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Concrete Universal
Exemplarity's Method, Ontology, Pragmatics, and Poetics (excerpts)

Javier Gomá

Translated by Joseph Rager

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Observatorio de la lengua española y las culturas hispánicas en los Estados Unidos / Observatory of the Spanish Language and Hispanic Cultures in the United States
2 Arrow Street 4th fl., Faculty of Arts and Sciences - Harvard University. Cambridge, MA 02138 – USA
http://cervantesobservatory.fas.harvard.edu
info-observatory@fas.harvard.edu

INTRODUCTION

Considered by some to be the Ortega y Gasset of the 21st century, **Javier Gomá Lanzón** (b. 1965) is a Spanish philosopher, writer, and essayist. His first book, *Imitación y experiencia* [Imitation and Experience], won the 2004 Spanish National Literature Award for non-Fiction. As a public intellectual, he has contributed to numerous newspapers, magazines, and cultural supplements, including *El Mundo*, *La Vanguardia*, *Nueva Revista de Política*, *Cultura y Arte*, and *El País*. As of 2024, he holds the Professorship of Exemplarity at the Spanish CUNEF University in Madrid.

This text—excerpted from his book *Universal concreto. Método, ontología, pragmática y poética de la ejemplaridad* and translated here with the title "Concrete Universal: Exemplarity's Method, Ontology, Pragmatics, and Poetics"—demonstrates both the breadth and depth of Gomá's work, as well as the distinctive writerly style he has cultivated across genres. Gomá describes this book as the one he "always wanted to write," and, in it, he argues against the increasing empiricism of philosophy, embracing instead its literary character as he revisits the field's two fundamental questions: What is there in the world, and what do we do with what there is?

This translation presents two integral sections from the book's first chapter, as well as the work's full table of contents, inviting intrigued readers to continue thinking alongside Gomá. The included sections—"Literary Philosophy" and "Worldly Philosophy"—reveal philosophy's purpose, tracing its origins and evolution in the Western world, its relationship to the literary canon, and its ideal reader: *you*, who is worldly, who lives in the world and is of the world. Gomá addresses all of us who have felt, at some point or another, seized by a creative energy and wondered what to do with it.

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ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Joseph Rager is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He received his A.B. in Romance Languages & Literatures and in Linguistics from Harvard University and worked previously as a Research Assistant at the Observatorio of the Instituto Cervantes at Harvard University. His current research interests center on the body, the senses, and reason in 20th-century Spain and France. He is also an avid baker, runner, tennis player, and translator.

josephrager@berkeley.edu

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PART ONE. METHOD

Before expounding the philosophy of exemplarity's content, this book's object of study, it is necessary to declare the class of writing that said philosophy exercises among the variety of literary forms and genres in which philosophical thought has been expressed throughout the course of its long history.

From the first: the philosophy of exemplarity is literary, worldly, and systematic, and it elects ingenuity as its method.

Literary Philosophy

At philosophy's heart, two very different spirits have historically coexisted in permanent struggle: a literary spirit and a scientific one.

The philosophy of exemplarity openly declares itself literary and, beyond that, sustains that philosophy, the best part of it, is nothing other than literature, so the right thing would be to forever abandon the dreamlike aspiration of being scientific, because every time a philosophy has tried to emulate science not only has it failed, but it has betrayed its true nature.

There was a time at the beginning of its history when the name *philosophy* was given to an all-encompassing wisdom that addressed all fields of knowledge of that era. Even in the 4th century A.D., Aristotle could author treatises on the most disparate subjects: logic, rhetoric, metaphysics, ethics, politics, poetics, history, physics, biology, meteorology, psychology. Philosophy was, then, the primary science, and the fundamentals of all possible thinking were fixed in it. Later, starting with the Renaissance, disciplines became more specialized and, having freed themselves of philosophy and theology, the modern sciences were born, autonomous in the field that constituted their specific subject, which compelled philosophy to redefine its essence and take up a new position in the general system of knowledge.

Philosophy has always looked to science with admiration, fascinated by its exactitude, its systemic coherence, the predictive method and character of its laws, which

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must—this is incontestable—be sensitive in some way to objective and public demonstration. Only the statements that overcome the test of rational verification will be considered scientific. The laws of the empirical sciences, for example, must be validated in the laboratory or via experiment, and any person could test them, provided they took the trouble to follow the given conditions or protocols of those same laws of verification. Composed of more and more precise proofs, science progresses, understanding accumulates, and science's conclusions are able to explain the world better and more thoroughly than before. The notion of progress, along with the humility with which this controversial status ought to be used today, is generally applicable to scientific development. No one, except a historian of the sciences, cares about the state of molecular biology thirty, forty, or a hundred years ago. For science, which always looks to the future, the most interesting is found in the most recent, and each new advancement, which corrects or overturns the previous state of the discipline, condemns the past to archeology.

In contrast, let us now observe what happens with literature. It has been pointed out that in the sciences the moment of truth is in its verification. Having said that, does anyone know if at any point the great masterpieces of literature—*The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, or *War and Peace*—were verified? Does some procedure exist to objectively measure their exceptional quality? We know the answer, no? Then where does their truth lie?

Out of a lack of other, more exact evidence, the only way to know a literary work's excellence is by attending to its social reception in the very-long term. We call a book a classic if its reading, according to unanimous opinion, is fertile and meaningful and years and even centuries later continues as such into the present, since a classic behaves like a constant contemporary, not unlike those perpetual snows of the highest mountains that never melt even in the summer heat. Literature's truth stems from the tradition-woven consensus regarding a work's perfection and, by extension, regarding its unyielding timeliness. In sum, what the laboratory and experimentation represent for science is, for literature, carried out in a written work's continued and sustained applause over the course of many generations.

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It follows that, in the world of Letters, the category of progress does not apply as it does in the sciences, so much so that no one would think of entertaining—to mention a few literary works of epic nature—the claim that Tolstoy's *War and Peace* substitutes Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or that this poem replaces Dante's *Divine Comedy*, nor the latter Virgil's *Aeneid*, or that Virgil's epic improves Homer's *Iliad*. Literature is not cumulative; nor do more recent texts, by grace of being recent, possess any distinct value. Rather, it is not unheard of for the first instance of a literary genre to mark the genre's zenith, as befell the Homeric epic, taken afterwards as the epic's insurmountable paradigm. The passing of time conspires in support of the canon's masterpieces, which (when they are truly masterpieces) enjoy a constant vitality and enormous symbolic potential no matter how much time has elapsed since they were written. What's more, not only are the oldest not of lesser quality than the more modern pieces, but—quite the opposite—they benefit from a favorable assumption because they have enjoyed the approval of a larger number of people over a longer period of time.

And philosophy behaves like literature. If no one has empirically attested the works of Homer, Virgil, Dante, Milton, or Tolstoy, then neither have the philosophical theses of Plato, Aristotle, Saint Thomas, Locke, Kant or Nietzsche been validated. In both cases one finds an absence of scientific proof. In the end, philosophy is not different from literature, and, by extension, it takes up with the novel, poetry, and theater, who share in their defiance toward being ensnared by the impersonal laws of a science that—alien to the creative person's imaginative universe—limits itself to studying nature's repetitive phenomena. In philosophy, what matters is not science's plausibility, but rather the applause of literature.

Conceptual literature: This is the most appropriate definition of philosophy's essence, where "literature" is a noun and "conceptual" an adjective. Having said that, in the collocation "conceptual literature," the adjective is far from superfluous, since it fulfills the important function of delimiting the very genre of this literature via contrast with other preexisting ones. What is specific to this class of literary works is, to put it in Hegelian terms, the work in the concept. Neither poetic verse, novelistic narrative, nor

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theater scene, it deals with the ordered presentation of a body of abstract and universal concepts, the linguistic translation of the author's particular worldview.

With the passage of time, the more persuasive worldviews are accepted: those that offer the reader a more convincing meaning, those that may seem more true. Alien to a notion of truth as corresponding with a statement about the world (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*), philosophy places the most importance on the veracity of propositions, understood here as being validated by a conscience that assess what it views as reasonable, believable or plausible. There is no place in literature for the curse of the seer Cassandra: To behold truth but lack the persuasion needed for those around her to believe. In the long run, truth and veracity always coexist, since true philosophy unabashedly wipes the slate of that body of supposedly esoteric and private knowledge reserved as inaccessible but to the few. Indeed, philosophical thought permits an ordered sequence in its history of doctrines, which successively gain validity for the strength of their rhetorical argumentation—and in some posterior moment lose strength when the community withdraws the intimate backing that they first lent out—without anyone having ever proved their empirical certainty or, in the end, having demonstrated their miscalculation. Despite that loss of acceptance, if in their finest hour they managed to grasp and give shape to an invariable aspect of the human condition (Plato's idealism, Aristotle's realism, Epicurious's life knowledge, Pyrrho's skepticism), philosophical doctrines—though the schools their founders create expire—often continue to be worthy of constant meditation, as happens by definition to every masterpiece.

The corollary may seem perplexing to some: today the philosophical works that we read best and most fruitfully (because even today they maintain a timeliness that excites us, questions us, and yields food for thought) are those that were composed with the greatest faithfulness to their literary essence, whereas other works that took pains to seem scientific have lost interest, have left the canon, and have gladly been handed over to the specialists. The literary is always youthful; the scientific grows old. The scientific takes up the latest; the literary takes up the always.

With great pleasure we read early and middle Plato, that artist of philosophical

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prose. Late Plato, literarily drier, tires us. The Aristotelian treatises that have retained their vitality are the humanistic ones—*Poetics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, *Metaphysics* or *Politics*—while those on scientific themes—*Analytics*, *Animals*, *Physics*—lay buried in an archeological dig site for forgotten ideas that only interest researchers. Seneca's *Dialogues*, *Consolations*, and *Letters from a Stoic* are still bestsellers while no one reads his *Natural Questions* about issues of cosmology and meteorology. Among the modern philosophers Kant is a genuinely literary author possessed by a poetic *ethos* of the first order in many moments of his works. The surplus of his writings—which threatens to quench the heat of his essential philosophical intuition, the marked-down pseudoscientific that obstructs sensible comprehension and exhausts instead of seducing—lies in that spurious Kantian desire to be the philosophical Newton, which at times shrouds his poetic vision in tedious technical apparatus. The contemporary reader of German philosophy must wade through the frigid waters of his would-be precision—which, emulating 18th-century science, besmirches so many of the passages in his books—to be able to enjoy the strength and power of his efficient prose. Naturally, what has been said, by way of example, about Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and Kant can be said too about other authors of the West's great philosophical tradition.

It is well known: anyone can paint on canvas, write on paper, sculpt rock, but those materials do not warrant the title of artist to those who use them. Art does not take place but with an ultimate cause that lets loose the creative process of a work: we refer to this cause as a *calling*.

A *calling* responds to that question of why one would dedicate the better part of the day, most of the days in a year, and the best years of one's life to something that no one asked for and, on top of it all, has no purpose. A work of art demands from its creator an exorbitant strength to stand the slow time inherent to true art, and only those with a calling have the necessary patience to withstand it. The phenomenon constitutes an objective degradation for those who suffer it insofar as it involves the mobilization of all the intellectual, volitional, and sensorial faculties of a person in a sole direction, only one among the many that life has to offer; yet, in exchange for that vital anomaly, the affected

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person gains an immense concentration of energies that imbue him with the courage and patience to accept the privations that are inherent to his condition.

A calling is composed of two elements: *visio* and *missio* (vision and mission).

In the first place, vision. Our experience of reality is fragmentary, incomplete, and an understanding of its significance never comes from the partial, provisional or precarious. It resembles a fifty-piece puzzle with only ten pieces put into place—inadequate to guess the image that forms once the game is up: a waterfall, a tree, a pyramid, a city, whatever it may be. We call artists those who, by some mysterious inspiration, complete with their imagination the forty pieces experience is missing and, as if all fifty pieces were already placed, are moved by the resulting vision that assembles the disorganized plurality of the fragments and gives them unified meaning for the first time. The vision, mentally anticipated by the artist before it exists in reality, strikes his conscience and enamors his heart, now captivated by the perfection that illuminates his fantasy.

Whoever has seen that ideal image feels within him the urgency to produce an object that materializes it to avoid that, existing only in his consciousness, it might slip away with time or disappear entirely. This production in ancient Greek is called *poiesis*, which designates the creation of an artistic object without any utilitarian function, oriented exclusively toward giving consistency, coherence, and persistence to the principle of *visio* and, upon fixing it to a stable support, toward making it permanently available to oneself and to others. Which already introduces the second moment: *missio.*

The anxiety to create the object, which can become all consuming, tyrannical, and predacious, was represented by the Ancients as a kidnapping at the hands of the Muses, who, like birds of prey, seize whomever they want, whenever they want, and capriciously snatch them away from their loved ones without permission. The victim (*mousóleptos*) goes through his abduction as a signal to devote himself entirely to the elaboration of his idea and put the entire organization of his existence in service of carrying out that mission. In the *mousóleptos*'s chest beats a genuinely poetic emotion that, despite its burning heat, is in the end a cold passion because it is directed at the abstract generality of the world, unable

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to concretize itself in anything or in anyone: everything is in suspense for the *mousóleptos*, who, as he lives, remains on the defensive against any news that might distract him, neither surprising himself nor letting himself be surprised.

The material chosen to give form to his vision defines his type of calling. When the choice falls to the canvas, he is a painter; if rock or wood, a sculptor; if a staff, a composer. We call *literary* that calling which chooses as its material object the production of a text. Plain and simple: writer is he who has learned the task of putting one word after another and composing with them a text, while a poet is the writer with a calling whose text, in addition to being well written, captures the image of the world that he has come to know over the course of his vision, that source of his abduction.

A Muse, writes Plato in *Phaedrus* 245, "takes hold upon a gentle and pure soul, arouses it and inspires it to songs and other poetry." The philosopher is a poet in this precise way: he too has suffered from the Muses' assailing. In the absence of that abduction, his wellspring of the new and the original, he lacks his own ideas and can scarcely do anything other than repeat or paraphrase the ideas that others have uttered before him. Philosophy, too, is a question of imagination before it is one of intelligence, because, without the first, the second turns constantly around itself without engendering anything new. The great philosophers of History, even if they formulated on occasion very speculative systems, have always experienced, as all poets do, the tremor of a literary calling along with their *visio,* whose discovery provokes a pressing amorous desire, and their *missio.* Rightfully, the Socrates of *Phaedo* classifies philosophy as the art of the Muses *par excellence*: *megíste mousiké.* Among the moderns, it was Max Scheler who, in "The Essence of Philosophy and the Moral Preconditions of Philosophical Knowledge," argues most convincingly about how philosophy always sustains itself on a previous erotic emotion: the lover always comes before the connoisseur. To poeticize is to celebrate desire with verse, story or stage drama; to philosophize is to define that same feeling with concepts and categories. The task of the philosopher consists in the hard conversion of *eros* into concept to immediately thereafter verbalize it with words and articulate them into a discourse.

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It cannot be coincidence that Western philosophy is inaugurated with an episode protagonized by the Muses, who pay a surprise visit to the poet-philosopher Hesiod and entrust upon him a mission. "From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing, who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon" are the first words of European conceptual literature. Modern research begins the history of Greek philosophy with Hesiod's *Theogony* because it anticipates many themes that will be taken up later by the Ionian philosophers in their first organization of the cosmos. This strange poetic work's opening scene—which runs no less than a tenth of the poem's total length—sketches an enchanting scene of literary calling in which none of its characteristic moments are missing. It presents the Muses as women, full of grace, who make up beautiful and delicious choruses around a fountain of violet reflections in whose waters they bathe nonplussed. Born with hearts free from pain thanks to their marvelous voices, they launch into the wind hymns that rejoice Zeus and the immortal gods' Olympian lineage for the "forgetting of ills and a rest from sorrow."

One day, the muses circled Hesiod while he put his sheep to graze at the foot of Mount Helicon and instilled in him knowledge about the origin of the world and its gods in a time when all was still enveloped in chaos (*visio*). They anointed him a poet by gifting him a laurel branch and tasked him (*missio*) to spread the story of that origin with his song, which he did in the rest of the *Theogony*. Moses too, the liberator of the Jews, was called while herding his father-in-law's flock of sheep. Upon his arrival at Mount Horeb, a burning bush spoke to him (*visio*) and sent him with a literary mission (*missio*) to mankind: to compose the laws of the chosen people, the Pentateuch (Exodus 3). The biblical scene highlights the flaming aspect of the calling, while the Greek scene extols its grace and gentleness. In both cases, the epiphany precedes the urgency to produce a document that structures the sudden vision and confers it an everlasting form. In both cases, too, the one chosen by the vision is caught unawares in his shepherding chores: it might be said that the nomadic existence—without commitment or roots in any fixed place, wandering, always available to inspiration's arrival alongside one's docile sheep—is favorable for the calling.

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Philosophy is a genre of literature that, like all literature, arises in instances of a calling. A philosophy without *visio* and without *missio*—without a literary calling—could well be the text of a philosophical professional, of a professor, an editor, a philologist, a translator, a commentator, a researcher, even to an eminent degree, but not the work of a philosopher.

Worldly Philosophy

A philosophy that declares itself literary is already ready to behave as good worldly philosophy.

It is worth specifying, without further ado, that by worldly philosophy here I do not mean doctrines *ad usum delphini*, exemplary, domesticated, or didactic baby mash for little ones too wet behind the ears to swallow their bite of real philosophy. The opposite is also true. Worldly philosophy is the name that designates our glorious tradition's best philosophy. This is how Kant interprets it, that revivalist of the "worldly," who distinguished (*Critique of Pure Reason* A 839 and B 867; *Logic*, a university course published in 1800 by his disciple Jäsche) between the *scholastic* concept of philosophy, which teaches not philosophy but to philosophize, and a worldly or *cosmopolitan* philosophy that teaches one to think for himself. Needless to say, not only would Kant's works belong to this latter class, but also all of the great philosophy before and after our Prussian philosopher.

Any philosophy deserves the noble title of worldly if it duly recognizes its worldliness. Indeed, the philosophy of exemplarity expresses its desire to be worldly not once, but indeed three times, because it wants to practice a philosophy about the world, for us in the world, in a worldly way.

There is a first decision regarding philosophy's object that contributes to demarcating the discipline's specific field. At the end of the day, what does the philosophy speak of? The world? Or books that talk about the world?

A science emulating philosophy privileges the institutional position of a minority (professors, researchers) and imposes some specialized objective criteria on its activity. It finds

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the objectivity it searches for in determined canonical books that have been glossed and analyzed a thousand times over under the tutelage of experts, books that would have the same function for philosophy as facts of Nature do for scientific knowledge. This scientific philosophy, that blushes at the literary calling (that moment of creative imagination), hopes that the bookish would read many articles and works on one subject, would demonstrate a full dominion over the state of the question and the most recent bibliography, a familiarity with the codified vocabulary, an aptitude to devise a highly formalized discourse, et cetera. Frequently, this kind of professionalization ends up producing logomachies of astounding subtlety for the sole consumption of specialists in the field, who are contractually obligated, if they want to prosper, to meet the epistemic requirements of the institution to which they belong. As the topic comes to be assigned by said contracting institutions, it is no wonder that the chosen issues tend to be institutional ones, at the extreme of the regular world, which is never thought of directly, but always mediatedly by select canonical texts that are conveniently interpreted by authorities from the typical schools.

Kant describes this institutional or scholastic philosophy as a "system of knowledge that acts as Science," a philosophy that, he specifies in *Logic*, is in the habit of dealing with issues that exclusively occupy the time of "thinkers by trade" while, quite the opposite, the worldly, according to him, opens up to the universality of subjects insofar as "it refers to that which interests all," since no one is entirely unaware of "the relationship of all knowledge with all the essential purposes of human reason," he stresses in his *Critique*. Those specific and universal purposes are formulated elsewhere from the book in his three famed questions: "What can I know?" "What should I do?" "What may I hope?" (A 805 and B 833, condensed in the fourth and definitive: "What is the human being?" in *Logic*). Effectively, to some extent we all know, act, and hope, so we all feel equally compelled by those philosophical doubts. Regarding the fourth, regarding what the human being is, it is clear that all of us, not just a minority of us, would like to know ourselves better, and to know everyone else better. In light of their content, the four questions could be synthesized into two, one ontological and the other pragmatic: what is there in the world (man) and what to do with what there is (know, act, hope).

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The answers to these two questions, we call world. To think *about* the world is to dare to generalize on that which concerns everyone by the mere fact of their being and existing. The universal questions of philosophy are always the same: although they are asked in the language of their time (in premodern realism or modern idealism), in their content they remain unchanging and foreseeable. In turn, what varies are the philosophers' imaginative answers, given in accordance with their personal worldviews. Each of the great philosophical works is a thinking *of the same again* through the construction of a truth that lives up to the times. As it seems, scientific progress does not apply here, as it does not explain anything, neither the new nor the novel. Of course, we welcome the erudition and reconsideration of the best intellects in the history of philosophy—conversation with those who have thought and written on the subject elsewhere —, but only so long as they put themselves in the service of what is truly important: explanation by way of concepts from one's own worldview.

A philosophy about the world charges forth under its own weight—the second trait of worldliness—toward a philosophy for us in the world. Traditionally it had been denied that philosophy could be for the majority of men and women, since it was considered wisdom reserved for a small number of writers and readers, so-called philosophers, yet the well-known "linguistic turn"—introduced to contemporary philosophy in the 20th century in parallel with the historic development of democracy—enlarged the philosopher's nature to all people of the world without exception.

The linguistic turn describes—contrary to what its literalness seems to suggest—a transformation at the core of language without getting away from it, a mutation between two linguistic types, rather than a transition to a linguistic universe from a different, non-linguistic one. From Aristotle to 19th-century positivism, philosophy had always assumed that truth needed to be etched out by means of a technical jargon maintained by some guild of professional philosophers. The elitist postulate falls away during the 20th century when the great philosophical currents, despite their notable differences and peculiarities, converge on the same general conclusion: the codified language of the sciences is derived and secondary with respect to a first, fundamental one: natural language. The common and

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ordinary speech of the community, used spontaneously by every speaker, entails an entire interpretation of reality (a *world*). Since then, we peacefully recognize that truth resides not in the language of the sciences but in the everyday speech of the people, who contain a philosophy implicitly. The aristocracy of formalized language that presided over tradition recently gives way to the democracy of natural language, designated by the authors via a plurality of names: preconceptions, understanding, beliefs, prejudices, interpretations or, simply, worldview.

In this case, who should we consider "worldly"? The question is moot: everyone is.

From the perspective opened up by the turn, the totality of men and women in the world interpret said world with the ordinary speech they use and, in doing so, albeit in a confused and disordered way, practice a genuinely philosophical activity. In this sense, it is absolutely true to say that all men and women who inhabit the planet are philosophers natively and cannot cease to be so without renouncing their human condition. Philosophy is an anthropological universal, which is to say that we will encounter it each and every time we find ourselves before a human endowed with the traits that make us recognizable.

It does not naturally follow from the egalitarianism of philosophy in our democratic age, of course, that all interpretations are worth the same. There are vulgar and simple ones, others that are subtle and refined. The readerly training of one's gaze, in the transition from the former to the latter, often takes place through the study of a few "works of philosophy." Yet, by mentioning these written works, we have already begun to understand the term philosophy in a new and clearly distinct sense, literary instead of natural. Next to philosophy as unconscious interpretation partially inherited from reality, we must add, then, the *other* philosophy which is put forth in accordance with the art of the written word in a literary work, whose authors are philosophers *par excellence*. Unlike the previous case, this written form of philosophy is no universal attribute, but rather the ailings of a few literati's *calling*.

When literary philosophers seriously take up the natively philosophical condition of all human beings, they make an elemental commitment to worldliness: their books will be for all in the world—since everyone is of the world, is worldly—with the aim of refining and distilling the image of the world that one's readers have, to loan it texture and volume.

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Does a playwright debut his work so that only other playwrights know it? Does the poet rhyme his verses for other poets to recite them? Does the novelist compose his novel to be read only by other novelists? No, no, and no. It makes as little sense to maintain that a philosopher must write his conceptual literature for the attention of other writers like himself. Rather he should put his vision of things to print for the benefit of all everyday people, the non-specialized. As if walking blindly through a dark room tripping on the furniture and we suddenly flipped on the light switch: nothing changes on the outside, but, with the space illuminated, we are better able to direct ourselves around the obstacles. In the same way, the literary philosopher, who illuminates the world without being able to modify its unchanging ontological structure, urges us to live our life in a more meaningful way, one more worthy of being lived.

The language we use both to communicate with others and to talk to ourselves is made up of words we have borrowed from the communities we belong to: we did not invent the words ourselves. It was the writers of the past that did, those who founded words or created new meanings for those that already existed and left them available to the common cultural heritage of living language. Borrowed words and meanings sneak into the nooks and crannies of the speaker's consciousness and, once imprinted there, shape the dictionary he uses, like a second Adam, to name each and every thing that makes up his experience.

Who writes the dictionary of words that future generations will borrow? The current founders of language: novelists, poets, playwrights, and, with special strength, the literary philosophers who—working so long with the hard material of language to verbalize their worldview—see it necessary to invent a glossary of terms with multiple connotations and a fistful of effective metaphors. Since we have learned, from the linguistic turn, that natural language is the ultimate source of truth, we must conclude that the philosophy of today, by furnishing its writings with the vocabulary used by the generations to come, arranges the status of truth for the future world. Can you imagine a greater responsibility? So great that one manages to think that perhaps philosophy is the only truly important thing in this life, since the world's remaining assets satisfy human desires all while philosophy shapes those desires.

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Philosophy about the world, for us in the world, and (where possible, a third and final aspect of worldliness) with some style, taste, flair, and ease—that is, itself a little worldly.

Philosophy that dreams of being scientific tends to express itself through recondite language characterized by an impoverished vocabulary, a neglect of emotion, and a tasteless curtness oft exaggerated by its author for believing a certain coarse affect of form as enhancing the feeling of an exacting content. In turn, the philosophy that knows itself to be literature appeals shamelessly to the natural language of the people to make itself understood by all. It is clear that this abeyance to the people's language does not require the philosopher to resign himself to the vulgar or coarse chitter chatter of the everyday. Instead, if he is aware of his status as a poet, he must commit to the careful labor of selecting from the inherited material available: without ever leaving the limits of naturality, he is called to compose a rhetorically well-structured, elegant, and persuasive discourse capable of rendering to its reader that characteristic pleasure that always accompanies good literature.

If philosophy's fortune, as with all literature, hangs entirely on readers' approval—readers who must be convinced of the truth contained in books by pure rhetorical persuasion without empirically corroborative proof—, it follows that every philosopher is meant to be a writer and have good prose. Plato, Augustine of Hippo, Descartes, Hume, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ortega y Gasset, among many others, were masters of style. Let us remember that there was a time, not so long ago, when philosophers like Bergson, Russel, and Sartre were awarded Nobel Prizes in Literature.

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Disponibles en/available at http://cervantesobservatorio.fas.harvard.edu/en/translation-corner

1. RT/TC 001 (2019). A Letter of Federico García Lorca to his Parents, 1935. Author: Federico García Lorca (Spain); Translator: Christopher Maurer; Genre: Letter.

2. RT/TC 002 (2019). "Like a Night with Legs Wide Open". Author: José Alcántara Almánzar (Dominican Republic); Translator: Luis Guzmán Valerio; Genre: Short Story.

3. RT/TC 003 (2019). "In the Parks, at Dusk" and "I Only Think of You". Author: Marina Mayoral (Spain); Translator: María Socorro Suárez Lafuente; Genre: Short Story.

4. RT/TC 004 (2020). "The Guide through Death" and "The Fat Lady". Author: Guadalupe Dueñas (Mexico); Translator: Josie Hough; Genre: Short Story.

5. RT/TC 005 (2020). "The Case of the Unfaithful Translator". Author: José María Merino (Spain); Translator: Erin Goodman; Genre: Short Story.

6. RT/TC 006 (2020). "The Guerrilla Fighter" and "May as Well Call it Quits". Author: Albalucía Ángel Marulanda (Colombia); Translator: Daniel Steele Rodríguez; Genre: Short Story.

7. RT/TC 007 (2020). "Miguel Hernández' Speech to His Companions in the Ocaña Jail". Author: Miguel Hernández (Spain); Translator: Constance Marina; Genre: Speech.

8. RT/TC 008 (2020). "On the Road to Houmt Souk". Author: Soledad Puértolas (Spain); Translator: Francisca González Arias; Genre: Short Story.

9. RT/TC 009 (2020). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 1: Compilation 2019-2020*. Various Authors; Various Translators.

10. RT/TC 010 (2020). *Waiting for the Revolution: Cuba, the Unfinished Journey* (excerpt). Author: Gustavo Gac-Artigas (Chile); Translator: Andrea G. Labinger; Genre: Chronicle.

11. RT/TC 011 (2020). "A Bad Girl". Author: Montserrat Ordóñez (Colombia); Translator: Clara Eugenia Ronderos; Genre: Short Story.

12. RT/TC 012 (2020). "Claudia and the Cats". Author: Ivanna Chapeta (Guatemala); Translator: Lindsay Romanoff Bartlett; Genre: Short Story.

13. RT/TC 013 (2021). *Song of Being and Nonbeing*. Author: Santiago Alba Rico (Spain); Translator: Carolina Finley Hampson; Genre: Poetry.

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14. RT/TC 014 (2021). Christmas Eve in the Hills of Jaruco. Author: Robert F. Lima Rovira and Robert Lima (Cuba/USA); Translator: Robert Lima; Genre: Chronicle.

15. RT/TC 015 (2021). Three Poems. Author: José Luis García Martín (Spain); Translator: Claudia Quevedo-Webb; Genre: Poetry.

16. RT/TC 016 (2021). *A Manifesto for reading* (excerpt). Author: Irene Vallejo (Spain); Translator: Erin Goodman; Genre: Essay.

17. RT/TC 017 (2021). *Parallel 35* (three excerpts) and "The Dead Woman". Author: Carmen Laforet (Spain); Translator: Roberta Johnson; Genre: Chronicle/Short Story.

18. RT/TC 018 (2021). "Torn Lace" and "Native Plant". Author: Emilia Pardo Bazán (Spain); Translator: Francisca González Arias; Genre: Short Story.

19. RT/TC 019 (2021). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 2: Compilation 2020-2021*. Various Authors; Various Translators.

20. RT/TC 020 (2021). Three Poems. Author: Julia Barella (Spain); Translator: Sarah Glenski; Genre: Poetry.

21. RT/TC 021 (2021). *Five Galician Songs*. Author: Emilio Cao (Spain); Translator: Robert Lima; Genre: Poetry.

22. RT/TC 022 (2022). "The KIO Towers". Author: José Luis Castillo Puche (Spain); Translator: Douglas Edward LaPrade; Genre: Poetry.

23. RT/TC 023 (2022). "One Hundred Cornfields of Solitude". Author: Melanie Márquez Adams (Ecuador); Translator: Emily Hunsberger; Genre: Chronicle.

24. RT/TC 024 (2022). Eight Poems. Author: Luis Alberto de Cuenca (Spain); Translator: Gustavo Pérez Firmat; Genre: Poetry.

25. RT/TC 025 (2022). *Pilgrimage to Santiago (1610)*. Author: Diego de Guzmán (Spain); Translator: George D. Greenia; Genre: Chronicle.

26. RT/TC 026 (2022). Short stories from *Ábrete sésamo*. Author: Clara Eugenia Ronderos (Colombia); Translator: Mary G. Berg; Genre: Short Story.

27. RT/TC 027 (2022). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 3: Compilation 2021-2022*. Various Authors; Various Translators.

28. RT/TC 028 (2022). "Carabanchel Blues". Author: Lorenzo Silva (Spain); Translator: Kevin Gerry Dunn; Genre: Short Story.

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29. RT/TC 029 (2022). Poems from *Under Leonardo's Wing*. Author: Clara Janés (Spain); Translator: Ana M. Osan; Genre: Poetry.

30. RT/TC 030 (2023). Poems from *Hasta que no haya luna*. Author: Alan Smith Soto (Costa Rica/USA); Translator: Katherine Hannula Hill; Genre: Poetry.

31. RT/TC 031 (2023). *Quixote*. Author: Lorenzo Silva (Spain); Translator: Christopher Maurer; Genre: Essay.

32. RT/TC 032 (2023). Two Stories from *Amantes y enemigos: cuentos de parejas*. Author: Rosa Montero (Spain); Translator: Erin Goodman; Genre: Short Story.

33. RT/TC 033 (2023). "Running with Luck" and "His Profile". Author: Cristina Rivera Garza (Mexico); Translator: Francisca González Arias; Genre: Short Story.

34. RT/TC 034 (2023). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 4: Compilation 2022-2023*. Various Authors; Various Translators.

35. RT/TC 035 (2023). Excerpts from *Amigo*. Author: Ana Merino (Spain); Translator: Lynn M. Shirey; Genre: Short Story.

36. RT/TC 036 (2023). "At the Precise Moment". Author: Emiliano Monge (Mexico); Translator: Josh Dunn; Genre: Short Story.

37. RT/TC 037 (2024). Stories from *Las almas de Brandon*. Author: César Brandon Ndjocu Davies (Equatorial Guinea); Translator: Raquel Vega-Durán; Genre: Short Story.

38. RT/TC 038 (2024). *The Truest Love of Art*. Author: Javier Marías (Spain); Translator: M. Cristina Valdés Rodríguez; Genre: Newspaper Column.

39. RT/TC 039 (2024). Two Stories (from Eight) that Could Be a Novel. Author: Sonia Rivera Valdés (Cuba); Translator: Pennell Somsen; Genre: Short Story.

40. RT/TC 040 (2024). *You Will Never Set Eyes on Me Again* (excerpt). Author: Marta Barrio (Spain); Translator: Lynn M. Shirey; Genre: Short Story.

41. RT/TC 041 (2024). *Bad Sleep: An Essay on Sleeping, Wakefulness and Exhaustion* (excerpts). Author: David Jiménez Torres (Spain); Translator: Joseph Rager; Genre: Essay.

42. RT/TC 042 (2024). *Synthetic History of a Tailored Suit*. Author: Alfonsina Storni (Argentina); Translators: Anna White-Nockleby and Alina Lazar; Genre: Short Story.

43. RT/TC 043 (2024). *Rincón de Traductores / Translators' Corner – Volume 5: Compilation 2023-2024*. Various Authors; Various Translators.

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44. RT/TC 044 (2025). Three Poems by Alfonsina Storni: "Saturday", "You Want Me White", and "Her". Author: Alfonsina Storni (Argentina); Translators: Silas Mullins and Alejandro López; Genre: Poetry.

45. RT/TC 045 (2025). "The Huisache". Author: Lorea Canales (Mexico); Translator: Lia Galván; Genre: Short Story.

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