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ESSENCE
IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF
GEORGE SANTAYANA

Submitted to the Department of Philosophy
of Assumption College in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

William F. P. Dollar, B. A.

Faculty of Graduate Studies

1954

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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

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I

INTRODUCTION

SANTAYANA'S MATERIALISM

The problem of this thesis, as its title conveys, concerns the notion of essence in the philosophy of George Santayana. Ordinarily in dealing with a subject of this kind, one would attempt to seize upon the strictly doctrinal utterances of the philosopher and make these the basis for an explanation of what he meant when he made them. In this case other materials, of historical or biographical interest, would be used only insofar as they served this purpose. But this procedure cannot be readily adopted in a study of the philosophy of Santayana whose doctrine is buried in an immense imagery inseparable from it. Thus in attempting to contract the study of his philosophy and thereby focusing on one particular problem; viz., his notion of essence, one must place this notion in its proper setting.

This demands a description of his materialism for it is materialism that his imagery most consistently reflects. A description of this kind cannot be

culled, therefore, from texts which are accumulated by doctrinally selective questioning. This becomes understandable only when one sees that what Santayana himself writes shows better how his philosophy lived in his lyrical mind than how it is to be understood by pedagogues. Thus to know what he means by essence we must first see what his materialism is. An examination of some of his autobiographical writings will reveal the early formation of his thoughts on materialism.

In his autobiography, Persons and Places,¹ there is found an intensely interesting account of his early years at home in Boston, in Latin School, and later at Harvard University. This is the testimony of an old man who has the leisure to sit down and, with acute mental vision, to recall and record the ruminations of an uncommonly precocious and sensitive youth. If this can be taken as evidence which would throw light on his philosophy, then the first thing that should be noticed is a conflict between a lively consciousness of an inexorable existence and a desire to escape to an imaginary and beautiful

¹George Santayana, Persons and Places (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944).

world:

Existence could not be right or beautiful under other conditions. But was existence beautiful or right? Quite the opposite; according to my youthful heart, existence was profoundly ugly and wrong. The beautiful remained imaginary . . . That the real was rotten and only the imaginary at all interesting seemed to me axiomatic . . . it is still what I think. My philosophy has never changed . . . it is a system of presuppositions and categories discovered already alive and at work within me willy-nilly, like existence itself, and virtually present not only in the boy but in the embryo.²

In his description of days at Harvard, Santayana alludes to the same conflict. He speaks of himself as being the only really free thinker among the faculty. The others seemed to be divided up into neat little cliques, devoting all their energies to sundry causes and systems, and each desiring to become tyrant over the other. But his thoughts continued, as before, to veer toward a realistic approach to nature, in its stark material nakedness, but coupled with, and bolstered by, a faint glimpse of a better world of the spirit:

I, being a materialist, cynic, and Tory in philosophy, never dreamt of rebelling against the despotism of nature . . . So I believe, compulsorily and satirically, in the existence of this absurd world;

²Ibid., p. 172.

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but as to the existence of a better world, or of hidden reasons in this one, I am incredulous, or rather, I am critically sceptical; because it is not difficult to see the familiar motives that lead men to invent such myths.³

We may continue to browse among these wonderfully written narratives and discover adumbrations consistently suggesting the antinomies expressed in the two series of volumes in which he states his philosophy, The Life of Reason and Realms of Being. However, if we should expect to find in these volumes a technical elaboration of what is lyrically expressed in his autobiographical musings, we are in for a disappointment. Santayana never ceases to narrate and never gives himself to explaining what he means.⁴ Thus, while there is a distinct advantage in having a wealth of psychological material which enables us to relate the philosophy of Santayana as he would live

³George Santayana, Persons and Places, Vol. II: The Middle Span (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), pp. 155-156.

⁴V. E. Smith, Idea-Men of Today (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1950), p. 70. "In this respect, like James, Santayana is very difficult to pin down. This much should be said here against him: It is not enough in philosophy to describe and to narrate. Such is, at different levels, the office of the poet and the empiriological physicist. In a larger sense, it is the office of phenomenology as Husserl conceived it and as it was practiced in different ways by Scheler and by Heidegger."

it in his own mind and his philosophy as he would explain it, there is always the difficulty of discerning clearly in his narratives the outlines of the philosophical problems he wished to solve. This means that the recurrence of terms like materialism and naturalism throughout his writings is to be interpreted as a theme or expressed dedication to beliefs for which no exact definitions are given. In his later years, Santayana composed an apology which appears at the conclusion of a group of critical essays about his philosophy by such leading contemporary philosophers as Professors Baker Brownell, Charles Hartshorne, C. A. Strong, Bertrand Russell, and others. In it he is given the opportunity to make observations concerning the criticisms of his fellow philosophers and to make further explanations of any of his postulates which he feels were not sufficiently treated. The tenor of his writing would seem to be that of disappointment and discouragement--discouragement to the extent that his critics will not accept his principles at face value and are prone to give them, in many instances, interpretations far different from what he had intended; and disappointment to the extent that, save in one essay, the real foundation of

his philosophy has not been indicated. It is better, he writes, to approach any system, as well as the criticisms of it, from within; beginning with the vital foundation and proceeding to its corollaries.⁵ By his own admission, the vital foundation of his entire philosophy, materialism, has been unperceived by all but one of his critics who contributed to the volume mentioned above. This is true notwithstanding the fact that he makes bold assertions of his materialism and requests to be interpreted as nothing more than a materialist. It is puzzling, to say the least, to know why a materialist or naturalist, in the orthodox sense, should employ such terms as "spirit", "morals", and, above all, "essence". And it is not difficult to understand that his commentators may have easily found his writings confusing and perplexing for that reason alone; certainly a sympathetic ear can be lent to their cries for consistency.⁶ But as we have al-

⁵George Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", in P. A. Schilpp, ed., The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. II: The Philosophy of George Santayana (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1940), p. 503.

⁶W. R. Dennes, "Santayana's Materialism", ibid., p. 431. "The materialism of Scepticism and Animal Faith and of the Realms of Being does not assert that nature is composed of moving bodies whose actions and reactions exhibit mechanical regularity as that was conceived in classical mechanics. Rather it asserts that

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ready said, Santayana is not given to explaining paradoxes.

An examination of what he says in the Realms of Being bears this out: The social ills of this old world and the sundry panaceas that have arisen in recent years in an effort to correct them, can be accounted for by the fact that man has been plagued, from time to time, with various systems of philosophy based upon unfounded principles and chance adventure.⁷

nature is processes (or temporally and spatially and qualitatively variegated process), is whatever is going on; that we can never be sure that anything is going on, or what it is that is going on; that we can never pretend that existence must be confined to the traits and patterns we suppose it to embody -- even if our supposition were (as we could never know) correct for its finite range. For the realm of essence is infinite; i.e., the fact that some qualities and relations are embodied here or there in existence in no way prevents others from being embodied elsewhere. Santayana's peculiar epistemology requires us to say that it is impossible for us to intuit any stretch of existence -- to know certainly that anything exists, or what any of its properties are. But, like all other strict impossibilities, this one depends upon definitions which render self-contradictory the statement of what is said to be impossible. Santayana's definitions are clearly illustrated and, on the whole, consistently respected in his work; but it is more than disputable whether they are reasonably convenient and more likely to aid than to obstruct understanding."

⁷Vide George Santayana, Realms of Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), Preface, p. v.

The unfortunate result is that man has had no sure and sufficient philosophy by which to live. There remains still an urgent desire on the part of man to adjust himself to the stable harmony manifested by nature; and underneath this complexity of false philosophical systems there is actually present a ". . . dumb human philosophy, incomplete but solid, prevalent among all civilized peoples . . .";⁸ in other words, an accumulated natural wisdom which man has derived from his daily activity in agriculture, commerce, and the arts. Along with this accumulation of natural wisdom, there is sanity, morality, and science to insure the continuance of man's progress in the world of nature. So in asking himself, in a manner reminiscent of Thomas Reid, if man's competence amidst nature should not be philosophy enough to serve at once as a nucleus of a sound philosophy, and a focal point on which all future universal wisdom should converge, Santayana answers that, since this wisdom which has been derived from nature has been most successful so far, its permanence is assured. Yet this natural wisdom inherent among all civilized

⁸Ibid.

peoples has a more necessary basis and one that is compulsory inasmuch as:

There is indeed a circle of material events called nature, to which all minds belonging to the same society are responsive in common. Not to be responsive to these facts is simply to be stupid and backward in the arts; those who explore and master their environment cannot help learning what it is.⁹

Man must, then, assume a common ground, a single system of events, to which there is common response, since, as is noted above, society is confronted with the same events and facts. Were this not true, intercourse among men, exchange of ideas, would be an impossibility. For Santayana, this single system is materialism, which embraces all nature, including man, his body and his actions. By the assumption of this common ground, knowledge and communication of same can be accounted for:

Material events will arouse in them (animals) intuitions conformable to their several stations, faculties, and passions; and their active nature (since they are animals, not plants) will compel them to regard many of the essences so given in intuition as signs for the environment in which they move, modifying this environment and affected by it.¹⁰

⁹Ibid., p. vi.

¹⁰Ibid., p. vii.

Further, Santayana makes the claim that his basic assumption of materialism, to serve as a starting point upon which all men must agree, is a fundamental presupposition which he cannot live without making.¹¹ When the question is asked of Santayana, since materialism is the ground of so much in his philosophy, what he would posit as the foundation of his materialism, he boldly responds that he is stopped short by the brute fact, the quia of matter. To search for a ground for the brute fact of matter is an endless task because existence is essentially groundless.¹² Materialism is mechanical and meaningless flux and:

. . . denotes and confesses in the first place that I find myself carried along by a great automatic engine moving out of the past into the future, not giving me any reason for its being, nor any reason why I should be.¹³

In another of his works, Santayana reiterates his ignorance of the nature of matter.¹⁴ The idealists, he writes, have labelled materialism as

¹¹Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 505.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Vide George Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), Pre-face, pp. vii-viii.

metaphysics, bringing discredit to materialism by including it in their own system. But he denies, conclusively, that his materialism is metaphysical; he claims no insight into just what matter is, in itself, and:

. . . feel[s] no confidence in the divination of those esprits forts who, leading a life of vice, thought the universe must be composed of nothing but dice and billiard balls.¹⁵

With an air of finality, he adds that he will " . . . wait for men of science to tell me what matter is, in so far as they can discover it . . ."¹⁶

Matter, which Santayana assigns as the principle of existence, is, then, essentially irrational for the above reason. However, because of its constancy and " . . . fidelity to measure and law . . .",¹⁷ matter is not mad, so much so that experience of it is cumulative and productive, whereby man's knowledge, by an evolutionary process, accumulates greater exactitude and his actions develop into precise techniques:

Though life, however, is initially experi-

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. viii.

¹⁷George Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", in his Realms of Being, One-Volume Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), Preface, p. 187.

mental and always remains experimental at bottom, yet experiment fortifies certain tendencies and cancels others, so that a gradual sediment of habit and wisdom is formed in the stream of time. Action then ceases to be merely tentative and spontaneous, and becomes art.¹⁸

Materialism, as he says, is nothing more than this experience, ". . . simply ordinary perception, sustained in its impulsive trust but criticized in its deliverance."¹⁹ It is for this very reason, then, that materialism is a presupposition not only of all science and natural investigation, since natural science deals with the facts at hand, but also of all deliberate action.²⁰

That materialism is presupposed in all natural science and in all deliberate action is further substantiated by the fact that science makes it its business to investigate and understand the material world. This experience of matter and experimentation with matter is absolutely necessary to the function of science. Santayana's justification for calling his philosophy materialistic is based squarely upon this hypothesis:

¹⁸George Santayana, The Life of Reason; or, The Phases of Human Progress, Vol. IV: Reason in Art (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 35.

¹⁹Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 505.

²⁰Ibid., p. 507.

The study and description of objects on their natural plane is a study and description of matter, and since physics is solely capable of revealing the source and method of the gross events of matter, then any philosophy is materialistic which recognizes physics as its only authority.²¹ This conviction to which Santayana gives repeated expression throughout his works is almost axiomatic. That outside the mind there are only events with which the physicist alone can adequately deal is one of the tenets commonly held by modern philosophers since Kant. It is difficult to over-stress the importance of this in a study of Santayana's philosophy.²² Accordingly, since natural science is the study of nature,²³ and is a representation only of the effect that surrounding reality

²¹ Ibid., pp. 507-508.

²² Vide infra, pp. 84, 102-103.

²³ Aristotle named four causes. There is no equivalent for these causes in Santayana. The only cause is the so-called material cause, matter or substrate. It is not on Aristotle's notion of physics that Santayana bases his materialism but on modern physics. Vide Aristotle, *Metaphysica* I. 3. 983^a24-983^b6, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 693.

produces upon men at any given time, Santayana asserts that sometimes the word naturalism is used to indicate his fundamental belief.²⁴ But the term materialism is preferable to him for three reasons:

(1) "Naturalism might include psychology, or . . . it might mean only one moral interest or one logical perspective open to absolute thought";²⁵

(2) "The term materialism seems to me safer, precisely because more disliked; and the cruder notions of it are so crude that they may be easily distinguished and discarded";²⁶

(3) the term nature is an indicative term, devoid of any ontological analysis.²⁷

²⁴George Santayana, "A General Confession", in P. A. Schilpp, ed., The Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. II: The Philosophy of George Santayana (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1940), pp. 9-10. "The necessity of naturalism as a foundation for all further serious opinions was clear to me from the beginning. Naturalism might indeed be criticized--and I was myself intellectually and emotionally predisposed to criticize it, and to oscillate between supernaturalism and solipsism--but if naturalism was condemned, supernaturalism itself could have no point of application in the world of fact; and the whole edifice of human knowledge would crumble, since no perception would then be a report and no judgment would have a transcendent object." Cf. Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 600. Here he also alludes to a cosmological naturalism as the basis of his philosophy, having taken his cue from Democritus, Lucretius, and Spinoza.

²⁵Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 508.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", Préface, p.

It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that Santayana's preface to Scepticism and Animal Faith contains the following frank admission: "Now in natural philosophy I am a decided materialist -- apparently the only one living . . ." ²⁸ Although at present many theories obtain which are in essence materialistic, the name has, nevertheless, fallen somewhat into disrepute; and this might well be what Santayana meant when he said apparently he was the only materialist living. But, for the most part, and in its most pronounced form, materialism is a term applied to all those theories which emphasize the material principle and pass over, either by denying or by ignoring, the spiritual principle in the matter proper to the various branches of philosophical inquiry. Upon an atomistic, mechanistic, and deterministic background there is elaborated a philosophy of nature in which everything teleological is rejected. Animals and men alike are machines; the advantage man enjoys over the brute is due to the higher evolution of his brain, which is the sole or-

²⁸Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, Preface, p. vii.

gan of thought.²⁹

With the above in mind, and in view of Santayana's description of matter as ". . . the matrix and the source of everything: it is nature, the sphere of genesis, the universal mother",³⁰ it is somewhat of a paradox to come across the following text in which he implies that other realities exist alongside matter, and seemingly with equal ontological value:

Materialism by no means implies that nothing exists save matter That matter is capable of eliciting feeling and thought follows necessarily from the principle that matter is the only substance, power, or agency in the universe: and this, not that matter is the only reality, is the first principle of materialism.³¹

Admitting other realities into a philosophy which is claimed to be materialistic to its core is hardly understandable, and it is not an easy task to form a definition of Santayana's materialism. A few sentences, before the above passage occurs in his work, Santayana likens his materialism to that of Democri-

²⁹Vide W. D. Bruckmann, Keystones & Theories of Philosophy (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1946), pp. 157-158.

³⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", Preface, p. 189.

³¹Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 509. Italics are his.

tus, the Greek materialist, by whom he claims to have been influenced,³² because Democritus also allowed for immaterial factors in a strictly material universe:

Democritus admitted the void to an equal reality, with all the relations and events that motion in that void would involve: he thereby admitted what I call the realm of truth. He also admitted appearances, bred in a material psyche by contact with other currents in matter; he thus recognized the moral presence of essences in themselves unsubstantial and not forms of matter.³³

If this be true of Democritean materialism, then, for the question at hand, the comparison has served little to limit Santayana's particular brand of materialism to a succinct definition. However, a possible solution might be effected by considering these other realities as logical beings, or mental facts -- not material beings -- which, nevertheless, have their origin in matter:

Substance, in diversifying the field of nature, sometimes takes the form of animals in whom there are feelings, images, and thoughts. These mental facts are immaterial. They offer no butt for ac-

³²Vide supra, p. 14, n. 24.

³³Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 509.

tion and exercise no physical influence on one another.³⁴

Being immaterial, these mental facts can hardly have the same ontological status as matter; as a materialist, Santayana must say that matter is the only existent. But he insists that there is something else existing save matter; and the only possible answer is that the "something else" is logical existence only.

More light is thrown on this problem in considering what Santayana has to say with further regard to the mental facts:

The same mental facts are manifestations of substance; in their occurrence they are parts of a total natural event which, on its substantial side, belongs to the plane of action. They are therefore significant and relevant to action as signs, being created and controlled by the flux of substance beneath.³⁵

Thus if the mental phenomena are viewed as manifestations of substantial matter, his explanation becomes more acceptable. Since matter is the only source from whence anything can come, all mental activity, such as appearance, thought, essence, spirit, etc., eman-

³⁴Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 233. Italics are his.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 233-234. Italics are his.

ates from matter and is immaterial in the sense that it does not occupy physical space.

The foregoing interpretation is good evidence that Santayana is consistent with his materialistic postulate. However, it would seem that, for his readers, much misunderstanding could have been avoided had Santayana chosen to use distinctive names for the various manifestations of matter. For instance, events, actions and entities of the material world might be designated as the green manifestation of matter, while all mental phenomena could be nominated as the white manifestation of matter. As a result, the difficulty discussed just above, regarding the other realities which Santayana speaks of, would never have arisen because the reader would be aware of the fact that all phenomena, both mental and physical, are phases of but one source, matter, yet these manifestations occur in two realms, the physical and the logical.

Though there is decided consistency with respect to his materialism, there exists a good deal of unnecessary inconsistency as regards the terminology used in presenting his philosophy, a point which has

already been raised.³⁶ As a further example, Santayana has said that it is not correct to say that matter is all that exists because there are other "realities"; namely, mental facts, which include feelings, appearances, and thoughts.³⁷ But in "The Realm of Essence" there is found a passage which reads ". . . essences do not exist."³⁸ Again, the reader is reminded of Santayana's words describing matter as the matrix and source of everything,³⁹ an implication that everything is material; in yet another place he states that "Essence . . . much more truly is than any substance or any experience or any event . . ."⁴⁰ These are but two instances where misunderstanding could arise, and space will not allow further examples to be enumerated. However, these two examples indicate that unless the reader is watchful, such passages can cause no end of confusion. A distinc-

³⁶Vide supra, p. 6.

³⁷Vide supra, p. 16.

³⁸George Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", in his Realms of Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 21. Italics are his.

³⁹Vide supra, p. 16.

⁴⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 23. Italics are his.

tion between the physical plane and the logical plane of being must be constantly borne in mind. If one considers the mental phenomena from the outside, or materially, the datum of immediate experience does not exist. Considered from the inside -- inside the mind -- these mental phenomena appear to have truer existence because they alone give meaning to the chaotic flux of the external world; whereas, in truth, the mental facts are purely logical beings. The suggestion offered above concerning a substitution of terminology could be used to good advantage in making the distinction between physical and logical entities more pronounced.⁴¹ That this is possible may be affirmed on the basis of his numerous descriptive, if not definitive, accounts of matter.

Though apparently Santáyana has not helped the issue by his forthright denial of any and all metaphysical implications which any of his readers might attach to his basic postulate, he is not bound to do so, for he disclaims any knowledge of the nature of matter.⁴² Besides, his use of the word "metaphys-

⁴¹Vide supra, p. 19.

⁴²Vide supra, p. 10.

ics" serves, it would seem, to describe the misinterpretations applied to his system rather than to give his reader any hint of the nature of matter:

But I was reserving the term metaphysics for a particular, though widespread, abuse of super-material categories; an abuse that occurs whenever logical, moral, or psychological figments are turned into substances or powers and placed beneath or behind the material world, to create, govern, or explain it.⁴³

Nevertheless, his position is quite clear that nothing immaterial or supra-material resides in gross matter which might divulge its make-up or be a cause of its behaviour. In this respect, Santayana is a genuine materialist. He is also a materialist in his assertion to the effect that matter is in perpetual flux.⁴⁴ However, he seems to depart from a materialistic position when he attributes a permanence to the flux. This permanence he designates as substance.⁴⁵ Yet further examination reveals that

⁴³George Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", in his Realms of Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 828.

⁴⁴Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", Preface, p. 189; vide etiam p. 268.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 207. "Undoubtedly the word substance suggests permanence rather than change, because the substances best known to man . . . evidently pass from place to place and from form to form while retaining

the stability he assigns to flux is understandable only insofar as it is opposed to the data of experience.⁴⁶ This introduces a consideration concerning epistemology in a materialistic philosophy. How is it possible for one real body to attain real knowledge of another without introducing some immaterial principle? Santayana does not help to answer this question when he tells us that matter, by its very existence as flux, is not rational, and can never be

their continuity and quantity. Such permanence is not contrary to flux, but a condition of flux. The degree of permanence which substance may have in any particular process, and the name which should be given to this permanent factor, are questions for scientific discussion. They may not, and need not, receive any ultimate answer. But that some permanence, not the casual persistence of this or that image, is interwoven with the flux of things, follows from the reality of this flux itself."

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 202. "Since substance is posited and not given in intuition, as essences may be given, substance is external to the thought which posits it." Vide etiam George Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", in Durant Drake et al., Essays in Critical Realism (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1920), pp. 164-165. "But even the passive and immediate data of appearance, its bare signals and language when stupidly gaped at, retain their aesthetic and logical character -- the primary sort of reality or being. Moreover, the fact that any such data appear or are thought of at all, however ideal and non-existent in themselves, is an historical event; with undeniable existence in the empirical sphere. It seems clear, therefore, that the special and invidious kind of reality opposed to appearance must mean an underlying reality, a substance: and it had better be called by that name."

rational of itself. But he does give some indication of what he means when he tells his reader that matter can become meaningful and intelligible through the intervention of an essence, which is eternal and self-identical.⁴⁷ Thus there is required a third factor, a purely logical factor, inserting itself between the knowing subject and the object which is supposed to preclude all numerical differences, and stop, as it were, the rapidly whirling flux for a moment to impose meaning upon it by giving it formal being. Of itself, matter is completely unintelligible in the sense that it cannot be perceived without essence, and, as Santayana explains, the flux flows through essences which stamp, so to speak, intelligible form on an otherwise chaotic mass:

The flux of nature could not be a flux nor at all perceptible, unless it was a flux through essences, that is, through forms of being differing from one another.⁴⁸

To proceed further along this line would involve our discussion in an epistemological account of

⁴⁷ Vide infra, pp. 98-99.

⁴⁸ Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 30.

the role played by essence in knowledge. It is sufficient to say here, as a concluding remark to this chapter, that the notion of essence definitely emerges from Santayana's materialism, yet without involving its denial.

II

SANTAYANA'S SCEPTICISM AND DOGMATISM

This is the paradox upon which we now reflect: Any philosophical system whose roots are sunk deeply in a pure materialism is forced to abandon its strict materialistic postulate when the question arises concerning the attainment of knowledge by one material body of another. The materialist, if he is honest with himself, must have recourse to an immaterial principle as an explanation of knowledge, otherwise he would have to say that knowledge itself is a material production resulting from the contact between the knower and the known. Santayana's matter, of itself, is unintelligible,¹ and his materialism sets up an impasse not easy to surmount with respect to enlightenment about the material world. But Santayana does not hesitate to make use of an immaterial principle as a solution to his epistemological difficulties. For an immaterial principle to occur in his system is by no means impossible nor inconsis-

¹Vide supra, pp. 10-11; p. 24. 1

tent once the reader accepts what he often repeats in his writings -- matter is the only source, power, or agency in the universe, but it is not the only reality.²

For Santayana, the anatomy of the human animal is so arranged that a certain part of it; namely, the brain or the mind, exhibits a high degree of sensitivity when collision occurs between the human animal and other material bodies. As a result, the sensitive part of the animal organism is stimulated, and these external material bodies become for the organism the objects of pursuit, attention, and passion:

. . . bodily life is, for the naturalist, the perfectly evident basis of moral emotions, pain, fear, attachment, and all kinds of desire; while patent and inevitable tensions between the animal organism and the rest of the world render those moral emotions indicative and extroverted and turn them into knowledge.³

At the moment of contact with other material bodies when the mind (the highly sensitive part of the animal organism) becomes aware of some thing external to itself, a third element is produced which is com-

²Vide supra, p. 16.

³Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 504.

posed of the sensible effects that are perceived by the human organism; that is to say, this other factor which is introduced besides the knower and the known, may be defined as a reaction produced in the mind as a consequence of contact between two material bodies. When expressed verbally, this reaction takes the form of an idea. Thus it is clear that a materialist must, in the end, resort to an immaterial principle when dealing with knowledge of the extramental world. As the study of Santayana's knowledge process develops in subsequent pages, it will be evident that this immaterial principle is Santayana's essence which was mentioned in the preceding chapter as the intervening factor whose purpose is to serve as a medium of knowledge.⁴

Santayana is acutely aware that his position thus far is really nothing more than idealism wherein the facts of experience flow singly through a perceptive mind in the form of ideas. He readily admits that, in this respect, a materialist and an idealist are indistinguishable as regards the knowing process:

The spirituality of spirit and the ideal-

⁴Vide supra, p. 24.

ity of data follow directly from materialism; and I think that it was by convinced materialists, by men thoroughly disillusioned about the course of nature and the decrees of fate . . . that the true quality of spirit was first discerned. For a materialist the mind will be simply sensibility in bodies; things that stimulate that sensibility will be the inevitable objects of pursuit, attention, and passion; but how should the feelings thereby aroused in the organism present the intrinsic character of the surrounding things? Evidently they will transcribe only the effects of those things on the organism; and this in aesthetic, moral, or verbal terms, not in the diffused and complicated form of the physical processes concerned. Mind, for a materialist, will therefore seem necessarily poetical, and data fictions of sense. If you are a materialist in respect to matter you will be an idealist in respect to mind.⁵

Although allying himself with the materialists, Santayana is, with honesty, facing the inevitable truth that materialists, like the idealists, can claim only the data of sensation as knowledge, even though the materialists avow that these data result from physical contact with an external object, while the idealists will never admit that the external world can be known in its intrinsic nature.

But for neither an idealist nor a materialist

⁵Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 529. Italics are his.

is there any positive proof that the data of sensation originated in the external world, much less to say that these data represent the intrinsic character of the object. It is in this way that Santayana clearly perceives this most formidable obstacle relative to the materialist's problem of verifying the validity of his ideas:

- (a) In the first place, Santayana has professed materialism which, from a purely physical or natural standpoint, could not undermine its very foundation by saying that there is no sure evidence of a material world exterior to the knowing subject which causes the ideas. Santayana refers intermittently throughout his writings to "the pressure of existence",⁶ and the instinctive action of expectancy and assurance on the part of the human animal naturally presupposes an objective world:

Whenever I look, act, or judge I assume that there is a continuous dynamic world that I am momentarily looking at, acting upon, or thinking about; for if the world were not continuous and external, but the figment of a dream, retention or recon-

⁶Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith,

sideration of it would be morbid, since there would be nothing existent to be perceived more clearly or possessed more safely.⁷

- (b) Secondly, Santayana relates his knowledge to the objective world by professing to be a realist, as evidenced by association with a group of philosophers which arose in the second decade of the twentieth century, and whose members called themselves Critical Realists, in opposition to the Neo-Realist movement underfoot at the time under the leadership of William James of Harvard University, and likewise in contradistinction to the ever-present Idealists. Santayana collaborated with certain members of the Critical Realist group in the preparation of a series of essays entitled Essays in Critical Realism.⁸ Santayana's contribution is entitled "Three Proofs of Realism."

With respect to knowledge, he writes, realism assumes various degrees, the minimum degree of realism asserting that the perception of data refers to some object

⁷Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 505-506.

⁸Vide Durant Drake et al., Essays in Critical Realism (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1920).

external to the knower's perceiving and thinking; whereas the maximum degree assures that perception and conception are a direct and literal revelation of, and strictly identical with, an external object which exists separately from the knower's apprehension.⁹

It would seem to Santayana that a reasonable realistic theory of knowledge would strive for a middle course between these two extremes. Without burdening the present discussion with an analysis of the Critical Realists' position, it is sufficient to say that philosophy, according to this school of thought, should first begin with an examination of knowledge; i. e., a discussion of the epistemological problem. As for the explanation of knowledge, the position of this group holds to the theory that knowledge involves three factors: the object which is known, the subject which knows, and the datum, or medium between the subject and the object, by which the object becomes present to the knowing subject.¹⁰

⁹Vide Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", p. 163.

¹⁰Vide C. E. M. Joad, Introduction to Modern Philosophy, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), pp. 16-18. "Another form of Realism which is prominent in modern philosophy has been propounded under the name of Critical Realism by seven American philosophers, Professors Drake, Lovejoy, Pratt, Rogers, Santayana, Sellars, and

In continuing his discussion on realism, Santayana states that the two tendencies of realism resolve themselves into a treatment of two distinct problems:

- (a) whether substance (the external object as opposed to appearance) and appearance are distinct in their existence and have different

Strong. Its distinctive feature consists in its view of the nature of the objects which form the data of perception, with regard to which, it is asserted, not only the Idealists, but also other schools of Realists, have gone radically astray.

What happens in perception is roughly as follows. When an object C comes into contact with a conscious organism A it exerts an influence over A. This influence is causal, what it causes being among other things the appearance to A of certain character-complexes. These character-complexes B are the data of perception, being as it were projected by A into the outer world, or imagined as being out there; and in true perception they are, or they are identical with, the characteristics of C. Perception, then, is 'imagining character-complexes out there in the world together with an implied attribution of existence.' If the perception is correct, the character-complexes are the actual characteristics of C, whose influence caused their projection, and the attribution of existence is justified; if not, not. Of these character-complexes we are told that they do not exist: they have logical being or subsistence only, and are therefore not altered by the circumstance of their being the data of perception, nor by their being abandoned for other data . . . But since in true perception the essences or data are, or are identical with, the characteristics of the object which started the whole process, the Critical Realist can urge that for him 'knowledge is a beholding of outer and absent objects in a very real and important sense -- a beholding that is of their what or nature'."

conditions, to which question a realist replies that they are quite distinct and their conditions are entirely different; and

- (b) what degree of similarity is there between the immediate data or symbols of sense or thought and the intrinsic qualities of the substance which is its object? -- to which a realist would reply that the similarity is great and may even rise to identity of essence.¹¹

Realism, as a theory of knowledge, will thus imply two distinct assumptions, both capable of varying degrees of affirmation:

- (a) that knowledge is transitive -- its object possesses a certain degree of independence or self-existence;
- (b) that knowledge is relevant -- the object possesses at least some of the qualities attributed to it by the mind.¹²

That there is an external world of objects effecting, in part, the appearances is a certain fact for a realist because knowledge is transitive, by which San-

¹¹Vide Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", p. 165.

¹²Ibid., p. 168.

tayana means that knowledge must relate to some other thing than the knowing subject. If this were not true, then man would be a mere prisoner of his dreams. The deepest presupposition for a materialist is his impulsive trust in the existence of a transcendent material world:

Indeed—nothing can be more arbitrary than existence, and therefore than the truth about existence; and it will be only by docility to nature, within us and without, that we shall be at all able to approach the truth.¹³

Just as a realist must affirm that the object of perception has an independent existence, it is equally necessary that he affirm the relevance of knowledge whereby the independent object contains at least some of the characteristics attributed to it by the mind. To deny either one would be undermining the validity of the other. Moreover, he declares, knowledge which does not include some aspect of both the transitivity and the relevancy of the object is not a realistic knowledge and cannot be posited at all.¹⁴ The degree to which each is present in man's knowledge will vary

¹³ Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 517-518.

¹⁴ Vide Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", pp. 168-169.

according to the object under consideration, inasmuch as Santayana has described the human animal as acutely sensitive to his environment, and all the impulses and passions of the animal are quickly directed toward his surroundings.¹⁵ At the same time, there is a sympathetic response on the part of the human organism to his environment, by which the organism perceives the sensations caused by an object, and then imagines what the object is. He states that such perceiving and imagining is private to the organism; but only when the images and feelings express the true relation between the organism and the object can there be knowledge.¹⁶

This knowledge should meet definite specifications:

. . . if it takes an imaginative or moral form at all, this knowledge must take a form determined by his specific senses and instincts. His true knowledge must then be, in its terms, relative to his nature, and no miraculous intuition of his habitat as it exists in itself.¹⁷

¹⁵Vide supra, p. 27.

¹⁶Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 515-516. ". . . organisms are affected and react as wholes according to the total customary operations of the object, as in hunting, fighting, and fleeing. Meantime on these occasions animals feel the excitement they undergo and imagine the object that excites them. Such feeling and imagination is something private and original to the organism; it is a spiritual event; and it becomes true knowledge, or spiritual dominion over the object, in so far as feelings and images express faithfully the relevant relations between the object and the organism."

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 511-512.

Therefore, the relevance of knowledge is interpreted as meaning not only that the object actually possesses some of the characteristics afforded it by the mind of the knower, but also it includes the response made by the knowing subject; *i. e.*, the sympathetic imaginings made as a reaction to the object encountered. Santayana does not attempt to distinguish between those characteristics present in the datum of sensation which are certain to exist independently in the object and those characteristics contributed by the feelings and imaginings of the knowing subject in response to stimulation. Had such a distinction been made, a possible solution might have been offered to explain how those independently existing characteristics of the object are transferred from the object to the sense datum, in view of the fact that, for Santayana, the mind does not possess the power to abstract, in the Aristotelian meaning of that word.

Be that as it may, Santayana is confronted by reality; and reality, as he describes it, is ". . . being of any sort."¹⁸ The form of reality with which he comes into immediate contact is the datum, or the facts of sense experience, which is opposed to that

¹⁸Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 33.

underlying substrate called substance, ". . . the basis of those immediate feelings . . ." ¹⁹ Even though on all sides there is the ". . . pressure of existence, of tyrannical, absolute, present being . . .", ²⁰ the immediate datum, in no way, seems to include the notion of existence. ²¹ Since it is Santayana's avowed purpose to free his mind of cant and artificial traditions, ²² he will proceed in an examination of the knowledge problem as a thorough sceptic, accepting only the immediate and real, and rejecting anything not included in the immediate appearance; he can be sure of himself only by accepting experience for what it is, without assigning to it any conditions whatever. Since this notion "existence" is not present in the datum and appears over and above what is actually obvious, Santayana declares that the notion of existence is really

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 21; vide etiam p. 30 supra.

²¹ Ibid., p. 35. "The datum is an idea, a description; I may contemplate it without belief; but when I assert that such a thing exists I am hypostatizing this datum, placing it in presumptive relations which are not internal to it, and worshipping it as an idol or thing. Neither its existence nor mine nor that of my belief can be given in any datum."

²² Ibid., Preface, p. vi.

something added by the perceiver, for existence belongs to the world of flux with all its external relations.²³ Inasmuch as it is not an obvious character of the datum, existence is a fact which is always open to doubt.²⁴

It is Santayana's privilege to accept only what he believes to be the immediately apparent, if, as he says, his intentions are to exercise a severe scepticism. Nevertheless, it is difficult to recon-

²³Ibid., p. 37. "In the sense of existence there is accordingly something more than the obvious character of that which is alleged to exist. What is this complement? It cannot be a feature in the datum, since the datum by definition is the whole of what is found. Nor can it be, in my sense at least of the word existence, the intrinsic constitution or specific being of this object, since existence comports external relations, variable, contingent, and not discoverable in a given being when taken alone: for there is nothing that may not lose its existence, or the existence of which might not be conceivably denied. The complement added to the datum when it is alleged to exist seems, then, to be added by me; it is the finding, the occurrence, the assault, the impact of that being here and now; it is the experience of it."

²⁴Ibid., p. 40. "I call it a fact notwithstanding, because in talking about the sceptic I am positing his existence. If he has any intuition, however little the theme of that intuition may have to do with any actual world, certainly I who think of his intuition, or he himself thinking of it afterwards, see that this intuition of his must have been an event, and his existence at that time a fact; but like all facts and events, this one can be known only by an affirmation which posits it, which may be suspended or reversed, and which is subject to error."

cile his statement that a realist holds for probable identity between the characteristics attributed to the object by the mind and the object's intrinsic qualities.²⁵ Why should not the notion of independent existence accompany these characteristics if, as a self-professed realist, he is certain that there is a great similarity between the datum and the external object? Santayana answers this query by saying that the last step in scepticism demands that he abolish altogether the whole category of existence. Belief in the existence of anything, he asserts, is radically incapable of proof, and the mind must be freed of all dogmatic beliefs and assumed principles of various kinds which are founded upon the knower's own preferences and persuasions.²⁶

Santayana warns that scepticism, when carried to its ultimate reaches, is quite often tempted to deny the existence of all facts; that is, change, memory, and the fact that anything has ever existed. Such scepticism is false because to deny these facts is, in itself, a dogmatic statement -- an existing fact --

²⁵Vide supra, p. 34.

²⁶Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 35.

which must be subjected to sceptical examination.²⁷

Neither is scepticism a disbelief. It is a gross misunderstanding to assume that scepticism means disbelief because disbelief, far from being sceptical, connotes a disbelief in what has been previously asserted.²⁸

Furthermore, scepticism, explains Santayana, should not cause the sceptic to lose his sense of what is before him; *i. e.*, it is a discipline for purifying the mind -- it should not cause undue alarm and force one to lose his perspective of reality.²⁹ Whether existence is obvious in the datum is the sceptic's problem; and since it is not, the term "existence" is a mere name designating those things caught up in the flux of materiality. The sceptic should not concern himself with an account of the external world with which applied sciences are concerned; the sceptic concerns himself primarily with an exploration or an analysis of reality with respect to man's knowledge of it:

²⁷Ibid., p. 40

²⁸Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 516.

²⁹Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 42.

So the whole realm of being which I point to when I say existence might be described more fully; the description of it would be physics or perhaps psychology; but the exploration of that realm, which is open only to animal faith, would not concern the sceptic.³⁰

When, at last, the sceptic has chastized and purified his mind, and eliminated from it every trace of belief and preferences for which clear and positive proof cannot be located within the datum, he has reached what Santayana terms the "Watershed of Criticism".³¹ This state was not attained without sacrifice and pain to the sceptic, ". . . even at the price of intellectual suicide."³² Moreover, it often meant that his most cherished hopes and beliefs had to be tossed out mercilessly. This last state also results in illusion, but it is a happy state of complete illusion wherein the datum contains only the truly real and immediately apparent, without reference to exterior conditions. The sceptic accepts complete illusion gladly, yet he does not succumb to it, nor does he attempt to hypostatize the datum by placing it in relations not in-

³⁰Ibid., pp. 42-43.

³¹Ibid., p. 99.

³²Ibid., p. 10.

ternally evident.³³ And so the last state attained by the sceptic is the same as the first: It was illusion which prompted him to doubt the validity of all belief and tradition in the first place, and after a critical analysis of these same beliefs is completed, the sceptic still experiences illusion because of the natural inclination of the animal organism to relate only what is apparent to existence.³⁴ Furthermore, when the datum has been thoroughly wrenched of any notion of existence and becomes a pure image or idea, ". . . it is essentially illusory and unsubstantial, however thunderous its sound or keen its edge, or however normal and significant its presence may be."³⁵

Should the question arise as to whether the datum is relevant to existence, the sceptic is not able to reply with certitude. A relation to existence can be expressed only in terms of faith -- a natural belief that this pure idea corresponds iden-

³³ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 38-39. "Animals, being by nature hounded and hungry creatures, spy out and take alarm at any datum of sense or fancy, supposing that there is something substantial there, something that will count and work in the world."

³⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

tically with material facts occurring outside:

Although I am not afraid of solitude, I have no predilection for any acrobatic pose, sceptical, transcendental, or prophetic; and my scepticism remains merely the confession that faith is faith, without any rebellion against the physical necessity of believing. It enables me to believe in common-sense, and in materialism and, like Landor, to warm both hands before the fire of life; and at the same time it gives me the key to the realms of dialectic and fancy which I may enter without illusion.³⁶

It would seem that, having gone to much difficulty to free his mind from unfounded, dogmatic beliefs, Santayana would hesitate to speak of his passing from the datum to existence, by an act of faith, as a dogmatism. Nevertheless, he freely speaks of himself as a dogmatist who has raised his system upon a thorough scepticism.³⁷ Dogmatism, or a blind acceptance of certain inevitable truths, is just as necessary in his thinking as it is for any system of philosophy which is honest and genuine.³⁸ One such dogmatic truth is the assertion that the animal organism, through its senses and instincts, determines and gives form to

³⁶ Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 516-517

³⁷ Ibid., p. 515.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 511. ". . . any philosophy not respectful towards our inevitable primary dogmas, and not built upon them, condemns itself to be artificial and not quite honest."

knowledge when its attention is turned upon its natural habitat; i. e., knowledge is relative due to the exigencies of animal nature.³⁹ This relativity of knowledge lends to his dogmatism logical soundness which the rash dogmatist, who says that reality is exactly what he says it is but denies that knowledge is relative, cannot claim.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Santayana states that a realistic philosophy demands the basic assumption that knowledge be relevant to external reality, as was noted above.⁴¹ In addition, it was noted that his materialism implies relativity of knowledge

³⁹Vide Santayana, *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, p. 185. "The whole life of imagination and knowledge comes from within, from the restlessness, eagerness, curiosity, and terror of the animal bent on hunting, feeding and breeding; and the throb of being which he experiences at any moment is not proper to the datum in his mind's eye -- a purely fantastic essence -- but to himself. It is out of his organism or its central part, the psyche, that this datum has been bred. The living substance within him being bent, in the first instance, on pursuing or avoiding some agency in its environment, it projects whatever (in consequence of its reactions) reaches its consciousness into the locus whence it feels the stimulus to come, and it thus frames its description or knowledge of objects." Vide etiam Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 511-512.

⁴⁰Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 511.

⁴¹Vide supra, pp. 35-36.

whereby the human animal is acutely responsive to the material events of nature from which a natural wisdom is acquired.⁴²

Now dogmatic belief enters his philosophy only after the sceptic has completed his work of purifying the datum. Since no evidence of existence is apparent in the datum, and the datum itself is not an object of knowledge, Santayana must relate the datum to existence from which, as a realist, he is certain that it came in the first place. Existence, therefore, is the not given about which knowledge is concerned:

Knowledge is always about the not given, it is faith justified by its material ground or by its material verification.⁴³

An act of faith, then, serves to connect the immediately apparent datum with the material world. Faith arbitrarily posits substance which causes the datum to appear:

. . . with nature in me, I would retain faith to give breath to knowledge; a faith imposed on every living creature by the exigencies of action and justified in the natural interplay of each animal with his environment. Such faith accumulates sufficient and trustworthy knowledge of

⁴²Vide supra, pp. 8-9.

⁴³Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 514.

"things-in-themselves", that is, of the substances, powers, or agencies that actually breed and support animal life; but this is natural knowledge, not unnecessary intuition of the depths of the world or of its entirety. It is knowledge inevitably limited to the range of the natural or artificial instruments that convey it, and couched, in each case, in the language of a special experience.⁴⁴

This dogmatic faith enables Santayana to say that knowledge is possible whereas he would never have been able to make such a claim solely as a sceptic:

My dogmatism asserts that, in an observable biological sense, knowledge is possible, and, on the same biological grounds that knowledge is relative. My scepticism confirms this dogma, from the inside and analytically, by pointing out that knowledge, for the spirit, involves a claim that the spirit may always challenge; whereas self-evidence, or contemplative possession of a datum, collapses logically into tautology, and is not knowledge.⁴⁵

Scepticism and dogmatism, Santayana contends, work so closely together in his system that it is a mistake to assume that they cannot exist side by side. They are ". . . complementary views of the same fact of natural history . . .",⁴⁶ the former operating from the outside,

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 512.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 515.

⁴⁶Ibid.

or from an observable biological standpoint; the latter from the inside, or analytically:

Complete scepticism is accordingly not inconsistent with animal faith; the admission that nothing given exists is not incompatible with belief in things not given.⁴⁷

Our discussion of materialism in the first chapter of this study broke off rather abruptly at the point where it was obvious that Santayana recognized the need for, and made it quite apparent that he would make use of, some principle other than a material one to present the epistemological phase of his system. Reality, for the materialist, is a flux, but, at the same time, a certain stability is manifest in this flux which our philosopher designates as substance.⁴⁸ Here it was that a serious problem of knowledge came to light. The flux exhibits a certain degree of permanence in spite of itself, but this does not hold true for the flux as it appears to a sentient animal mind. It occurred to Santayana very early that the flow of ideas through the mind is no different for a materialist than the experiences of an idealist. Therefore, a materialist has this problem to face: how can the

⁴⁷Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 105.

⁴⁸Vide supra, p. 22.

ideas that are aroused in the animal organism present the intrinsic character of the external world?

This problem makes clear the suggestion made in Chapter I that there is a decided cleavage between the world of substance and the world of immediate appearance. More than that, there seems to be a subtle opposition between substance and appearance which prevents substance from being at all intelligible except through some immaterial principle which Santayana introduces as an essence, a medium between the knowing subject and the external object. To stabilize and render the flow of ideas intelligible for the mind is the task of essence; in other words, what substance does for the material flux, essence accomplishes for the mind.

The datum of immediate appearance, having undergone a thorough sceptical examination, revealed nothing intimating existence. Furthermore, what has come to light in this chapter is that a sceptical analysis of the contents of the mind must be complemented by an act of faith in order to reach existence, the not-given.

It remains now to look into the actual process of cognition for a more formal introduction to

essence, and to investigate the inference made on the preceding page that essence may not, after all, solve the problem of how to close the gap between appearance and substance, between mind and matter.

III

ESSENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

The crux of the problem concerning essence is now at hand. The emphasis that has been placed upon the datum as being devoid of any notion of existence, together with stress being laid upon an act of animal faith in order to relate the datum to existence, would seem to negate Santayana's original claim to a realistic epistemology.¹ In fact, the development of this exposition of Santayana's epistemology thus far has taken a decided turn toward the opinion expressed earlier in this paper that appearance and reality; i.e., mind and matter, are hopelessly opposed.² This last opinion has not gone unnoticed by Santayana. His reply consists in recalling what the immediate appearance, or the datum of experience, means for a Critical Realist. That the given, the datum, does not exist (when considered solely in its ideal or logical sphere).

¹Vide supra, pp. 31-32.

²Vide supra, pp. 22-23 and 49.

is not to be construed as meaning that the datum is not an actual experience of the animal organism. The datum means that which is given in experience. Therefore, the datum of appearance is not to be opposed to reality (for it is itself a reality as an historical event in the empirical sphere), but to underlying reality, or substance.³ Having made this distinction, it is Santayana's contention that the two assumptions that realists must make; viz., that knowledge is transitive and that it is relevant,⁴ do not oppose each other. In the first assumption, the datum of appearance is opposed to substance, while in the second assumption, the datum of appearance is united to the intrinsic qualities of substance. Hence Santayana concludes:

The two tendencies in realism are therefore perfectly consistent, and truly complementary: the one tends to separate appearance from substance only in existence; the other tends to identify them only in essence. But neither the separation nor the identification can ever be absolute, else the theory of knowledge would prove that knowledge was impossible, and all good sense would go by the board.⁵

³Vide Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", pp. 164-165.

⁴Vide supra, p. 34.

⁵Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", p. 166.

In other words, thought and object are identical, but this identity occurs in essence, not in existence:

. . . it is not his knowledge or his mind that the naive realist identifies with the object, but only the essence immediately intuited by him that he identifies with its essence.⁶

The moment has now arrived when it is determined that an identity actually occurs between the knower and the known. For a moderate realist -- a Thomist -- such an identity between mind and reality denotes that the mind has acquired an added perfection to the extent that it truly possesses real knowledge of the external object. This, however, is not so for Santayana and the Critical Realists because, as was just noted, the identity occurs not between mind and object, but between the essence of the intuition and what Santayana calls the essence of the object. And here it is that the term "essence" makes its formal introduction. Since the term "datum of immediate appearance" has been used exclusively to designate that sphere opposed to extramental reality, it would be justifiable to pause for a moment in order to determine the origin of essence. Briefly, essence is

⁶Ibid., p. 167.

found in the very datum of immediate appearance about which much has been said; poetically speaking, it is the heart -- the innermost core -- of the datum, stripped of all adventitious significance, devoid of any frame of reference, suggestive of nothing but that which it is:

This recognition that the data of experience are essences is Platonic, but it is a corrective to all that is sentimental in Platonism, curing it as it were homoeopathically. The realm of essence is not peopled by choice forms or magic powers. It is simply the unwritten catalogue, prosaic and infinite, of all the characters possessed by such things as happen to exist, together with the characters which all different things would possess if they existed.⁷

And when the datum yields essence, which ". . . is taken neither for the manifestation of a substance nor for an idea in a mind nor for an event in a world, but simply if a colour for that colour, and if music for that music, and if a face for that face . . ." ⁸ Santayana declares that he is more than compensated for his sceptical suspicions and doubts because he has at last uncovered "the absolutely indubitable".⁹

⁷Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 77:

⁸Ibid., p. 74.

⁹Ibid.

Now essence is not perceived in the same realm of being in which the datum is perceived by the animal organism. Essence properly resides in a realm of its own, the realm of essence; however, when it is perceived and when it serves its function in the cognitive process, the realm of matter, in which realm the datum is received by the organism, has already developed into a new realm of being, the realm of spirit:

At certain junctures animal life, properly a habit in matter, bursts as with a peal of bells into a new realm of being, into the realm of spirit.¹⁰

This development takes place, Santayana explains, as a result of the tensions and strains within the organism after it has been stimulated by the datum. The realm of spirit can be called consciousness, ". . . that inner light of actuality or attention which floods all life as men actually live it on earth",¹¹ and is a synthesis of all organic movements and tensions.¹² The very essence of the life of spirit is to think,

¹⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 348.

¹¹Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", p. 549.

¹²Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 349.

love, to be awake, watchful, and transitive.¹³

If an identity occurs between the intuited essence and the essence of the external object, Santayana's theory of knowledge would seem to revolve solely around essence, since, so far as essence has been defined, it appears to be the object which the mind seizes upon in the process of cognition. This is not entirely true, and subsequent pages will elucidate just what part essence plays in Santayana's theory of knowledge. For the present, however, an examination of the knowing subject is in order for two reasons:

- (a) because there would appear to be two levels upon which a type of cognition can take place; i.e., a sort of organic, sentient behaviour is perceptible strictly in the material realm, while essence appears, or is intuited, in the realm of spirit;
- (b) because these two levels of cognition, although in distinct and separate modes of being, nevertheless are of common origin and depend equally as much on the same source or agency, matter.

¹³Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", pp. 852-853.

In his description of the knowing subject, Santayana clearly distinguishes between two levels of life in the human organism, psyche and spirit:

1. The psyche is not another name for consciousness or mind. Everything truly conscious or mental -- feeling, intuition, intent -- belongs to the realm of spirit. We may say of spirit, but not of the psyche, that its essence is to think. The psyche is a natural fact, the fact that many organisms are alive, can nourish and reproduce themselves, and on occasion can feel and think. This is not merely a question of the use of words: it is a deliberate refusal to admit the possibility of any mental machinery.

2. By the word matter, I do not understand any human idea of matter popular or scientific, ancient, or recent. Matter is properly a name for the actual substance of the natural world, whatever that substance might be.

3. In calling the psyche material I do not mean to identify her with any piece or kind of substance; an atom or monad or ether or energy. Perhaps all sorts of substances may enter into her system; she is not herself a substance, except relatively to consciousness, of which her movements and harmonies are the organ, and the immediate support. She is a mode of substance, a trope or habit established in matter; she is made of matter as a cathedral is made of stone, or the worship in it of sounds and motions; but only their respective forms and moral functions render the one a cathedral or a rite, and the other a psyche.

4. The whole life of the psyche, even if hidden by chance from human observation, is essentially observable; it is the object of biology. Such is the only scientific psychology, as conceived by the ancients, Aristotle included, and now renewed in behaviourism and psycho-analysis. This conception of the psyche also allows the adepts of psychical research to retain a congenial name for

the very real region, far removed from everything that I call spiritual, in which occult processes, unusual powers, and subtle survivals may be actually discovered.¹⁴

The psyche's function primarily is to maintain itself as a living being, to exercise the vital powers of nutrition and generation. In its moral unity, Santayana describes the psyche as a ". . . poetic or mythological notion but needed to mark the hereditary vehement movement in organisms towards specific forms and functions."¹⁵ No doubt remains that psyche is a material principle and finds its place in the realm of matter. Yet spirit, the reader is told, emerges from the material psyche, but psyche and spirit are quite distinct in that psyche is material while spirit is a logical realm of being. A further distinction is made between psyche and spirit in this passage:

By spirit I understand the actual light of consciousness falling upon anything -- the ultimate invisible emotional fruition of life in feeling and thought. On the other hand, by the psyche I understand a system of tropes, inherited or acquired, displayed by living bodies in their growth and behaviour. This psyche is the specific form of physical life, present and potential, asserting itself in any plant or animal; it

¹⁴Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", pp. 331-333.

¹⁵Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", pp. 569-570.

will bend to circumstances, but if bent too much it will suddenly snap. The animal or plant will die, and the matter hitherto controlled by that psyche will be scattered. Such a moving equilibrium is at once vital and material, these qualities not being opposed but coincident. Some parcels of matter, called seeds, are predetermined to grow into organisms of a specific habit, producing similar seeds in their turn. Such a habit in matter is a psyche.¹⁶

In addition to the bodily and material functions dependent upon this inner organization of matter called the psyche, there is yet strong evidence¹⁷ to indicate that psyche, itself, contributes much more to cognition. Over and above the nutritive and generative functions of psyche, Santayana declares that it has further obligations:

All that is called knowledge of the world, of human nature, of character, and of the passions is a sort of auscultation of the psyche . . . Not knowing what we are, we at least can discourse abundantly about our books, our words, and our social actions; and these manifestations of the psyche, though peripheral, are faithful enough witnesses to her nature. She is that inner moving equilibrium from which these things radiate, and which they help to restore -- the equilibrium by which we live, in the sense of not dying; and to keep us alive is her first and essential function. It follows naturally from this biological office that in each of us she is one, vigilant,

¹⁶Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 331.

and predetermined; that she is selfish and devoted, intrepid and vicious, intelligent and mad; for her quick potentialities are solicited and distracted by all sorts of accidents.¹⁷

In the preceding chapter it was noted that the animal organism undergoes physical contact with other bodies from which sensible effects result.¹⁸ These resultant effects are the data of immediate appearance. As a realist, Santayana is convinced that the cause of such effects is an object separate and distinct from, and external to, the appearances which it caused. Furthermore, he claims that certain of the characteristics contained in the datum are objectively present in the external object and certain other characteristics come about from a sympathetic response on the part of the animal organism.¹⁹ To account for the actual perceiving of the datum, which includes objective characteristics and subjective characteristics, it would be necessary for one to say that the psyche is responsible for all these sensible activities. In consequence, it is feasible to contend that any organism possessing a transmissible structure (a psyche)

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 335-336.

¹⁸Vide supra, pp. 27-28.

¹⁹Vide supra, pp. 36-37.

is capable of experiencing organic behaviour, or sentient activity. Since a datum is actually perceived and "known" as something caused by an external object, then the animal organism may be said to have a sentient knowledge below the level of consciousness, all of which takes place in the psyche. Santayana observes that while in "literary psychology" the psychic generally denotes purely mental activities, he stresses that the psyche he refers to is the dynamic life of both body and mind yet being wholly material itself.²⁰

While psyche and spirit are separate and distinct faculties, spirit is fundamentally a part of natural life, and it could not exist at all unless its existence were natural.²¹ Therefore, spirit must emerge from and, at the same time, have a sustaining psyche beneath it:

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, with its original aesthetic spectrum and moral range and values incommensurable with anything but themselves.²²

²⁰Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 331

²¹Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", p. 844.

²²Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 354.

Inasmuch as the basis of spirit is matter, then ". . . the office of matter is precisely to breed mind and to feed it . . ." ²³

Santayana continues the enumeration of distinctions between spirit and psyche by saying that spirit is an awareness natural to animals which reveals the universe and themselves as parts of the universe. He further says that any word that marks the total inner difference between being awake or asleep, alive or dead, is synonymous with spirit, such as consciousness, attention, feeling, or thought. ²⁴ Before spirit emerges, however, there is ". . . a long growth during which excitability and potentiality of various kinds are concentrated in organisms and become transmissible." ²⁵ Viewed from the inside, the difference between sleeping and waking is absolute morally, but from the outside, or biologically, the difference is not absolute. Spirit is not in potency as is the psyche; ²⁶ it is pure

²³George Santayana, "The Realm of Truth", in his Realms of Being, One-Volume Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), p. 441.

²⁴Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", p. 572.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 597.

light and actuality.²⁷ Neither is it persistent in its perception; on the contrary, spirit depends entirely on the inner organization and physical tendencies of the material psyche to enable it to perceive its object; that is to say:

. . . the intensity and scope of this moral illumination, as well as the choice of characters lighted up, the order of the scenes and how long each shall last, all hang on the preparations nature may have made for this free entertainment.²⁸

Now the suggestion appears once again that since there is no absolute difference between sleeping and waking in the psyche -- no observable difference from the outside, or from a biological viewpoint -- then there is a constant potentiality or persistency for the acquisition of a transmissible, sentient knowledge purely on the level of the material psyche; in other words, in the realm of matter before spirit is aroused. Since the difference between sleeping and waking is absolute in the spirit, sporadic illumination (or, as will soon be evident, intuition) occurs whereby a conscious knowledge, or a purely intellectual knowledge, is acquired. Santayana states that the stress and strain of material facts and events cause this conscious activity to arise which

²⁷Ibid., p. 572.

²⁸Ibid.

thinks in ideas, but ". . . it is not a realm of ideas hypostasized",²⁹ by which he means that these ideas are not to be considered as true objects of knowledge. At the same time that the material psyché perceives facts and events in the material order, spirit -- whose essence is thought -- synthesizes these facts, lending ". . . new mental dimension, expressing material organization morally, and perhaps gloriously",³⁰ to matter.

If in sentient knowledge, the organism perceives and responds to stimulation from the outside, both of which operations, though occurring simultaneously, culminate in the formation of an idea, or the datum of immediate experience, what is the fruition and goal for the spirit? Santayana answers that, in thinking, the spirit dwells upon an eternal, logical and non-existent essence, the absolutely indubitable characteristics of an external object as contained in the datum. Spirit, as was noted above, is not constant and persistent in its perception.³¹ It perceives essence only at some particular place and definite moment ". . . by the operation of its natural organs . . ." ³² The fact that

²⁹Ibid., p. 597.

³⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Truth", p. 442.

³¹Vide supra, p. 2.

³²Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 63.

spirit is aware or conscious of this essence is what Santayana calls intuition:

This acquaintance with essence I call intuition, whether it be passive, aesthetic, and mystical, or on the contrary analytical and selective, as in reasoned discourse . . .³³

Santayana speaks of intuition of essence as the vanishing point of scepticism,³⁴ because it is in essence that the animal organism has found the ultimate goal, an end to the search prompted by the contradictions and fanciful dogmas of the material world. Intuition is a spontaneous and electric illumination of the mind wherein its object is grasped simultaneously with its own birth in the psyche:

. . . by intuition I mean direct and obvious possession of the apparent, without commitments of any sort about its truth, significance, or material existence. The deliverance of intuition is some pure essence.³⁵

For fear that its origin might be forgotten, Santayana reiterates on numerous occasions throughout the Realms of Being that intuition is ". . . an animal faculty: it is called forth by material stress, or by passion."³⁶

³³Ibid., p. 4.

³⁴Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 126.

³⁵Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", p. 646.

³⁶Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", pp. 15-16.

Without this animal faculty, the psyche, there would be no organ nor any occasion for intuition;³⁷ and, in direct consequence, essence would never enter the life of an animal organism.³⁸ Despite its undisputed origin in the realm of matter, intuition of essence occurs in the realm of spirit only.³⁹ Perhaps the most important single approach to essence, Santayana asserts, is attention, which, if awakened, intensified, and purified, will cause the object of intuition ". . . to stand before you in all its living immediacy and innocent nakedness."⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid., p. 9. "Intuition would be impossible without an underlying animal life, a psyche; for how should the sheer light of intuition actualise itself, or choose the essence on which it should fall? A psyche, the hereditary organisation and movement of life in an animal, must first exist and sustain itself by its 'intelligent' adaptations to the ambient world: but these adaptations are not conscious until, by virtue of their existence, intuition arises; and intuition arises when the inner life of the animal, or its contact with external things, is expressed in some actual appearance, in some essence given in feeling or thought."

³⁸Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, pp. 128-129. "Essence without intuition would be not merely non-existent (as it always is), but what is worse, it would be the object of no contemplation, the goal of no effort, the secret or implicit ideal of no life. It would be valueless."

³⁹Vide Santayana, Realms of Being, Preface, p. xi. "Intuition, or absolute apprehension without media or doubt, is proper to spirit perusing essences; it is impossible to animals confronting facts."

⁴⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 15.

In spite of the fact that whatever approach is used for the discovery of essence, since all approaches are adventitious, or whether it is discovered at all makes no difference to essence in the least,⁴¹ Santayana has elected to enumerate three other approaches to essence by which this very real yet non-existent, logical being, is experienced. Firstly, essence may be discovered by a scrupulous scepticism, admitting of nothing doubtful save the character of some given essence;⁴² secondly, by dialectics, an analysis or construction of ideal forms, which abstracts from such animal faith as might be stimulated by their presence, and traces instead the inherent patterns or logical relations of these forms as intuition reveals them;⁴³ and thirdly, essence may be discovered wherever the beautiful harmonies and patterns of nature, all of which are essences, so enhance the knowing subject that he is caught up in aesthetic rapture -- or the approach by

⁴¹Ibid., p. 1.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 1-2. This is the approach that Santayana chose to use in Scepticism and Animal Faith where by the datum was purified of all contingent relations to existence. This substantiates the suggestion made earlier that essence is the "purified datum". Vide supra pp. 38; 42-43; 53-54.

⁴³Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", pp. 3-5.

pure contemplation.⁴⁴

When essence is intuited and possessed most intimately in the spiritual realm, is it at this point that knowledge of the external object is acquired? No, Santayana answers, because the essence which arises spontaneously in intuition is but a signal to the spirit that an object is stimulating the organism, or that an event is taking place in the external world. When this signal is properly interpreted, knowledge results.⁴⁵ It is true that essence acts as an object of intuition and, in this sense, intuition is a type of cognition; nevertheless, the intuition of essence can never con-

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 6-8; vide etiam p. 14. "Thus scepticism, dialectic, contemplation, and spiritual discipline, all lead to the discrimination of essence; and anyone who has trodden any of these paths to the end will not need to be told what essence means, or that it is a most real and interesting realm of being. But it is not the whole of being: on the contrary, were there nothing but essence, not one of these approaches to it would be open: there would be no possible movement, no events, no life, and no preference. Considered in itself, essence is certainly the deepest, the only inevitable, form of reality; but I am here speaking of approaches to it, that is, of considerations drawn from human experience that may enable us to discern that primary reality and to recognize it to be such in contrast to our own form of being. We stand, then, on another plane, the plane of scattered experience, brute fact, contingent existence; if we did not, the discernment of essence would have no novelty for us, it would reveal no night-firmament behind our day, it would not liberate us from ourselves or from the incubus of accidental things."

⁴⁵Vide Santayana, Realms of Being, Preface, p. viii; vide etiam Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 88.

vey knowledge because essence is intended to be only a signal to indicate something other than itself in the existential realm:

There is indeed a sense in which intuition itself is cognitive from the beginning. It is apprehension of something distinct, capable of being recognized and spoken of again. Yet this something might be a pure feeling or idea, enriching the mind, but conveying no knowledge of anything further. In a pregnant and transcendent sense, therefore, intuition is not knowledge. It is the mere possession of a thought, which need have no object other than the essence revealed to it.⁴⁶

These signals are also names for external objects, and they may become terms in knowledge because things are "known" when they are named; but they must never be interpreted as abstractions; that is to say, the innermost characteristics, or nature, abstracted by the mind from an external object.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Santayana, "The Realm of Spirit", pp. 662-663; vide etiam Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, pp. 169-170.

⁴⁷ Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 35. "Things are thereby 'known' in the sense that they are named, and distinguished by their rough aspect and occasions; they are not known at all in the sense of being disclosed in their inner nature, either totally or partially. The specious essence intuited is the name given by the psyche to the material force encountered or exerted; it is a spontaneous symbol, not abstract even in its origin; as the word cat is not drawn out of the domestic animal, yet serves to designate it in its entirety, and is much simpler."

On this occasion, the nominalistic strain evident throughout Santayana's description of essence is brought clearly to light. He anticipates that others will charge him with nominalism, and answers his critics by saying that a nominalist employs mere facts to denote the differences in things, which differences are stated only after the facts are manifested singly to a perceiving mind. His essences, he explains, are not facts but are logical entities which reside eternally in a distinct realm, and designate precisely a single object; therefore, the name called forth by an essence is truly proper and universal to the extent that it can be applied once, or many times, or never at all.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, it would appear that the manifestation of essences and facts occurs the same way for both Santayana and the nominalists; in other words, when either appears, a thing is designated by the name which the essence or the fact suggests. Furthermore, it is difficult for Santayana to explain away charges of nominalism while emphatically stating that essences are not abstractions. For all intents and purposes, Santayana's essence floats in and as easily disappears, the same as a name or

⁴⁸Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", pp. 535-536.

term occurs to a nominalist when he experiences facts, and is forgotten or passes out of his mind when he is not experiencing those facts.

Apropos to the discussion of essences as signals for a material fact or event, it remains to discover just what Santayana means by knowledge since essences themselves are not the objects of knowledge.

It will be recalled that the Critical Realists set forth three factors to be dealt with in a consideration of the knowledge problem: the object; the knowing subject; and the datum, by which the object becomes present to the knowing subject.⁴⁹ Since the aim of intelligence is a knowledge of things as they are, Santayana seeks to achieve his aim by a theory of knowledge which interposes a transitive medium, an essence, between the idea, or datum of immediate appearance, and the object. Therefore, in Santayana, there are found three aspects of the cognition process which are necessary for an acquisition of knowledge; namely, the external object, the symbol of that object (an essence), and the awareness or consciousness of the given essence (intuition). The cognition process can be reduced to the following steps: The

⁴⁹Vide supra, p. 32.

animal organism is brought by chance in contact with an external object, fact, or event. The psyche, being the vital principle of the material body, perceives the stimulation as coming from the outside, and responds sympathetically. There is thus produced an idea -- known also as the datum -- containing certain characteristics supposed to have passed over from the object into the datum, and certain characteristics that result from the response of the psyche.⁵⁰ In this primary phase of cognition, there is a type of sentient knowledge whereby the organism is conscious of the external world. Yet it does not perceive the object as it actually exists; instead, the presence of the datum awakens intuition within the psyche. At this point, a transition is made from the realm of matter to the realm of spirit, and essences begin to appear in intuition which the animal organism recognizes as signals for the object encountered in action. Essence has absolutely no frame of reference, but is what it is intended to be -- a symbol for extramental

⁵⁰ Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 508. "All the appearances of matter including the geometrical, are relatively true of it, since it evokes them, but they all are conventional and qualified by the nature of the animal psyches in which they are evoked."

reality in its fullest measure. Where essence comes from is a question that Santayana does not answer with any degree of clarity. He has spoken of essences on at least two occasions as the datum of immediate appearance; the datum of appearance becomes an essence after the psyche generates spirit.⁵¹ On yet another occasion, Santayana warns his reader that, of themselves, essences have no genesis, and their origin -- if that word can be used at all -- is entirely dependent upon animal life.⁵² The fact that essences are so dependent upon a natural basis, the animal psyche, gives credence to the contention stated immediately above that the indubitable characteristics of the datum in the realm of matter are intuited as essences after the emergence of spirit. Neither the datum nor the essence gives its perceiver any notion of an existential world, and this is the fundamental reason why essence must never be construed as an object upon which the cognitive process rests, but it must be considered solely as a symbol or sign for some object outside its own realm. Since essence does not exist

⁵¹Vide supra, p. 67, n. 42.

⁵²Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 132.

and manifests itself only in the realm of spirit, what actually occurs, and may be said to exist, is the act of intuition which emerges from the animal psyche:

. . . intuition, not the datum, is the fact which occurs; and this fact, if known at all must be asserted at some other moment by an adventurous belief which may be true or false. That which is certain and given . . . is something of which existence cannot be predicated, and which, until it is used as a description of something else, cannot be either false or true.⁵³

Although Santayana asserts that essence enlarges the acquaintance of the knowing subject with reality, the real significance of essence is one of ". . . aesthetic immediacy and logical definition",⁵⁴ which fact is a great deal of consolation to the sceptic,⁵⁵ because essence ". . . is the sum of mentionable objects, of terms about which, or in which, something might be said."⁵⁶ Nevertheless, essence does

⁵³Ibid., p. 45.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 75.

⁵⁵Ibid. "Thus the most radical sceptic may be consoled, without being rebuked or refuted; he may leap at one bound over the whole human tangle of beliefs and dogmatic claims, elude human incapacity, and bias, and take hold of the quite sufficient assurance that any essence or ideal quality of being which he may be intuiting has just the characteristics he is finding in it, and has them eternally."

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 77.

not even approach to knowledge of fact and may not have any natural significance. On the other hand, transitive knowledge would be impossible without the intuition of essence, Santayana declares, because essences are ". . . the indispensable terms (in the perception of matters of fact, and render transitive knowledge possible."⁵⁷ These terms, however, symbolize reality and do not reveal reality in itself, inasmuch as essence, a logical entity possessing no existential relationship, is incapable of revealing anything in the existential realm of matter. This temptation to hypostatize essence, Santayana warns, causing it to take the place of a material and existing being, is disastrous for knowledge and leads to complete illusion.

Intuition of essence, to which positive experience and certitude are confined, is therefore always illusion, if we allow our hypostatizing impulse to take it for evidence of anything else.⁵⁸

If essence is but a symbol for reality, then the very act of cognition, the moment when the organism is intelligized, does not occur when essence ap-

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 80.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 100.

pears in intuition. On the contrary, perception, or knowledge of the object, occurs when the human organism reacts to the stimulation from the outside and posits the existence of the external object arbitrarily and by an act of animal faith, regarding the essence intuited as a quality of the object. Perception, as Santayana describes it quite simply, is faith.⁵⁹ While the object is posited by animal faith at the moment the organism is stimulated and intuition is awakened -- these two events being the only ones that actually occur and have existence in the natural order -- then some accounting must be made for the fact that essence, a non-abstractive, logical entity, appears in intuition, and has, at the most, a symbolic relationship to the material world of action. In rejecting abstraction, Santayana is confronted with an obstacle which cannot be ignored or lightly passed over; namely, the reconciliation of essence as given in intuition with the object experienced in action. He surmounts this difficulty by the use of animal faith:

Transitivity in knowledge has two stages or leaps: the leap of intuition, from the state of the living organism to the consci-

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 69.

ousness of some essence; and the leap of faith and of action, from the symbol actually given in sense or in thought to some ulterior existing object.⁶⁰

"Knowledge is knowledge," Santayana says, "because it has compulsory objects that pre-exist";⁶¹ which is to say that an internal or intramental operation does not take place in cognition,⁶² but a ". . . felt attitude identifies the object of . . . desire and knowledge in the physical world."⁶³ Knowledge is ". . . belief in a world of events, and especially of those parts of it which are near the self, tempting or threatening it."⁶⁴ Mind, for Santayana, is not an active faculty -- it is incapable of reproducing anything on a spiritual level, by which operation the thing reproduced becomes a part of the knowing subject very intimately. Santayana declares that mind has the power only to notice or intend things; consequently, the objects apprehended by mind ". . . are no part of itself even when they are essences, much less when they are things."⁶⁵

⁶⁰Santayana, "Three Proofs of Realism", p. 183.

⁶¹Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 172.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 171-172.

⁶³Ibid., p. 173. Italics are his.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 179.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 179-180.

That these natural signs have a real object is the first and truest of all pre-suppositions; and they reveal this reality to us in the only way in which revelation or knowledge is possible to a mind, namely, by faith mediated by some feeling, image, or concept. We are a part of the reality, but cannot, in body or mind, be or become any other part of it. We can only think the rest and believe in it. Faith is accordingly gnostic. Only the demand for literal knowledge makes knowledge impossible.⁶⁶

Since a knowledge of existence can be based on animal faith only, the mind can never discover absolute truth because such truth is intangible and scorns being known.⁶⁷ Rather is it the function of mind to bring about an increase in knowledge ". . . in the spiritual dimension, by adding appearance to substance . . .",⁶⁸ the same substance which the mind initially posited by animal faith. And so, Santayana continues, ". . . the garment of appearance must always fit it [matter] loosely and drape it in alien folds, because appearance is essentially an adaptation of facts to the scale and faculty of the observer."⁶⁹ In fine, knowledge of an

⁶⁶Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 518.

⁶⁷Vide Santayana, Realms of Being, Preface, p. xiii.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. xii.

object is a knowledge of what the object means to the knowing subject; it would appear that its only function is to satisfy the needs and desires of each organism in accordance with "... the action on foot or ... the subject in hand."⁷⁰ Santayana reduces the cognition process to the following succinct description:

Finally, knowledge is true belief grounded in experience, I mean, controlled by outer facts. It is not true by accident; it is not shot into the air on the chance that there may be something it may hit. It arises by a movement of the self sympathetic or responsive to surrounding beings, so that these beings become its intended objects, and at the same time an appropriate correspondence tends to be established between these objects and the beliefs generated under their influence.⁷¹

In summation, let us recall these pertinent points: Essence, for Santayana, is an intermediary between the knowing subject and the external object, and acts as a symbol. In such a role, essence consists of all possible terms needed to describe the object, but it does not take the place of the object as object. Knowledge, as a result, is not acquired when essences are intuited.

⁷⁰Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 515.

⁷¹Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 180.

Essences also are in an entirely different realm of being than the objects of which they are symbols. Knowledge, or a reference given to these symbols -- a transition to the realm in which the objects are found -- is made only at the bidding of animal faith. In fact, animal faith is called forth before essences appear because some external object is needed as a cause for the data of immediate appearance.⁷²

Since the ground for justifying the reference between essences and the external objects is irrational and instinctive animal faith, it would appear that essence has been afforded too prominent a place for a mere collection of logical terms. Moreover, Santayana never does explain satisfactorily how such an entity can contain characteristics which have real existence in the object inasmuch as essences reside in a Platonic and transcendental world, while the objects they symbolize exist in the real world.

Santayana has made an honest attempt to overcome epistemological pitfalls thoroughly aware to him from the very beginning. Unfortunately, his explana-

⁷²Ibid., p. 107. "Animal faith being a sort of expectation and open-mouthedness, is earlier than intuition; intuitions come to help it out and lend it something to posit."

tion of knowledge does not satisfy, especially when, at the most crucial moments, that explanation peters out in animal faith. It seems that, instead of surmounting the errors of idealism, he relapses into similar ones. May we not say that essences are nothing more than objects of knowledge for Santayana precisely because he cannot say definitely what this object is until an essence is intuited? Would it be presumptuous to say that an essence really is the essence of the external object which signifies its true nature? Santayana is as conscious of triangularity, horseness, humanity, as any realist, but to say that such essences are abstractions would be for him an idolatrous statement.

In his presentation of a realistic theory of knowledge, Santayana has followed the policies of the Critical Realists in creating a medium between thought and thing. But if he has proved the realistic thesis, it has been because of the implicit assumption of the distinction between subject and object which underlies his entire argument rather than by the efficacy of the doctrine of essence. If Santayana says he knows the object through his essence, then it is not known at all. By hypothesis, they are directly intuited. Therefore, they are not the essences of this or that object,

except by the merest chance -- they are simply essences
and nothing more. Knowledge, in the end, depends on
animal faith.

IV
CONCLUSION

We saw at the outset that the first impressions of Santayana's tender years bear witness to his deep concern for the world of nature, for natural objects, and for the natural wisdom that one may acquire who gives himself wholeheartedly to the study of nature. Philosophy, then, is thoroughly grounded in the natural manifestations of the material world rather than in "high guessing" and "rash and pretentious intellectualism." Untold pleasure is derived from reflecting on observations of nature in order to ". . . disentangle the intimate moral and intellectual echoes . . ." inherent in the natural world.¹

Santayana never abandoned this pristine inclination toward naturalism, and it is reflected in his writings throughout his entire career. We may note this attitude chiefly in the two major aspects of his system: a philosophy of nature envisaging the entire universe, and an epistemological inquiry based upon its findings.

¹Vide Santayana, "A General Confession", p. 12.

Firstly, a propensity for naturalism as manifested in the material reality of ". . . public experience . . . the stars, the seasons, the swarm of animals, the spectacle of birth and death, of cities and wars",² prompted in him a serious interest in a philosophy of nature which took precedence over any other philosophical interests. He would have nothing to do with exact sciences and learned books of the metaphysicians who seek to impose logical or rhetorical constructions on the simple matters of fact in nature. His view of nature was simply that to the senses, the passions, and the intellect, reality presents itself to man as a flux of events and actions, a world of infinite potentiality. As a matter of course, his prime interest in the philosophy of nature would cause him to investigate matter from the standpoint of its natural construction. As to its inner nature, or "whatness", he would leave this question to the scientists; this is truly the work of the scientists and not the metaphysicians. Matter, with respect to its inward secrets of composition, is completely unfathomable and unintelligible.

But, nevertheless, matter does manifest a cer-

²Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, Preface, p. x.

tain stability as it appears to the senses in the whirling flux of existence. Santayana arbitrarily assigns the term substance to the "underlying reality" in existence which, as we have noted,³ exhibits a high degree of permanence. He further describes substance as being composed of many parts and constituting a physical space and a physical time.⁴ In addition to a permanent quality in the existential flux for which substance is responsible, the reader is told that man takes note of a decided repetition of similar events, a recurrence of familiar patterns, at various moments of existence. There is a natural tendency in existence for these patterns and familiar events to change often and assume different characteristics. His explanation for this phenomenon is that the dynamic flux of existence is in constant potency to become something else.⁵ This "something else" Santayana defines as a form which substance must assume at any natural moment⁶ because ". . . sub-

³Vide supra, p. 22.

⁴Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 202.

⁵Ibid., p. 285. "Existence, then, is a passage from potentiality to act, the order of its moments being determined by the direction of realisations within each of them."

⁶Ibid., p. 292. "A natural moment marks the existential emergence of a new form -- that particular

stance itself must be something in particular, exclusive at each point of what it is at all others."⁷ Otherwise it would be incapable of existing itself, or making itself known at a particular moment to a particular mind. Potency in matter is another name for "material fertility", since matter displays a forward tension for the taking on of new forms; however, ". . . what this potentiality may be actually is usually unknown to us; we merely assume that it must be something actual . . ."⁸

Do forms, for Santayana, have the same meaning as for Aristotle and the Thomists? Santayana answers negatively to this question because the terms "matter" and "form" denote merely poetical and logical categories for a naturalist. Regardless of the fact that matter must exhibit form at every particular moment in existence, it is not to be understood that matter and form are metaphysical principles which unite to become an existing being, as Aristotle's metaphysics demands.⁹

form which circumstances then impose on the matter at hand, as previously disposed; and this moment ends when the balance of tensions which brought it about yields to a fresh equilibrium."

⁷Ibid., p. 277.

⁸Ibid., p. 286. This is a prime example of how Santayana has misconceived the philosophy of nature. So many of the moderns are guilty of this same default.

⁹Santayana dismisses the classical principle

And Santayana is not quite certain that Aristotle relied on these component principles in his own philosophy of nature:

No doubt the naturalist too may speak of forms and of matter; but his forms are aggregates, themselves arising and breaking up; and his matter is something existent, the matter actually transmitted and transmuted by nutrition, generation, or labour. This matter everywhere has a particular quality, structure, and potency; and it not only possesses form, as a geometrical solid possesses it, but it is informed with the peculiar essence of existence also, which includes inner stability . . . Aristotle himself derived the existence of any particular thing or substance not from its metaphysical components but from prior complete natural beings; and he even assigned to this ancestral matter what seems to us too fixed a form, since he did not admit any evolution of species.¹⁰

Matter, he declares, must pass endlessly from one form to another.¹¹ Nevertheless, he remains firm in holding that forms cannot be the cause of any particular incidents, that only the varied predispositions of matter can be the cause of things:

"prime matter" as a grammatical essence, a purely transcendental term, not only incapable of existence, but as nothing more than an ideal term which some philosophers employ in an effort to translate the events of nature into thought. Ibid., p. 210.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 279.

¹¹Ibid., p. 278.

In respect to any particular event, or to the form of any particular thing or action, the cause of occurrence or non-occurrence can only lie in the material situation at the previous moment -- the structure and movement of the substance at hand under those material circumstances.¹²

In fine, it may be concluded that in the physical order matter must exhibit some character, and this character is what Santayana means by form. His form, however, is far from being the active form, self-energizing principle, and causative agent, which is to be found in Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. Santayana seems to reverse the order, making matter the self-energizing principle, the origin of, and the selector-for, the forms which characterize it:

. . . but it is indomitable matter, from the beginning in unstable equilibrium, that fell once into that old form as it falls now into the new, spontaneously and without vows of fidelity.¹³

Oftentimes the interplay of matter and form may take an "unprecedented direction".¹⁴ Thus Santayana rejects the notion of causality and Aristotle's doctrine

¹²Ibid., p. 387.

¹³Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁴Ibid.

of teleology and substitutes an explanation of his own preference:

Now a different form of mock explanation appears in what is called teleology, when the ground of things is sought in their excellence, in their harmony with their surroundings, or in the adaptation of organs to their functions and of actions to their intentions.¹⁵

Santayana does not deny that patterns or correspondences are actually perceptible and are ". . . a patent and prevalent fact in nature."¹⁶ But when the question "why" is asked (an unanswerable question, he says), the only explanation is that everything in nature is cooperative by necessity.¹⁷

He dismisses the question of final causes by saying that, in themselves, they are inadequate to explain the effects in which they are manifested, but such causes require for their operation ". . . a deeper flow of natural forces which we may darkly assign to fate or matter or chance or the unfathomable will of God."¹⁸ Final causes do not effect the development of nature, but

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 310.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 319.

final causes are themselves effected by a "predisposition" in matter. This predisposition, or potentiality to a predestined movement, cannot be examined because it is hidden from human observation, and even inexpressible in intelligible terms.¹⁹ Summing up the question of final causes, Santayana states that they do appear evident in nature, but, in truth, they are ". . . moral perspectives superposed on natural causation."²⁰

This thesis has attempted to show that Santayana envisaged nature as a whole -- dynamic and primitive -- when he set out to define a philosophy of nature, and that his paramount intention to define and limit the scope of such a philosophy was directed toward ". . . a single view, summary and symbolic, but comprehensive."²¹ His embarkment on such a task was predetermined, for we have noted in the first pages of this chapter, and again in Chapter I, his early testament concerning an affinity for a close study of the course and events of the natural world:

The most a man can say for himself, or for

¹⁹Ibid., p. 317.

²⁰Ibid., p. 319.

²¹Ibid., p. 194.

any other element from which exploration may start, is that whatever is to enter his field of action must belong to the same dynamic system with himself.²²

He describes his task in simple terms: man must begin with the natural world as it appears to him, leaving aside for the moment an analysis of how we know what we know about the world and whether or not it is true knowledge, relying on an assumption that nature is as it seems. And so our efforts will merely carry out this assumption consistently and honestly until we have reached a valid conception of nature ". . . by which the faith involved in action may be enlightened and guided."²³

Let us now consider the second major aspect of Santayana's philosophy, noted on the first page of this chapter, by which he would formulate a valid method of acquiring knowledge of the world, based upon the findings of his philosophy of nature, with a view to communicating this wisdom of nature to others. This aspect, of course, concerns his epistemology.

Chapters II and III established the fact that

²²Ibid., p. 216.

²³Ibid., p. 194.

Santayana interposed an intermediary agent between his mind and the external world of objects to symbolize in the spiritual sphere what takes place in the material sphere. He emphasized the symbolic nature of the intermediary essence for the very reason that essence is not the object of knowledge; it is animal faith, and faith alone, that man ultimately depends upon to corroborate what he already believes.

In Chapter I, we saw that his philosophy of nature could proceed only so far before the knowledge problem must be considered. Matter is utterly unintelligible to mind without the intervention of some immaterial principle. The flux of materialism has meaning to a perceptive mind only when it flows through essences. Hence, essence per se is due for a brief treatment in our concluding remarks insofar as it complements and rounds out the consistent and honest conception of nature for which Santayana states he has always striven. It is of vital importance for a proper understanding of his philosophy to stress the preceding statement: essence figures pre-eminently in the total scope of Santayana's natural philosophy, and our consideration of essence must confine itself to the framework which his materialism provides. Thus Santayana declares, at the

outset, that all essences of human experience are assigned and belong wholly to the very essence of substance. All exemplified essences are manifestations of substance ". . . because the essences which substance takes on in detail are certainly forms of substances at those points/. . ."24 The very advent of essence is traced directly to the forms which substance assumes at one moment and throws off at the next moment: "It is as the forms things wear to the senses or to the practised intellect that essences are first noticed . . ."25

In considering essence per se, Santayana warns his reader that he is lifting it from its context -- a logical and non-existent realm -- and that the reader must not relegate to essence any substantial or natural significance:

Even if the whole realm of essence . . . were realised somewhere at some time in the life of nature, essence would remain a different and non-existent realm: because the realisation of each part could be only local and temporary, and for all the rest of time and in all the worlds that excluded it, each fact would fade

²⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

²⁵ Santayana, "The Realm of Essence" } p. 30.

into the corresponding essence, and would remain certain and inevitable as an essence only, and as a fact merely presumptive.²⁶

The significance of essence in its non-existent realm consists solely in aesthetic immediacy and logical definition;²⁷ it is the sum of the mentionable terms of actual thought about some external object.²⁸ Using such descriptive language, Santayana continually reiterates his Platonic experience with essence in its purely ideal and logical status. The external world of substance is the only existent. Essence finds its place in the world of appearance, which is completely devoid of any notion of existence.²⁹

The logical being of essence, Santayana declares, is a being which is not realized. Essences are inert and passive themes, unable to reveal themselves or even to resist being manifested as the flux flows through them, picking up now one essence only to drop it for another. Should essence be realized; that is, should existence, at any given moment, select one es-

²⁶Ibid., pp. 22-23.

²⁷Vide supra, p. 74.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Vide supra, p. 73.

sence to portray itself, this realization results through sheer chance, and does not in any way change the logical, non-existent character of essence since realization in existence is only temporal and local.³⁰ Essence eternally retains its perfect identity and individuality in its own logical realm whether or not it is ever realized in existence. The independence of the whole realm of essence from any existential circumstances causes it to be wholly indifferent to realization in existence.³¹ Although essence is an indispensable term in the perception of matters of fact and renders transitive knowledge possible,³² it is matter which is the selective principle and renders manifest an essence whenever an ideal form is chosen to define the flux at any given moment.³³

Much understanding results, Santayana asserts,

³⁰Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 20. "An essence is an inert theme, something which cannot bring itself forward, but must be chosen, if chosen, by some external agent; and evidently the choice made by this agent, contingent as it is and wholly arbitrary, cannot render unavailable the other inert themes which other agents, or itself in a different moment of its flux, might choose instead."

³¹Ibid., p. 19.

³²Vide Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 80.

³³Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", p. 15.

when critics of his philosophy classify his theory of essence as a transcendental absolutism.³⁴ Their charge rests chiefly in the fact that it is not possible to determine an overt connection between the world of essence and the world of existence, and, hence, the two realms are hopelessly separated. Santayana replies to this charge by stating once again that it is impossible for the animal organism to notice change in the existential flux, where substance assumes a variety of forms, without the intervention of non-existent, logical essences.³⁵ There is certainly no evidence of an actual physical connection, he continues, but, at the same time, it is not to be interpreted that essence forever resides in a transcendental world with no relevant significance in the world of existence. Moreover, he points out that the two realms can never be connected in a way that his critics insinuate; that is, either that essence dwells intimately in the substance as its form,

³⁴Vide Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 525.

³⁵Ibid. "A changing world is defined at each moment or in each movement by the essence of that moment or of that movement; and when it drops that pattern or that trope, the essence then dismissed remains, in its logical identity, precisely the essence that it was during that manifestation and before it." Vide etiam Santayana, Scepticism and Animal Faith, p. 113.

or that somehow the mind abstracts the form from the substance which becomes the essence in the spiritual sphere. The fact that one is a logical, non-existent realm, while the other is a realm of real beings, actions, and events, indicates conclusively that they can never be continuous, but it is not correct to say that they are hopelessly separated. It would be more accurate to say that there is a distinction between essence and existence inasmuch as they may be super-imposed one upon the other. Essence and existence move along like parallels, essence reflecting in the realm of spirit what takes place in the realm of matter:

It is by its very ideality, non-existence, and eternity, then, that essence is inwardly linked with existence, not by being an extension or a portion of that which exists.³⁶

Continuing on this theme of the misinterpretation of essence, Santayana refers to the most stubborn misunderstanding as one which would say that essence is an abstraction in the sense of being drawn from external reality.³⁷ He explains that essence can never be abstracted from reality because it is never found there

³⁶Santayana, "Apologia Pro Mente Sua", p. 526.

³⁷Vide Santayana, "The Realm of Essence", pp. 31-

in the first place. It may have direct reference to reality in that it reflects the form manifested by substance, but it is a mere accident that some essence appears at one particular time, accountable for only because matter or mind happened to have traversed that form at that particular time and thereby selected that essence:

Not that essence can resist or resent this irrational selection which existence makes of its riches: on the contrary, essence is a sort of invitation to the dance; it tempts nature with openings in every direction; and in so doing, it manifests its own inexhaustible variety.³⁸

Considered independently, prior to any reference to the existential world, and purely as an unsubstantial entity residing in a logical realm, essence evinces certain characteristics which further substantiate its logical nature. These characteristics attest to the close similarity between the realm of essence and the world of Platonic ideas, an observation which Santayana himself mentions several times:

- (a) Owing to its logical nature, the principle of essence is identity -- the being of each essence is exhausted by its own definition, its

³⁸Ibid., p. 21.

own distinguishing character;³⁹

- (b) each essence is individual in the sense of being incommunicable;⁴⁰
- (c) the "inalienable individuality" of essence renders it also to be a universal, plus the fact that it stands in no temporal or spatial relationship to anything, and can be repeated an infinite number of times like copies of a book;⁴¹
- (d) an essence is eternal, a fact which is brought about by the identity of each essence with itself and the difference from every other essence, whereby they are all defined and distinguished in eternity.⁴²

Santayana draws a conclusion to his treatment of the being of essence by saying that when essence is

³⁹Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 18-19; p. 36. "Every essence is universal not because there are repeated manifestations of it (for there need be no manifestations at all) but because it is individuated internally by its character, not externally by its position in the flux of nature."

⁴²Ibid., pp. 24-25.

defined and understood as a non-existent, logical, eternal and immutable, self-identical being, it is said to have truer being than any substance, or any event or action of the existential world. The reason is obvious, he declares, because substance and events, occurring in the realm of matter, are subject to conditions of flux in which certain phases of being are present in one particular moment and absent in another. Thus, while existence enjoys real and actual being, nevertheless it does not possess the fullness of being wholly present in the logical essence.⁴³ The characteristics of essence, therefore, are sufficient to divulge its own proper being:

Determination, individuality, variety infinitely precise and indelible (degrees of articulation being themselves all equally distinct) is the very being of essence.⁴⁴

Whatever has been said about essence in the preceding pages, one cannot but be impressed with Santayana's insistence upon maintaining his original postulate of materialism throughout. It is the existential world, regardless of its unintelligible flux, that he posits as the source, power, or agency of every aspect of his

⁴³Ibid., p. 23.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 27.

philosophy, material or immaterial. Despite the noble task of making matter intelligible and meaningful to mind which essence is supposed to achieve, it plays a secondary role in the drama of the dynamic world of action. Even a description of its properties is related in terms of its reference to the existential world; the functions of essence, when described, are couched in the language of a materialist. Thus any conclusions made about the realm of essence and its function in the knowledge process will not cancel our original premise: a study of Santayana's philosophy must be carried out in its proper setting of materialism because the various aspects of his philosophy are inseparable from its materialistic foundation.

Professor M. K. Munitz points out conclusively that the naturalistic aspect of Santayana's philosophy exhibits certain historical affinities to Aristotle and Spinoza in that all three avoid epistemological and transcendental inquiries but base their systems upon "... a realistic theory of scientific methodology that finds nature accessible to exploration and genuine discovery of efficacious structure, and a theory of the good life that pays equal attention to both the theoretic and the practical functions of the intelli-

gence."⁴⁵ In avoiding wherever he could the embarrassments of an epistemological analysis of his thought and concentrating his attention on the philosophy of nature, Santayana was following a sound philosophical instinct:

The dream of the natural philosopher would be to describe the world from its beginning (if it had a beginning); tracing all its transformations; and he would like to do this analytically, not pictorially -- that is, not in the sensuous language of some local observer composing a private perspective, but in terms of the ultimate elements (if there are ultimate elements) concerned in the actual evolution of things.⁴⁶

The fact that his philosophy could not stand the tests to which epistemology would subject it is really beside the point, for epistemology is powerless to correct the initial misconception of the extramental real from which epistemological errors arise. And, in spite of all his high ideals and hard thinking, Santayana never achieved a sound philosophy of nature. First and foremost, he never really understood the nature of matter, and he chose the easy way out by throwing this question back to the scientists; it is the rightful duty of the philoso-

⁴⁵M. K. Munitz, The Moral Philosophy of Santayana (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 11-12.

⁴⁶Santayana, "The Realm of Matter", p. 194.

pher to solve such problems. No doubt Santayana firmly believed that leaving the difficult questions to the scientists would in no way jeopardize the validity of his philosophy, yet there is really only one principle that he actually attempted to establish in his philosophy of nature; namely, matter is the only source, power, or agency in the universe. This tells us very little.

In spite of his unabashed acceptance of a dogmatic faith as the final judge of matters of fact, Santayana proceeds to elaborate a theory of essences which exist in a transcendental world and whose function it is to symbolize the unknowable real. He is left with unintelligible matter on the outside, and logical entities residing in a transcendental world on the inside. Although he has relegated to essence the job of making intelligible to the mind what existence is, Santayana is not able to re-establish a relationship between essence and the form of substance which essence is supposed to portray. The extramental real is a world of events and action without intelligible content.

Moreover, Santayana posits the realm of essence to reflect in the mind the forms of substance, but refuses to allow essence to act in any other capacity

but a symbol. Essence is not an object of knowledge, neither is it a formal sign through which the mind of the animal organism is intelligized and perfected. Animal faith is the sum and substance of the act of cognition -- a fervent belief that what is present to the mind really exists and forms a part of the natural world.

But the very intimate act of the knowledge process in which the mind should become the thing that it knows is not an intellectual act for Santayana if faith takes over. What really belongs to the intellect is thrown to the imagination. The animal organism reacts to the stimulation of an external object, and an opaque screen of essences -- really a fabrication of the imagination -- symbolizes for the organism the stimulating object. Hence it remains for the imagination to invest the essences with a reality which the extramental real (originally misconceived) cannot provide.

By way of comparison, we may examine a valid epistemology, such as the Thomistic theory of knowledge, in which a distinction is made in the faculty of cognition between the external senses and the internal senses. The former deals exclusively with the thing to be known as it exists in the real world; its product is a phan-

tasm which includes the sensible notes of the thing. The latter works upon the phantasm and, with the aid of an active intellect, produces a concept by which the thing is known as an intellectuated object. The object as object is known as an essence, or the "whatness" of the thing, which is then related through a judgment to the thing as it exists in the real order. This last procedure of judging the actual existence of the thing is again verified by the external senses because the thing as it actually exists in the extramental world is never lost sight of by the external senses. In Santayana's theory of knowledge, one does not get beyond the first stage of cognition, which means that the mind is left with the imaginative notes of the thing only. This collection of imaginative notes is equivalent to his essence, the intermediary agent. There is a decided absence of a philosophy of judgment by which the spiritualized object can be related to its origin. Since the imagination, the highest faculty for Santayana, belongs solely to the material realm, his cognitive process is a supreme example of that species of philosophy called materialism: the higher is discussed in terms of the lower.

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V I T A

- 1923 The author was born William Franklin Dollar in Thomasville, Thomas County, Georgia, on May 30.
- 1941 Graduated from MacIntyre Park Senior High School on June 6.
Commenced employment with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company, Jacksonville, Florida, on November 7, as Secretary to the General Superintendent, Southern Division.
- 1943 Entered service with the United States Air Force on March 3.
Matriculated from U. S. Air Force Technical Training School, Fort Logan, Colorado, on July 8.
Sailed from New York with the 419th Bombardment Group (Light) on November 27, and landed in Scotland on December 2. Posted to Wethersfield, Essex, England, on December 4.
- 1944 Transferred with Air Group to Melun, France, on August 14, thence to Corneilles-en-Vixen, and Laon, France.
Confirmed by the Bishop of Versailles on December 11, the author choosing as his patron St. Paul the Apostle.
- 1945 Sailed from Marseilles, France, on September 12, after cessation of hostilities.
Separated from the service on September 30, at Camp Blanding, Florida, with rank of Technical Sergeant.
- Resumed employment with the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company, Jacksonville, Florida, in November.
- 1946 Registered with Sampson College, Geneva, New York, on October 3, as freshman in the General Arts Course.

- 1947 Entered Carmelite Order at Middletown, New York, on September 5.
- 1949 Left Whitefriars Novitiate on May 20. Registered at Assumption College on September 26 in the General Arts Course.
- 1951 Graduated from Assumption College on June 3, with Bachelor of Arts degree, General Course. Commenced graduate work in philosophy at Assumption College in September.
- 1952 Successfully passed comprehensive examinations set by the University of Western Ontario for Master of Arts candidates on October 6.
- 1954 Completed thesis on May 3.