift in attitude Santayana suggests is radical and remarkable. Because she must begin *in medias res* the philosopher must work with the common sense of her day. The virtue of common sense is that it tries to address a wide range of human experiences and to some extent has been tested by cultural histories. Thus, as did Peirce, Santayana placed more trust for our lives in common sense beliefs than he did in specialized and narrow philosophical outlooks:

> I think that common sense, in a rough and dogged sort of way, is technically sounder than the special schools of philosophy, each of which squints and overlooks half the facts and half the difficulties in its eagerness to find in some detail the key to the whole. [Santayana 2009, p. 51]

Such have been, for example, the battles between nominalism and realism, idealism and naturalism, and rationalism and empiricism. Santayana preferred that we stick to our existential facts in our thinking even if this leads us to contradiction and confusion on occasion. His "eclecticism," as he put it, "is not helplessness before sundry influences; it is detachment and firmness in taking each thing for what it is" [Santayana 2009, p. 156]. Meeting the facts was for him a better move than making everything work neatly in a speculative world. The competing outlooks should be part of our palette but no one of them should govern our thinking in an unreflective way. Philosophy begins not as a special science but as the most general engagement with the relations between human life and its natural environment.

Because of this existential origin for philosophers, we must also be good perceivers of the everyday. We must look at ourselves and what goes on around us with candor and clarity. But this, Santayana notes, takes much more courage than we might imagine. Human

animals find it easy to lie to themselves—or simply to repress their worries—in order to keep things stable and untroubled. To allow our spirits to speak freely, we must relinquish, to the extent we can, our ego's interests and fears, and simply face the facts as we live them. It is in this sense that for Santayana "humility, piety, is a prerequisite for spirituality" [Santayana 2009, p. 370]. Consider the absurdity of thinking that to be an "important philosopher" in any age is a truly significant feature of the history of the cosmos. Being clever, witty, sharp, and quick on one's feet are not the crucial criteria for a philosophical life. Being receptive to the phenomena of experience, being unpretentious, and being courageously honest about oneself and one's world are the crucial criteria.

Santayana well understood that meeting these criteria is not easy. Perception and expression require discipline and attentiveness. In all the modes of spirit's activity we must learn to pay close attention. We should not let our habituated egos filter what we might learn; the philosopher must clear his "mind of cant and free it from the cramp of artificial traditions" [Santayana 2009, p. 52]. However, letting things run too freely—being inattentive—is also a way of being out of control. Santayana took a middle road. "The business of the philosopher," Santayana maintained, "is to be a good shepherd of his thoughts" [Santayana 2009, p. 155]. We perceive and speak freely neither by dominating our thoughts nor by letting them pass chaotically, but by disciplined and honest attentiveness to them as well as to the feelings and emotions that accompany them. "Only a long discipline," Santayana urged, "can avail in most cases to smooth out all the sophistry and banish all pride, so that undisturbed by the devil, spirit may deploy all its notes and all its tints in a new springtime of inspiration" [Santayana 2009, p. 364].

Santayana would have the philosopher speak freely with both humility and discipline. But speaking freely must also include the ability to express oneself as fully as possible. From his perspective, in disallowing poetic speech the habits of professional philosophy have generally deterred or denied this capacity for full expression.

Philosophers are trained to write in stilted ways that, so it is argued, yield clarity and concreteness of expression. And indeed there are times when this sort of language is better. The fact is, however, that philosophical writing often lacks concreteness and it gains abstract and stipulative clarity at the expense of depth and thickness of description. In short, such writing is designed *not* to yield full expression of our lives and the world. It is designed to create the very skeletal structures of system that we discussed earlier in relation to deductivism.

Santayana's answer is not merely to add more clauses and qualifications. Rather, he rejects the western assumption that there is a fundamental opposition or quarrel between philosophy and poetry. For him they are continuous practices and are both features of spirit. Just as Emerson argued regarding Plato, Santayana maintains that philosophers may also be poets as they philosophize. Indeed, he suggested that to adequately express themselves, they need to have a poetic dimension. The so-called quarrel is supposed to have begun in Plato's *Republic*. In response, Santayana asked the obvious question: "Why did Plato, after banishing the poets, poetize the universe in his prose?" His answer was that only poesy can fill the gaps in our philosophical outlooks; Plato reintroduced poetry,

> Because the abstraction by which the world of science and of practice is drawn out of our experience is too violent to satisfy even the thoughtless and the vulgar; the ideality of the machine we call Nature, the conventionality of the drama we call the world, are too glaring not to somehow be perceived by all. Each must sometimes fall back upon the soul; he must challenge this apparition with the thought of death; he must ask himself for the mainspring and value of his life. [Santayana 2009, p. 272]

The language of linguistic analysis and subsequently of analytic philosophy in general is designed to sterilize, to remove feeling, intuition, emotion, and the vague details of life. This was seemingly

the only way one could handle "true" description of the universe. We supposedly needed propositions with delimited terms and designated operators. Metaphor leaves too much unstated and implied for the analytically trained mind. Needless to say, however, even the most positivistic thinkers must come to the use of metaphor; it usually just appears as stilted poesy or as a moment of cleverness in philosophical treatises. Even if metaphor leaves us with some confusion, we have ways of assessing it:

> poetic confusions are spontaneous in a candid mind. They may be corrected by science and by logical analysis; but it would be a foolish philosophy that should ignore the continuities and analogies that run through the universe and that at once impress the attentive poet. [Santayana 2009, p. 350]

Santayana would have the philosopher deploy all of her poetic abilities, honestly and humbly, to help color in the skeletal world established by our logical and systematic thought-structures. Poetry allows philosophical expression to return more closely to our perceptions. The poet, Santayana says,

> Dips into the chaos that underlies the rational shell of the world and brings up some superfluous image, some emotion dropped by the way, and reattaches it to the present object; he reinstates things unnecessary, he emphasizes things ignored, he paints again into the landscape the tints which the intellect has allowed to fade from it. [Santayana 2009, p. 269]

Modern philosophy operated with a compartmentalized psychology where reason was to set up shop in isolation from feeling and emotion. In contrast, for Santayana, thinking and feeling are continuous features of spirit and not only *can* work together but also *should* work together. Feeling gives body to thinking; and thinking gives discipline to feeling. In terms James often used, poetry returns

the thickness to our discussions of experience. As Santayana saw it: "the first element which the intellect rejects in forming its ideas is the emotion which accompanies the perception; and this emotion is the first thing the poet restores" [Santayana 2009, p. 270]. In the end, Santayana calls on those of us who would like to philosophize to drop our fears of social acceptance and speak honestly about what we see and feel. Perceiving ourselves honestly requires both courage and discipline; so also does expressing ourselves. We have become entrapped in what he calls our "parrot beliefs"—beliefs, and practices, we inherit and fail to consider reflectively. We are intimidated by fears of not living up to others' work and of being socially (professionally) excluded or marginalized. Such are the un-freeing traits and habits we must overcome; and the more "professional" we become, the more these pressures affect us. We have come to a point where we have allowed single dogmas to dictate to the culture what is and what is not "philosophy." Consider, for example, the current use of the Philosophical Gourmet Report in "ranking" philosophy programs; Santayana, I can imagine, would find humor in this. As professionals, we have mechanized our spirits and confined them to distorting ways of expressing ourselves. Nothing could be worse for Santayana than this: "Art, like life, should be free, since both are experimental" [Santayana 2009, p. 314]. Such an attitude shift in the world of philosophy would undoubtedly open up a flood of interesting ways of seeing the world. They would not all be "good" just as not all jazz is good—but we would have a much richer world of thought with which we might engage. And the freedom to speak might provide the courage to express: "with inner security comes a great inner clearness. We may now become aware of the world to any depth, in any degree of complexity" [Santayana 2009, p. 406].

Whether we agree with Santayana, it is time we read him carefully and seriously. He has put his finger on much that has gone wrong with philosophy in the last 150 years. The philosophical life should be one of self-expression and self-knowledge; it should also be an inspired and inspiring life. Philosophy is one of the human animal's

most natural and enriching activities. To compartmentalize it and make it a game for insiders to play is an abomination. If others in our culture think that philosophy is a marginal and tedious discipline, it is largely because we have made it so. Santayana, at the very least, offers us a road back to making philosophy interesting — and perhaps relevant — in the world of human experience. His road is one upon which we should each challenge ourselves to speak freely and fully about the world we encounter.

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