

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IN GEORGE SANTAYANA
AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE IDEA OF CHRIST

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS
(Works of George Santayana)

- ECR *Essays in Critical Realism*, A Co-operative Study of the Problem of Knowledge («Three Proofs of Realism»), London, Macmillan Co., 1920.
- ICG *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels or God in Man*, A Critical Essay, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1946.
- IPR *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion*, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1911.
- LSK «Literal and Symbolic Knowledge» in *The Works of George Santayana*, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, MCMXXXVII, Vol. XIII.
- MWI «Some Meanings of the Word *Is*» in *The Works of George Santayana*, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, MCMXXXVII, Vol. XIII.
- PP *Persons and Places* (The Background of My Life), New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1944.
- PS *The Philosophy of George Santayana* («Apologia Pro Mente Sua»); ed. by P. A. Schilpp, Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1940.
- PSL *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957.

- RE *The Realm of Essence*; Book First of Realms of Being, London, Constable and Co., 1928.
- RM *The Realm of Matter*; Book Second of Realms of Being, London, Constable and Co., 1930.
- RS *The Realm of Spirit*; Book Fourth of Realms of Being, New York, Scribner's Sons, 1940.
- RT *The Realm of Truth*; Book Third of Realms of Being, London, Constable and Co., 1937.
- SAF *Scepticism and Animal Faith*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc., 1955.
- SE *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies*, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1922.
- SOV *Sonnets and Other Verses*, Cambridge and Chicago, Stone and Kimball, MDCCCXCIV.
- TPP *Three Philosophical Poets* (Lucretius, Dante, Goethe), New York, Doubleday and Co., 1954.
- UR «Ultimate Religion» in *The Works of George Santayana*, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, MCMXXXVII, Vol. X.
- WD *Winds of Doctrine*, New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957.

INTRODUCTION

(Division of the Subject into Two Parts
and Their Corresponding Chapters)

The mass of mankind is divided into two classes, the Sancho Panzas who have a sense for reality, but no ideals, and the Don Quixotes with a sense for ideals, but mad (IPR, vi).

Our subject's division into two parts deriving from the natural division of the title itself, may be based on Santayana's teaching of the dualistic portion of the spirit as dependent on matter for its existence but not for its essence (RS, 79), or as springing in its origin from matter and resting in its outlook in essences (RS, 49).

A basic distinction in Santayana's ontology is that between essence and existence. Essence, according to him, merely *is* (RE, 23), it is «inert and non-existent» (RM, 84), while «existence involves external relations and actual (not merely specious) flux» (SAF, 34; also 42,48). This distinction between existence and essence, the actual and the ideal, makes M. K. Munitz, in his survey of Santayana's philosophy as a whole, think that «its essential interest has been to unite a thoroughgoing appreciation of the material aspects of being and conduct with an equally thoroughgoing emphasis upon the ideal and imaginative phases of experience»¹. This estimation of Santayana's philosophy in general must be made especially in his doctrine of the spirit as having its origin from matter and its outlook on essences. And it is this that again makes Munitz talk in the case of Santayana of two interpretations of «the spiritual life»².

According to Santayana, «matter is the principle of existence: it is all things in their potentiality» (RM, v), and, therefore, the «mind-

1. Milton Karl Munitz, *The Moral Philosophy of Santayana*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939, p. 107.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 87ff.

stuff» or «the basis of mind» (SE, 221n.), since the «real potentiality of spirit [is] in matter» (RS,37). Thus in its origin spirit springs from matter and it is «entirely dependent on matter for its existence and distribution» (RS,79). But, on the other hand, the effort for a «complete triumph of spirit over the other elements of human nature» (ICG,253), that is, the endeavour of the spirit for the attainment of its intrinsic ideal, which is represented by the idea of Christ (ICG, 253), can show that «in its outlook, spirit rests in essences» (RS,49). Christ as the Second Person of the Trinity corresponds, according to Santayana, to the realm of essence which only *is*, but does *not exist* (RS, 292). «Static being is therefore something *ideal*, a term defined by intuition, attention and logic, but only an essence and essentially non-existent» (ICG, 230). This rest of spirit on essences in its outlook, on the one hand, and its dependence on matter for its existence, on the other hand, makes Santayana say:

Spirit may be taken in two ways, in its essence and in its instances. In its essence, the vocation of spirit is that of Christ... In its instances, however, the vocation of spirit is different in each soul (ICG, 254).

Considering these two aspects of the spirit, we can understand why in the preface to the *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* Santayana says,

the mass of mankind is divided into two classes, the Sancho Panzas who have a sense for reality, but no ideals, and the Don Quixotes with a sense of ideals, but mad. The expedient of recognizing facts as facts and accepting ideals as ideals, — and this is all we propose, — although apparently simple enough, seems to elude the normal human power of discrimination (IPR, vi-vii).

So, according to this division of mankind into two classes, which corresponds in some way to the dualistic destiny of the spirit in its relation to existence on the one hand, and to essence on the other hand, we divide also our subject into two parts:

I. In the first part, entitled «The Life of the Spirit», we treat spirit by the method of literary interpretation «recognizing facts as facts». In this part, therefore, the emphasis is laid upon the «Reality of the Spirit» which, for this reason, is considered as the subtitle of the first part.

II. In the second part, entitled «Appeal to the Idea of Christ», we treat spirit by the method of symbolic interpretation «accepting ideals as ideals». So, the emphasis of the second part, in opposition to the first,

is placed upon the «Ideality of the Spirit» which, for this reason, is considered as the subtitle of this part. In other words, the life of the spirit in the first part is symbolized in the second part by the idea of Christ as this idea passes through his whole life, according to the narration of the Gospels.

This parallelism of the life of spirit and the life of Christ points out what is in a way the biographical form of our essay which, for this reason, could bear as subtitle «The Biography of the Spirit»³. Santayana himself speaks of the birth of Spirit, this «miraculous» and «strange child» who «is a poet» (SE, 223). He speaks also about Spirit's mother, «mother Psyche» (SE, 21) or «the earthly soul» (SE, 29: also 222ff.) «among her children» (SE, 222); and even about Spirit's «fairy» wife who is called «Truth» (SE, 224). In view of this metaphorical language of Santayana in his description of spirit, we ourselves talk also of its life in a similar manner, that is, of the parents and the birth of Spirit, of the distraction and liberation of Spirit, of the resurrection and immortality of Spirit, etc. There is, therefore, a correspondence of the life of spirit, as is described in the first part of our essay, to the life of Christ in the second part. For this reason, in our treatment we arrange the material in such a way that the seven chapters of the first part correspond to the seven parallel chapters of the second part. This correspondence of the chapters is as follows:

I. The *first chapter* (introductory chapter) of the first part, which is about the place of the spirit among the other «realms of being», corresponds to the *first* (introductory also) *chapter* of the second part, which is about the place of Christ, as the Second Person in the doctrine of Trinity; for Santayana compares his «realms of being» to the Three Persons of the Trinity.

II. The *second chapter* of the first part, on the birth and dependence of the spirit on matter, corresponds to the *second chapter* of the second part, which is about the birth of Christ, and his dependence on his Father.

III. The *third chapter* of the first part considers the two natures of the soul, the nature of the spirit and the nature of the psyche; it corresponds to the *third chapter* of the second part which discusses the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human.

IV. The *fourth chapter* of the first part concerning the will in the

3. Santayana characterizes this life of spirit as «the moral history of spirit» (RS, 278).

spirit and the will in the psyche corresponds to the *fourth chapter* of the second part which has as its subject the divine and the human will of Christ.

V. The *fifth chapter* of the first part on intuition as a stage or leap of transitiveness in knowledge and on spiritual union as love or charity corresponds to the *fifth chapter* of the second part which treats Christ's parables as a teaching of the divine wisdom and Christ's miracles as an expression of love.

VI. The *sixth chapter* of the first part about distraction, and especially pain as the first form of distraction, and about liberation of the spirit corresponds to the *sixth chapter* of the second part which revolves around the passion and the resurrection of Christ as the liberation of the spirit through suffering.

VII. Finally, the *seventh, concluding chapter* of the first part referring to the good life of the spirit corresponds to the *seventh, concluding chapter* of the second part which has to do with the idea of Christ or God in man as the supreme good or the ideal of the spirit.

PART ONE

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

(Reality of the Spirit)

CHAPTER I

THE PLACE OF THE SPIRIT IN SANTAYANA'S ONTOLOGY

*We learn in *Timaeus* that the first of all distinctions is that between what is always identical with itself and immutable and what, on the contrary, is in flux and indefinable. This is the precise distinction I should make between essence and existence (PS, 544). Spirit depends on matter for its existence but not for its essence (RS, 79).*

1. The Distinction between Essence and Existence (Unchangeability of Essence Contrasted to the Flux of Existence)

The first part of this essay is based in the main on Santayana's principal work, *Realms of Being*¹, and especially on the last one, *The Realm of Spirit*. Before we begin the treatment of the life of spirit in particular, let us survey all these realms in general and the place of the realm of spirit among them; for, according to the philosopher himself, his writing contains a system «frankly ontological, and not humanistic»

1. These realms, four in number, are the following: 1. *The Realm of Essence* (1928); 2. *The Realm of Matter* (1930); 3. *The Realm of Truth* (1937); 4. *The Realm of Spirit* (1940). According to the acknowledgement of the philosopher himself, this four-volume work with the introductory volume *Scepticism and Animal Faith* took «sixteen years» to be brought to an end. (See the first words in the general review of these realms in the *Realm of Spirit*, p. 272; see also in the preface to the introductory volume what Santayana says in general about his philosophical system as it is contained in all these volumes). On these *Realms of Being*, and especially on the *Realm of Spirit*, and not therefore on the *Life of Reason* which Santayana himself deprecated as immature, we base the first part of our essay.

as is obvious «from the very title, *Realms of Being*» (RS, 274). In order to understand better the relation of these realms to each other, and especially the relation of the realm of spirit to the others, we must notice at first a distinction which is of great importance in Santayana's ontological system, the distinction between essence and existence.

Essence, according to Santayana, merely *is*², it is *what it is* (MWI, 280), or *that which is*, which means that «essence is inert» and «without external relations», and as such therefore «non-existent» (RM, 84; also 168; RE, 21 ff.). Essence does not *exist* because it is a datum, that is, something which is given to intuition; but, according to Santayana's aphorism, «nothing given exists» (SAF, ch. vii, 42 ff.). On the other hand, existence *exists* because it cannot be a datum at all. «Existence or fact, in the sense which I give to these words», he says, «cannot be a datum at all, because existence involves external relations and actual (not merely specious) flux» (SAF, 34; also 42,48; RE, 75; RM, 84; MWI, 293), which «flux is itself absolute and the seat of existence» (RM, 85).

It is evident, then, that in his definition of existence Santayana's view is similar to that of Heraclitus who says that «all things are flowing» (Gr. *πάντα ῥεῖ*)³, Aristotle's conception of *κινήσεως*, the transition from potentiality (*δύναμις*, *dynamis*) to actuality (*ἐντελέχεια*, *entelecheia*)⁴. Santayana uses also the same expression for «existence» whose field is simply «the field of action» (RM, 91; also MWI, 290). «Existence», he says, «is the passage from potentiality to act» (RM, 93).

Concerning essence, on the other hand, Santayana's view is similar to that of Parmenides on Being⁵. Thus the being of essence for Santayana, like the one for Parmenides, is unchangeable. In opposition to «existences» which as not given are in flux (or change) and in external relations, «essences» as given are «unchangeable» and «have no exter-

2. «This being the most radical intimate meaning of the word 'is,' I have felt justified in usurping the term 'essence,' derived from the same root, to designate any ideal of formal nature, any thing always necessarily identical with itself. Essence so understood much more truly *is* than any substance or any experience or any event» (MWI, 281; also RE, 23).

3. Heraclitus' *Fragments*, 41-42, 81 (See *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*; ed. by N. C. Naughton, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947, pp. 91, 93). See also RM, 81.

4. Aristotle, *Physics*, III, 1, *Διηρημένον δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον γένος τοῦ μὲν ἐντελεχείᾳ τοῦ δὲ δυνάμει, ἢ τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος ἐντελέχεια, ἢ τοιοῦτον, κινήσις ἐστίν...* (201a) *ἐντελέχεια φανερόν ὅτι κινήσις ἐστίν...* (201b).

5. See Proemium (Gr. *Προοίμιον*), [a] 40; see also [a] 95 (*Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*, pp. 115, 117).

nal relations». By «unchangeability» and «without external relations» Santayana means, of course, identity which is «the principle of essence». In other words, each essence is by being identical and «perfectly individual»; it has «a character which distinguishes it from any other» (RE, 18; also MWI, 280-282). Each essence is also by virtue of its universal identity «universal»; that is, «it contains no reference to any setting in space or time, and stands in no adventitious relations to anything» (RE, 18; also 49). So, in his definition of essence, besides the similarity to Parmenides' teaching about the unchangeable «Being», Santayana's view is similar to Plato's doctrine about «ideas». Plato, combining both «being» of Parmenides and «becoming» of Heraclitus, contrasts ideas with sensible things. «Things», says Santayana, «are in flux and ideas, in the logical sense, unchangeable» (RT, 22). Ideas are properly essences (RS, 31) which are also «eternal» (RE, 24; RT, ix) and «infinite in number» (RE, 20). Generally about his distinction between essence and existence in reference to Plato, Santayana says the following:

We learn in *Timaeus* that the first of all distinctions is that between what is always identical with itself and immutable and what, on the contrary, is in flux and indefinable. This is the precise distinction I should make between essence and existence (PS, 544; cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 27D-28A, and 49).

2. Santayana Compared to Other Philosophers, Especially to Kierkegaard, on the Distinction between Essence and Existence

From what we said in the previous section, we can understand that Santayana's distinction of essence and existence is different from Parmenides' distinction between *being* and *not-being*. Being in Parmenides means that which exists⁶ and not-being that which does not exist. In other words, Parmenides defines being by existence and, therefore, essence and existence are the same in his philosophy.

Essence and existence which are identified by the Greek philosophers are distinguished in later years for the first time by the Scholastics. In his famous distinction between essence and existence, Thomas Aquinas makes the separation between the form itself and the existence of that form. The form or essence of «man», for example, is different

6. Parmenides, *Concerning Truth*, 60: «It [being] is universal, existing alone» (*Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*, p. 115).

from the existence of a particular man being in place and time. The essence of «man» does not involve existence. Only «in God essence or quiddity is not distinct from his existence» because «existence and essence in God are the same»⁷.

Commenting on God's nature as *essentia involvit existentiam*, which is also a principle of Spinoza⁸, Kierkegaard in his *Philosophical Fragments* makes «the distinction between factual being and ideal being». As he explains.

factual existence is wholly indifferent in essence, and everything that exists participates without petty jealousy in being, and participates in the same degree. Ideally to be sure, the case is quite different. But the moment I speak of being in the ideal sense I no longer speak of being, but of essence⁹.

On the grounds of this distinction between ideal being (essence) and factual being (existence) he says about *Hamlet* that «factual existence [as distinguished from ideal existence] is subject to the dialectic of Hamlet: to be or not to be»¹⁰. The distinction, therefore, between «being» and «not-being» in Hamlet's case is a distinction in terms of existence, it is a distinction between «existence and non-existence»¹¹.

Concerning in particular Hamlet's question, Santayana finds also that,

when Hamlet says, *To be or not to be*, he is pondering the alternative between *existence* and *non-existence*, and feeling the contingency of both. The question is not whether he shall be or not be Hamlet: death might cause him to forget his essence, but could not abolish it or transform it into another essence. In the realm of essence all these essences are eternally present and no alternative arises¹².

Though Santayana understands in a similar manner to Kierke-

7. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, (See *Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*; ed. by the Rev. Father M.C. D'Arcy, New York, E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1950, p. 119).

8. *Ethics*, Pt. I, Prop. XX (See Spinoza, *Selections*; ed. by John Wild, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958, p. 118).

9. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments or a Fragment of Philosophy*; tr. by D. F. Swenson, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 32n.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 33n; see Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III, i, 56.

11. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*; tr. by D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1941, p. 173.

12. R.M., 14. Santayana treats also in more detail «Hamlet's Question» in reference to the existence of psyche and spirit in a whole Soliloquy (SE, 27-29; see also MWI, 290n.).

gaard the distinction in general between essence and existence, as we can see especially from their same interpretation of Hamlet's question, he differs from him on some very important points of this distinction. For example, «Santayana claims that he distinguishes essence from existence», and «he insists he does not separate the two»¹³, while Kierkegaard accepts not only simple distinction but real separation, too. Another difference is also as concerns their emphasis either on essence or on existencē. In opposition to Kierkegaard who in his philosophy of Existentialism «affirmed the priority of existence over essence»¹⁴, Santayana, according to R. Butler, accepted «the primacy of essence»¹⁵, though with this opinion Munitz does not agree, believing in the case of Santayana in «an equally thorough-going emphasis» upon both the material and the ideal aspects of being¹⁶. In any case, however, we must accept that in Santayana's system there is an emphasis upon essence, if not greater than, at least equal to that upon existence. And it is this emphasis, of course, that makes Butler talk about «Santayana's Platonic Heritage»¹⁷.

That there is a great influence of Plato on Santayana, we think no one can doubt, since «essences» are central in the philosophy of critical realists, especially in Santayana who is the chief representative of the Drake-Rogers-Santayana-Strong theory of «essences»¹⁸. However, this influence does not mean, of course, that Santayana in his doctrine of «essences» agrees in every point with Plato because besides the similarities there are also differences which can be summarized in two main points, according to C. J. Sullivan: Plato's «limited extent of the realm of Ideas and the attribution of natural force to at least some of them»¹⁹.

13. R. Butler. *The Mind of Santayana*, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1955, p. 88. Butler, however, thinks that Santayana in reality separates these two. He says about him: «The ideal and the real are utterly and irreparably disparate. They represent two separate realms: one of matter contacted, the other of essence intuited (*ibid.*, pp. 104-105).

14. Wayman Bernard McLaughlin, *The Relation between Hegel and Kierkegaard*, Boston, Mass., Boston University, 1958, p. 112 (on film).

15. Butler, *op cit.*, p. 119.

16. M. K. Munitz, *The Moral Philosophy of Santayana*, p. 107.

17. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 161ff.

18. See W. H. Werkmeister, *A History of Philosophical Ideas in America*, New York, The Ronald Press Co., 1949, p. 502; see also John E. Bentley. *Philosophy, an Outline-History*, Ames, Iowa, Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1958, p. 144; also Santayana's important note in RE, 93.

19. «Santayana's Philosophical Inheritance» in *The Philosophy of George Santayana* (The Library of Living Philosophers); ed. by P. A. Schilpp, Evanston, Ill., Northwestern University Press, 1940, p. 69; see also p. 81.

3. The Exemplification of Essence in Existence by Substance

Between essence and existence Santayana puts substance which, according to his definition, is «the realm of essence as is ever exemplified in existence» (RM, 27; also 14). So, on the one hand, «all exemplified essences are in some respect qualities of substance» (RM, 27); and, on the other hand, «existence is the career of hereditary substance» (RM, 94). In other words, substance is the passage or, to use Santayana's word itself, the «medium» (RM, 14) between essence and existence. And, because «matter is the principle of existence» (RM, v), «matter is properly a name for the actual substance of the natural world, whatever that substance may be» (RM, 140).

Santayana writes that his conception of substance is like that of Aristotle «who gave the name of substance to compound natural things actually existing» so that «substance is the principle of individuation and exclusion, the condition of existence, succession and rivalry amongst natural things»²⁰. On this point Santayana differs from Spinoza «who bestowed it [substance] on an ambiguous metaphysical object, now pure Being, now the universe in its infinity—in either case an ideal unity and an essence»²¹. Therefore, Santayana says «the bold definition which Spinoza gives of what he calls substance that it is Being absolutely infinite seems to me a perfect and self-justifying definition of the realm of essence» (RE, 21). For this reason, Santayana uses Spinoza's definition as a motto of the *Realm of Essence*²².

20. RM, 20. In Aristotle substance was understood from the standpoint of existence. Since only individual things exist, therefore, substance for him was primarily the individual contrasting with the universal or secondary substance (See *Dictionary of Philosophy*; ed. by Dagobert D. Runes, Ames, Iowa, Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1958, p. 304).

21. RM, 20. Spinoza defines God (*Ethics*, Pt. I, Def. VI), in the following manner: «By God, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence» (See also Def. III).

22. Santayana puts this motto beside that of Plato, Buddha, and Leibniz (RE. XXII).

4. The Non-Existential Realms of Essence and Truth, and the Existential Realms of Matter and Spirit.

After the treatment of the distinction between essence and existence in Santayana, and the exemplification of essence in existence by substance, let us estimate now, according to this, the four realms of being, essence, matter, truth, and spirit which, in Santayana's view, «are not separate cosmological regions, separately substantial, and then juxtaposed. They are summary categories of logic, meant to describe a single natural dynamic process» (RS, 277).

As we said in the previous section concerning substance, matter for Santayana is the proper name for actual substance. It is this acceptance that makes R. Butler conclude that for Santayana «substance and matter, then, are interchangeable as terms. *Substance is matter*»²³. Considering that actual substance is the principle of existence and that substance as such is the same with matter, we can understand why Santayana says: «Matter is the principle of essence: it is all things in their potentiality» (RM, v). In this sense, therefore, his philosophy is materialistic. «It puts all substance and power into the realm of matter; and although this realm presupposes essence, [it] creates spirit, and involves truth» (RS, 284). Thus «three of four realms are nonmaterial and two of them non-existential» (RS, 274). The three nonmaterial realms, as is understood, are those of essence, truth, and spirit; but which are the two realms that Santayana considers as «non-existential»? These two realms to which Santayana assigns «no existence» are «the realms of truth and of essence» (RT, 47).

How the realm of essence does not exist, we talked about in our discussion of the distinction between essence and existence, a distinction determined by existence and non-existence, the latter (non-existence), which concerns essence, not in the sense, of course, of Parmenides' teaching of «not-being», but in the sense in which Santayana understands essence as non-existent, that is, as *what it is*. So, when he considers, besides the realm of essence, the realm of truth as «non-existential», too, he means, of course, this non-existence of the truth in the same as in the case of essence.

According to Santayana's definition, «truth is all things seen under the form of eternity» (RT, vi). «The eternity of truth is inherent

23. Butler, *The Mind of Santayana*, p. 90.

n it: all truths — not a few grand ones — are equally eternal» (RT, ix); and since «eternity is a property of essences only» (RT, ix), «[it] belongs properly only to essences and truths» (RS, 263), the *Realm of Truth* is a segment of the realm of essence (RE, xv; RT, viii). In this sense, therefore, Santayana «assigns no existence to the realms of truth and of essence» (RT, 47). These «two realms», he affirms, «are non-existential» (RS, 274). But, Santayana distinguishes «between truth and knowledge of truth, between essence and existence, between the ideal and the actual» (RT, 129). The truth itself, like essence, is ideal and non-existential in opposition to the knowledge of truth which is actual and existential. Taking truth in the latter sense (knowledge of truth), Santayana says that this kind of truth is «subservient to existence: it is ontologically secondary and true of something else» (RT, 39). As such, therefore, this «truth [is] descriptive of existence» (RT, 2). However, this description concerning the knowledge of truth is a partial description which is contrasted by Santayana with «the complete description of [the system of nature], covering the whole past and the whole future» (RE, xv), a description concerning the truth itself or the whole truth.

In view of this distinction, then, Santayana says in the *Realm of Truth*:

By the truth, as the reader knows, I understand the complete ideal description of existence; and any part of this description will be a truth, that is, a part of the truth (RT, 14). Insofar as consciousness can become more than vain sensation of blind anguish, it must therefore aspire to possess the truth. The truth will be declared, however partially, by any opinion that prophesies an event before this event arises, or describes it when occurring, or reports it after it has occurred. Such opinions are all incidental to the truth: they may be framed or not, according to the accidents of human life and intelligence. They reproduce the truth in part, as it may be discoverable from their various stations with their various organs; but the truth in its wholeness outruns and completes their several deliverances, and is the standard which these deliverances conform to, insofar as they are true. This possible discovery of truth, or of some part of the truth, is often confused with truth itself (RT, 40).

As we can understand, then, the distinction between the truth itself or the wholeness of the truth and the part of the truth is a distinction between absolute and relative truth. However, as Santayana explains, «this relativity does not imply that there is no absolute truth» (RE, xv). There is absolute truth, but it «is undiscoverable just because

it is not a perspective» (RE, xiii). For this reason, «mind was not created for the sake of discovering the absolute truth. The absolute truth has its own intangible reality, and scorns to be known» (RE, xiii).

From what we said in general about the truth and the distinction between truth itself or absolute truth (wholeness of truth) and knowledge of relative truth (part of truth), it is evident that when Santayana characterizes the realm of truth as non-existential, he means the absolute truth which «is no living view, no actual judgment, but merely that segment of the realm of essence which happens to be illustrated in existence» (RE, xv). In this sense, therefore, besides the realm of essence, the realm of truth is non-existential, too. But, on the other hand, Santayana says that the two others, the realms of matter and of spirit, are existential.

For Santayana the realm of matter as «the principle of existence» is «the matrix and the source of everything: it is nature, the sphere of genesis, the universal mother» (RM, xi). As such, «matter is the seat and principle of the flux» (RM, 76), which «flux is itself absolute and the seat of existence» (RM, 85). In other words, «the realm of matter is the field of action» (RM, xi) which «field of action is simply the field of existence» (RM, 91). In this sense, therefore, the realm of matter is the only realm that exists at all (RT, 47). So, when Santayana says that, besides the realm of matter, the realm of spirit though «immaterial» (RS, 6), exists, too (RS, 274), we must understand this existence of spirit, as derived from matter, in a secondary degree. But, about this existence of spirit, which has to do with the origin and dependence of spirit from and on matter, we shall speak especially in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN AND BIRTH OF THE SPIRIT

If, in its outlook, spirit rests in essences, in its origin it springs from matter (RS, 49). Matter may be called mind-stuff or psychic substance inasmuch as it can become on occasion the substance of a Psyche, and through the Psyche the basis of mind [spirit]... (SE, 221n.). Psyche has given birth to spirit (RM, 162).

5. The Origin and Dependence of the Spirit from and on Matter

In our general account of the spirit in relation to the other realms of being we found that, though spirit as «immaterial and transcendental» (RS, 6; also 3) is different from matter, it has a similarity with this realm, for spirit, like matter, is existential in opposition to essence which merely *is* but does not *exist*. So, from the point of view of what it *is*, essence, as the common characteristic of all realms of being has «a dual status with respect to existence, as the nature of the material world and as it appears in the mind»¹. Santayana himself says that «the exemplification of essence in nature and in thought, although composed of very unlike forms, flows in parallel streams» which «are rather one stream» (RE, 134).

However, concerning the existence of these two realms (the realm of matter and the realm of spirit), there is a difference in the manner in which they exist; for the existence of the former is something which can be seen by everyone since matter is visible, while the existence of the latter cannot be seen at all because the essence of spirit is «an invisible stress» (RS,7). For this reason, Santayana condemns those who mate-

1. See C. J. Sullivan's review of *The Mind of Santayana* by Richard Butler, O. P. in *The Modern Schoolman*, Vol. XXXVI, no. 1, November 1958.

realize spirit by considering it as a ghost or phenomenon. But spirit, as he explains, «is not at all a visible ghost or phenomenon in its own being» (RS, 6; also 4). «Spirit is invisible, intangible, unapproachable from the outside. The materialist might like to deny its existence; but that is not the inclination of mankind at large» (RS, 3). So, «the criterion for the existence of spirit is internal, namely, that it finds itself thinking» (RS, 44). From this alone it is plain, then, that the manner in which matter and spirit exist is different. Essentially, the only realm which exists at all, according to Santayana, is that of matter as the source of everything, and therefore of the spirit, which as dependent on matter for its existence, exists in a secondary degree.

In order to understand better the manner in which spirit exists, that is, the origin and the dependence of the spirit for its existence, we must consider a distinction which is characterized by Santayana himself as «of great importance» in his system, the distinction between «ideal possibility or essence» and «real or existing potentiality». He says:

In my system as the name for the *intrinsic ideal possibility of all things* is essence, so the name for the *existing potentiality of specific things* is matter (RS, 24).

In this latter sense (existing potentiality) Santayana accepts that «everywhere must be a potentiality of mind in matter» (RS, 37; «mind is spirit», RT, 50). He says:

A seed is the seat of a real potentiality; it is not a blank; it is not an ideal possibility or essence, but a moment in a material involution and evolution, materially conditioning, under favourable circumstances, the growth of a particular organism. In this sense we might say truly that the potentiality of mind pervades the universe, since doubtless, if the prerequisite material complexities arose at any point, spirit would arise there (RS, 38).

So, Santayana's conclusion in this paragraph as is contained in its title is that there is «real potentiality of the spirit in matter» (RS, 37). From this alone it is plain that, though «the power of nature is often attributed to spirit or identified with it» (RS, 9), «spirit is not seed, it is not a potentiality, it is not a power» (RS, 12). «This power or potentiality, often concentrated in a seed, dwells, in the matter of an organism, but is mysterious» (RS, 15). In view, then, of the real potentiality of spirit in matter Santayana says that «spirit depends on matter for its existence but not for its essence» (RS, 79), for in the latter sense the dependence of the spirit has to do with its ideal possibility in essence.

Concerning spirit, Santayana distinguishes between the essence of spirit as perceiver and the essence perceived.

There are accordingly two disparate essences exemplified in every instance of spirit; one is the essence of spirit, exemplified *formally* and embodied in the event or fact that at such a moment such an animal has such a feeling; the other is the essence then revealed to that animal, and realized *objectively* or imaginatively in his intuition (RE, 130).

This relation of the spirit to essences exemplified can explain the ideal possibility and rest of the spirit in essences. But, «if, in its outlook, spirit rests in essences, in its origin it springs from matter» (RS, 49). So, «essence to which spirit is addressed, is not the source of spirit or of any existing fact» (RE, 14). «Considered in itself, essence is certainly the deepest, the only inevitable, form of reality» (RE, 14). But, «the existence and distribution of enlightenment, as of any other fact, places us, to begin with, in another realm, the realm of matter, which must be begged separately: without it there would be no manifestation of essence, whether in nature or in discourse» (RE, 15). So, «spirit cannot exist except in matter» (RE, 11).

From what we said in general in this section about the origin and the dependence of spirit on matter, it is evident that matter, as the principle of existence, the sphere of genesis, and the source of everything, is also the origin and the cause of the existence of spirit. In this sense Santayana says:

Matter may be called mind-stuff or psychic substance inasmuch as it can become on occasion the substance of a Psyche, and through the Psyche the basis of mind; but of course not in the sense that matter may be an aggregate of thinking spirits (SE, 221n.).

6. The Birth of the Spirit (Psyche as the Mother of the Spirit)

«Psyche», according to Santayana, «creates spirit» (RS, 64). So, «spirit is a product of the psyche; the psyche makes for a specific order and direction of life; spirit congenitally shares in this vitality and this specific impulse» (RS, 13). This «impulse of psyche, making for a specific perfection of form and action, underlies the spiritual distinction between good and evil» (RS, 16). So, psyche gives birth to spirit, the realm of spirit, with its original aesthetic spectrum and moral range» (RM, 162).

Speaking of birth in the above passage, Santayana understands, of course, the relation of psyche to spirit as a relation of mother to her child. In the *Realm of Spirit* he says:

For the first time she felt a real pang, the birth-pang of the spirit, and she saw a clear image, her first notion of a world. It was a strange self-displacement, like falling in love (RS, 62). Like an ignorant girl, the psyche has become a mother without counting the cost either to herself or to her miraculous child [spirit] (RS, 63).

It is this relation of mother to her child, then, that Santayana has in his mind when he says in his *Soliloquies* about «our poor mother Psyche, being justly afraid of growing old» (SE, 21-22; also 223). And in his *Later Soliloquies*, in a special one entitled «The Psyche», he describes «our good mother» (SE, 224) «like the Chinese [who] is just as busy by night as by day. Long before sunrise she is at work in her subterranean kitchen, over her pots of stewing herbs, her looms, and her spindles», until «the first dawn» comes «when the first ray of intuition falls through some aperture into those dusky spaces» (SE, 222). «The birth of spirit is joyful when it is the dawn of light, disclosing a thousand movements and objects that evoke intuition» (RS, 125). «That intuition», as Santayana explains, «is not a material organ of the Psyche, like a hand or an antenna; it is a miraculous child, far more alive than herself, whose only instinct is play, laughter, and brooding meditation» (SE, 223). But who is this «miraculous child» with whom Santayana compares intuition? Who else than Spirit? For «spirit», as he explains, «was a name for material force before it was a name for intuition» (RM, 164). So, «spirit is like a child with eyes wide open, heart simple, faith ready, intellect pure» (RS, 12). In opposition to the child, who is characterized by intelligence, «she [the mother or Psyche] is artful but not intelligent, least of all about herself. For this reason she can never understand how she gave birth to such a thankless child» (SE, 223; also 224). So, «the motherly soul, having unintentionally given birth to the intellect, will grumble at her runaway and thankless child»².

2. SE, 29. In the soliloquy about «Psyche» her child Spirit is compared with a poet, too (SE, 223). Santayana compares also another realm of being, that of Truth, with a fairy woman who becomes the wife of Spirit. «He [Spirit or the Poet] once ravished and married a fairy, whom he called Truth; and he wished to bring her to live with him at home» (SE, 224). So, with the addition of the comparison of Truth with a fairy woman whose parent must be Essence, since truth is a segment of the realm of essence (RE, xv), the whole picture about the birth and the family of Spirit is accomplished.