

**THE SENSE OF BEAUTY;
BEING THE OUTLINES
OF ÆSTHETIC THEORY**

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The sense of beauty; being the outlines of æsthetic theory by George Santayana

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GEORGE SANTAYANA

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BY

GEORGE SANTAYANA

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1896

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PREFACE

THIS little work contains the chief ideas gathered together for a course of lectures on the theory and history of æsthetics given at Harvard College from 1892 to 1895. The only originality I can claim is that which may result from the attempt to put together the scattered commonplaces of criticism into a system, under the inspiration of a naturalistic psychology. I have studied sincerity rather than novelty, and if any subject, as for instance the excellence of tragedy, is presented in a new light, the change consists only in the stricter application to a complex subject of the principles acknowledged to obtain in our simple judgments. My effort throughout has been to recall those fundamental æsthetic feelings the orderly extension of which yields sanity of judgment and distinction of taste.

The influences under which the book has been written are rather too general and pervasive to admit of specification; yet the student of philosophy will not fail to perceive how much I owe to

writers, both living and dead, to whom no honour could be added by my acknowledgments. I have usually omitted any reference to them in foot-notes or in the text, in order that the air of controversy might be avoided, and the reader might be enabled to compare what is said more directly with the reality of his own experience.

G. S.

SEPTEMBER, 1896.

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