

# PURE BEING IN GEORGE SANTAYANA'S PHILOSOPHY COMPARED WITH THAT IN MYSTICISM AND HINDUISM ON ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL GROUNDS

BY  
MICHAEL K. MACRAKIS, Ph.D.

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KEY TO ABBEVIATIONS  
OF GEORGE SANTAYANA'S WORKS

<i>APMS</i>	«Apologia Pro Mente Sua» in <i>The Philosophy of George Santayana</i>
<i>ICG</i>	<i>The Idea of Christ in the Gospels</i>
<i>IPR</i>	<i>Interpretations of Poetry and Religion</i>
<i>LSK</i>	«Literal and Symbolic Knowledge» in <i>The Works of George Santayana</i>
<i>MWI</i>	«Some Meanings of the Word <i>Is</i> » in <i>The Works of George Santayana</i>

<i>PP</i>	<i>Persons and Places</i>
<i>PSL</i>	<i>Platonism and Spiritual Life</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>The Realm of Essence</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>The Realm of Matter</i>
<i>RS</i>	<i>The Realm of Spirit</i>
<i>RT</i>	<i>The Realm of Truth</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Reason in Religion</i>
<i>SAF</i>	<i>Scepticism and Animal Faith</i>
<i>SELS</i>	<i>Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies</i>
<i>TPR</i>	«Three Proofs of Realism» in <i>Essays in Critical Realism</i>

## INTRODUCTION

*Without any pretence to be religious or mystical I find myself daily in that case (G. Santayana, The Realm of Essence, p. 156).*

1 (a) Analogously to philosophy, art, and religion, which, according to Greek Prof. Nik. Louvaris, are «the most essential content of the spiritual life»<sup>1</sup>, «the philosophical impulse is manifested in the history of philosophy in three ways depending on which of the three faculties of the soul [intellect, or feeling, or will] is used foremost for its satisfaction. In the first case we have the scientific philosopher (Aristotle), in the second the artistic philosopher (Plato), and in the third the prophetic philosopher (Pythagoras)»<sup>2</sup>. George Santayana belongs to the group of those philosophers who combine in their life and philosophy all these three philosophical types<sup>3</sup>. This essay,

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1. Nik. Louvaris, *History of Philosophy (Ἱστορία τῆς Φιλοσοφίας)*, Athens, Elephtheroudakis, Publisher, 1933, vol. I, p. 12 (in Greek).

2. *Ibid.*, vol II, p. 215.

3. G. Santayana, «moral philosopher, critic, poet, essayist and novelist», —who, after receiving his Ph. D. from Harvard University in 1889, taught philosophy at the same university till 1912— was also distinguished for his deeper religious feeling, believing that «religion is so profoundly moving and in a sense so profoundly just» (*RR*, 4). His relation to religion was very strong (See what Will Durant, considering Santayana's book, *Reason in Religion*, says in general about this relation in his own book, *Outline of Philosophy: Plato to Russell*, London, Ernest Benn Limited, 1962, pp. 424-427). Born in Spain on December 16, 1863, he died in Rome on September 26, 1952. One of his last books (the last but one) was *The Idea of Christ in the Gospels or*



however, concerns him especially in the third type of philosopher determined by the relation of his philosophy to religion.

(b) Concerning this relation, Santayana says that «my philosophy is like that of the ancients a discipline of the mind and heart, a lay religion» (*RS*, 273). This philosopher himself as a temperament is religious; and he remained as such throughout his whole life. The religious or mystic elements are inherent in his nature from the traditions and the religious beliefs of his fatherland, Spain, which, as David Pubio says, «has a soul: it is *mystic*, fundamentally mystic»<sup>4</sup>. These elements which were more obvious in the first, pre-rationalistic or romantic period of his life, could not disappear in later years despite his naturalism<sup>5</sup>. So, it is not strange that we hear from his mouth the following confession which seems to conflict with his materialism: «Without any pretence to be religious or mystical I find myself daily in that case» (*RE*, 156).

(c) Only when we consider Santayana's mystical temperament can we understand his sympathy with Hindu mysticism. He received this sympathy through Schopenhauer whose reflection of pessimism is already so evident upon Santayana's philosophy of the first period, characterized as

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*God in Man* (abbr. *ICG*) which, when it appeared in 1946, was described by a reviewer as «the most devout book ever written by an unbeliever» (Anonymous, «Santayana, George» in *Encyclopaedia Americana*, New York, Americana Corporation, vol. 24 [1960], p. 283). However, his last book was *Dominations and Poems* (1951); and then, as Notman V. Henfrey remarks, «with heroic tenacity —for he was nearly deaf and half blind— he gave himself» to translating and recasting a long love poem, *Ombra and Ambra*, from the Renaissance Italian of Lorenzo de Medici. But, unfortunately, this last literary effort was left unfinished, because during it he was overtaken by his last illness (N. V. Henfrey, «Santayana, George», *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica [Micro-paedia]*, 15th edn, Chicago, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., vol. 10 [1991], p. 431). He died in Rome a few months before his 89th birthday, in a nursing home run by Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. According to his wishes, he was buried in the Catholic cemetery of Rome in a plot reserved for Spanish nationals (See William G. Holzberger's Introduction in the work edited by him *The Complete Poems of George Santayana*, Lewisburg, Bucknell University Press, Inc., 1979, p. 23. See also Michael K. Macrakis, *The Life of the Spirit in George Santayana and Its Application to the Idea of Christ*, Athens 1980, Preface, pp. vii-viii).

4. D. Pubio, *The Mystic Soul of Spain*, New York, Cosmopolitan Sciences and Art Service Co., Inc., 1946, pp. 9-10.

5. See R. Butler, *The Mind of Santayana*, Chicago, Henry Regnary Co., 1955, pp. 121-122.

«pessimistic in its coloring»<sup>6</sup>. As a young man Santayana was «an enthusiast of Schopenhauer»<sup>7</sup>. Schopenhauer was «one of his favourite writers»<sup>8</sup>. When «he discovered Schopenhauer»<sup>9</sup>, he was an undergraduate yet at Harvard in the university. He «had been charmed by Royce's Schopenhauer, and during his postgraduate year or two in Berlin had heard Deussen give his lectures on Schopenhauer nirvana»<sup>10</sup>. It was, then, through Schopenhauer that Santayana came into contact with the Indians whom he recognizes as «the great masters of the spiritual life» (*PSL*, 249; cp. 287 and *SAF*, VIII). For this reason, as he says, they have «something that I can sympathize with» (*APMS*, 569; also *RS*, 25). This sympathy can explain his many references to them in his treatment of the spiritual life, and especially of pure Being (e. g. *RE*, 61, 177; *RM*, 19, 198; *RT*, 8; *RS*, V, IX-X, 22-26, 113, 114, 184-189, 191, 196, 202; etc.). The comparison, therefore, of Santayana with the mystics and the Indians on the subject of pure Being is not an inspiration of mine but it derives from his own great interest in them.

2. Concerning its division, this subject of Pure Being, as I treat it in this essay, entitled *Pure Being in George Santayana's Philosophy Compared with that in Mysticism and Hinduism*, is made up of three parts, according to the logical and natural division of the title itself: (a) Pure Being in Santayana; (b) Santayana Compared with the Mystics; and (c) Santayana Compared with the Indians. The general content of these parts is as follows:

- I. *Pure Being and the «Realms of Being»* where, considering Santayana's ontological distinction between essence and existence, I put pure Being in its perfect place in the Realms of Being, i.e. as that which implies the whole realm of essence to which intuition, as a stage of transitiveness in knowledge distinguished from that of animal faith, refers.
- II. *Pure Being and «Beyond Being»* where, separating the ontological from the epistemological distinction, I compare pure Being in

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6. M. K. Munitz, *The Moral Philosophy of Santayana*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1939, p. 9.

7. J. Duron, *La pensée de George Santayana*, Paris, Librairie Nizet, 1950, p. 51.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

10. H. W. Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1947, p. 410.

Santayana with «beyond being» in the mystics on epistemological gnosiological<sup>11</sup> grounds, i.e. on the intuition of pure Being.

III. *Pure Being in Relation to Brahma and Nirvana* where I compare Santayana with the Indians on both ontological and epistemological grounds since Santayana himself in his comparison of pure Being with Brahma and Nirvana considers the distinction in its both meanings (ontological and epistemological).

## I

### PURE BEING AND «THE REALMS OF BEING» (Ontology and Epistemology of Pure Being in Santayana)

*The nature of pure Being anywhere implies the whole realm of essence. — All essences partake of non-being, and pure Being does so in an eminent degree. — Contemplation of pure Being is the last phase of spiritual progress. — Contemplation of pure Being ever becomes the last secret of religious life* (G. Santayana, *The Realm of Essence*, p.p. 50, 57, 60, 63).

#### A. Of Being in General

1. Before we begin the treatment of pure Being in particular, let us see Being in general in Santayana's philosophical system which, according to the philosopher himself, is «frankly ontological» as is obvious from the very title of his principal work *Realms of Being*<sup>12</sup>.

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11. The term «epistemology» (adj. «epistemological», from the Greek *episteme*, knowledge) appears to have been used for the first time by J.F. Ferrier in 1854. The term «gnosiology» (adj. «gnosiological», from the Greek *gnosis*, knowledge) has also been suggested but has gained few adherents. However, both terms refer to the theory of knowledge (See Ledger Wood, «Epistemology» in *Dictionary of Philosophy*: edited by Dagobert D. Runes, Ames, Iowa, Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1958, p. 94; and also pp. 94-96. Cp. «Gnosiology», p. 117).

12. RS, 274. Our essay is based in the main on this fundamental work (*The Realms of Being*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1940) in four volumes: 1. *The Realm of Essence* (1928), 2. *The Realm of Matter* (1930), 3. *The Realm of Truth* (1938), and 4. *The Realm of Spirit* (1940). A fifth one, but in reality the first one as appeared before the above volumes containing Santayana's new system of philosophy, is also the introductory to this system volume *Scepticism and Animal Faith: Introduction to a System of Philosophy* (New York, Scribner's Sons, 1923). As Norman V. Henfrey says, «*Scepticism and Animal Faith* (1923) marks an important departure from his

(a) A basic distinction in Santayana's ontological system is that between *essence* and *existence*<sup>13</sup>. Essence, according to him, merely *is*<sup>14</sup>, it is *what it is*, which means that «essence is inert» and «without external relations» and as such, therefore, «non-existent» (*RM*, 84; also 168; *RE*, 14, 21ff.). On the other hand, «existence involves external relations and actual (not merely specious) flux» (*SAF*, 34; also

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[Santayana's] earlier philosophy and serves as 'a critical introduction' to and résumé of his new system developed in the four - volume *Realms of Being* (1928, 1930, 1937, 1940), an ontological (nature of being) treatise of great concentration and finish» (N. V. Henfrey, *op. cit.*, vol. 10, p. 431). Another important work of the philosopher is that which appeared previously by the title: *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress* (New York, Scribner's Sons, 1905-1906) in five volumes, too: 1. *Introduction and Reason in Common Sense* (1905), 2. *Reason in Society* (1905), 3. *Reason in Religion* (1905), 4. *Reason in Art* (1905), and *Reason in Science* (1906). Concerning Santayana's writings in general, not only his philosophical but also his literary ones (drama, fiction, essays and poetry), see the list of their titles and year appearance in the book of Timothy L. S. Sprigge, *Santayana: An Examination of his Philosophy*, London and Boston, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, pp. 11-13. A general bibliography including especially secondary sources (publications on Santayana) there is, too, in the essay: Michael K. Macrakis, *Spirit and Matter in George Santayana's Philosophy*, reprinted from *Theologia*, Athens 1980, pp. 5-7 (in Greek).

13. Referring to Santayana, Celestine J. Sullivan accepts that «this distinction between essence and existence [is] so basic in his philosophy» (C. J. Sullivan, Jr. «Essence and Existence in George Santayana» in *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. XLIX, No. 7, March 27, 1952, p. 225). See also on this subject in the same writer's article «Santayana's Philosophical Inheritance» in *The Philosophy of George Santayana*; edited by P. A. Schilpp, Evanston and Chicago, Northwestern University, 1940, p. 66. This distinction, as C. J. Sullivan explains, is not a simple distinction but a real separation. He says: «Santayana does distinguish these [essence and existence], but because, like Hume, he thinks that whatever is distinguishable is separable, a principle Hume himself, however, did not always adhere to, Santayana not only distinguishes but separates essence and existence...» (C. J. Sullivan, «Essence and Existence in George Santayana», p. 225). As for the meaning of «distinction» and «separation» in Hume, see the essay on him by the same writer, C. J. Sullivan, «David Hume on the Understanding» in *Augustinianum*, Collegium internationale Augustinianum, Roma, Martius 1962, p. 93). With Sullivan's opinion about Santayana, Richard Butler agrees, too (R. Butler, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-105), though, according to the latter, «Santayana claims that he distinguishes essence from existence», and «he insists he does not separate the two» (*Ibid.*, p. 88). However, besides Sullivan and others, the American philosopher Josiah Royce accepts also in this case a real separation and not simple distinction. Santayana himself referring to him says the following: «Josiah Royce... once said to me that the gist of my philosophy was the separation of essence from existence» (*APMS*, 497).

14. «Essence so understood much more truly *is* than any substance or any experience or any event» (*RE*, 23; also *MWI*, 281).

42, 48; *RE*, 75; *RM*, 84), which «flux is itself absolute and the seat of existence» (*RM*, 85).

As we can understand, then, Santayana's distinction between essence and existence is different from Parmenides' distinction between *being* and *not-being*. Being in Parmenides means that which exists<sup>15</sup> 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 Scholastics. In his famous distinction between essence and existence Thomas Aquinas, the most representative exponent of them, makes the separation between the form itself and the existence of that form. The form or essence of «man», for instance, is different from the existence of a particular man living 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»<sup>16</sup>.

Commenting on God's nature as *essentia involvit existentiam*, which is also a principle of Spinoza<sup>17</sup>, Kierkegaard in his *Philosophical Fragments* makes «the distinction between factual being and ideal being»<sup>18</sup> which is a distinction between existence and essence<sup>19</sup>, as Santayana understands this distinction, too.

(b) 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). In other words, substance is the passage or, to use Santayana's term itself, the «medium» (*RM*, 14) between essence and existence. And, because «matter is the principle of existence» (*RM*, V, 96), «matter is properly a name for the actual

15. «It [being] is universal, existing alone» (See Parmenides' poem in *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*; edited by M. C. Nahm, New York, Appleton - Century - Crofts, 1947, p. 115).

16. *Summa Contra Gentiles* (See *Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*; edited by the Rev. Father M. S. D'Acry, New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., 1950, p. 119).

17. *Ethics*, Pt. 1, Prop. XX (See *Spinoza Selections*, edited by John Wild, New York, Ch. Scribner's Sons, 1958, p. 118).

18. S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*; trans. by D. F. Swenson, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 32n.

19. «Factual existence is wholly indifferent in essence... But, the moment I speak of being in the ideal sense I no longer speak of being, but of essence» (*Ibid.*, p. 32n.).

substance of the natural world, whatever that substance may be» (*RM*, 140; also 100; *RE*, 51). This makes Richard Butler conclude that «substance and matter, then, are interchangeable as terms. *Substance is matter*»<sup>20</sup>.

(c) In this sense, therefore, «the realm of matter is the only realm that exists at all» (*RT*, 47). Besides the realm of matter, the realm of spirit though «immaterial» (*RS*, 6) exists, too. But the degree in which spirit exists is secondary, for «spirit is entirely dependent on matter for its existence and distribution» (*RS*, 79; also 37, 45, 49; *SELS*, 221n.). Thus, among the four *Realms of Being*, i.e. of *Essence*, of *Matter*, of *Truth*, and of *Spirit*, «three of four realms are non-material and two of them non-existent» (*RS*, 274). These two realms to which Santayana assigns «non existence» are «the realms of truth and of essence» (*RT*, 47), for «the Realm of Truth is the Realm of Essence» (*RT*, VIII; also *RE*, XV). What Santayan understands here by truth is the truth itself. So, when he says that, besides the realm of essence, the realm of truth does not exist, too, he means the wholeness of the truth as distinguished from the part of the truth (*RT*, 14, 40). The latter (relative truth), in opposition to the truth itself or the whole (absolute) truth, reaches knowledge, it is known by man, and as such it exists. In other words, this distinction between «absolute» and «relative» truth is a distinction «between truth and knowledge of truth, between essence and existence, between the ideal and the actual» (*RT*, 129).

2 (a) Santayana's ontological distinction between essence and existence corresponds to his epistemological (gnosiological) distinction into two stages or leaps of transitiveness in knowledge: «the leap of intuition, from the state of the living organism to the consciousness of some essence; and the leap of faith or action, from the symbol actually given in essence or in thought to some ulterior existing object»<sup>21</sup>. As we can see, then, according to this epistemological distinction of

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20. R. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

21. *TPR*, 183. Concerning the «transitiveness» in knowledge, Santayana says: «Knowledge is *transitive*, so that self - existing things may become the chosen objects of a mind that identifies and indicates them» (*TPR*, 168, and 172; see also *RE*, 1-2). And, though «intuition of itself is intransitive» (*SAF*, 262), «intuition in one sense is transitive, too, since the essences it observes are independent of it, not in existence (for they are not exist) but in character and identity...» (*LSK*, 315). So, «knowledge of essence too is transitive...» (*TPR*, 183).

Santayana, «animal faith [which] is earlier than intuition» (*SAF*, 107) refers to existence and intuition refers to essence. In this reference the characteristic of the former is faith in «not-given», for «nothing given exists» (*SAF*, ch. VII), while the characteristic of the latter is «the given» or the datum which is an essence (*RS*, 95; *RM*, 63). «That which certainly exists in such a case is only the intuition of that datum, not the datum in its own specious field, which is that of essence» (*RS*, 256).

(b) Though one of the characteristics of intuition is cognition (*RS*, 108), for «intuition is cognitive of essence» (*RS*, 111), «in a pregnant and transcendent sense, intuition is not knowledge» (*RS*, 108-109). It is rather, according to Santayana's own characterization, «symbolic knowledge» as distinguished from the knowledge of fact, i.e. animal faith (*LSK*, 318, 319; cp. *SAF*, 103). Concerning intuition in relation to knowledge, Santayana says:

Knowledge such as animal life requires is something transitive, a form of belief in things absent or eventual or somehow more than the state of the animal knowing them. It needs to be information (*RE*, 1-2). —But the intuition of an idea, let me repeat, is not knowledge; and if a thing resembling that idea happened to exist, my intuition would still not be knowledge of it, but contemplation of the idea only. Plato and many other philosophers, being in love with intuition (for which alone they were perhaps designed by nature), have identified science with certitude, and consequently entirely condemned what I call knowledge (which is a form of animal faith)... (*SAF*, 170-171). —Certitude and dialectical cogency are far removed from animal faith, and unnecessary to it; and animal faith, when it describes in suitable symbols (of which a dialectical system may be one) the objects encountered in action, is what I call knowledge. The question of titles and preferences does not concern me here; in any case the dialectician, whether his art be called knowledge or not, has discovered the realm of essence (or some province in it) and has devoted himself to exploring it. 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; because at every point demonstration or inference depends for its force on intuition of the intrinsic relation between the given terms (*RE*, 4). —What is dialectic? Precisely an analysis or construction of ideal forms which abstracts from 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 (*RE*, 3).

Thus, knowledge, as Santayana understands it, i.e. knowledge of fact is faith. Intuition is not knowledge<sup>22</sup>.

### ***B. Of Pure Being in Particular***

1. In our treatment of Being in general, we saw the relation of essence to existence. Now, treating of pure Being in particular, let us consider its relation to essences<sup>23</sup>.

(a) As Santayana says, «pure Being is related to other essences very much as any essence is related to its existing manifestations» (*RE*, 49-50). This relation of being to other essences is especially indicated when we speak of «pure Being». What is indicated, on the other hand, by calling being pure is the «contrast between being and existence». Thus, «in this acceptance of the word 'pure', pure Being is no purer than any other essence, but all are pure in so far as they are considered in their proper character». In this sense, «'pure' is an epithet proper to all essences» (*RE*, 49). In other words, «pure Being is itself only an essence. Expressly, it is that which all essences have in common - namely, character or distinguishableness and self-identity» (*RT*, 24; also *RE*, 45). Therefore, «the nature of pure Being anywhere implies the whole realm of essence» (*RE*, 50), «which is the full-length portrait of being» (*RE*, 55). As such «pure Being contains all essences within itself virtually or eminently, since, though it cannot be any of them, it requires each of them to be what it is» (*RE*, 57; also 119; *RM*, 85).

(b) Since «pure Being is itself only an essence» (*RT*, 24), it is understood that as every essence pure Being, too, must be unchangeable and without external relations, i.e. non-existent. This non-existence of pure Being requires essence; and to predicate non-existence to it is to recognize essence which *is*. In other words, «being and the non-existent here actually coincide; not because both are nothing, but

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22. As R. Butler remarks on Santayana's theory of knowledge, «in *Scepticism and Animal Faith* Santayana establishes a method, discovers essence in intuition, and reduces all knowledge of fact to faith, all definitions and terms to symbols, and all argument to arbitrary dialectic» (R. Butler, *op. cit.*, 59; see also p. 67).

23. Our treatment of pure Being in Santayana is based especially on his work, *The Realm of Essence; Book First of Realms of Being* (chapter IV). However, he talks about it in other writings, too (See in the above Timothy L. S. Sprigge's work, pp. 78-81 and note 20, pp. 127-128).



because both are being»<sup>24</sup>. Both coincide, for the word «nothing» when it denotes non-existence (*RE*, 55) «presupposes essences and leaves it standing» (*RE*, 54). But, as Santayana remarks, «the same word may be applied descriptively within the realm of essence, to express non-being or privation of essence; 'nothing', then, means 'nothing of that sort'. This mixture of privation distinguishes every essence, since in being itself is necessarily no other»<sup>25</sup>. By this mixture of privation or of not-being «all essences, therefore, partake of non-being, and pure Being does so in an eminent degree, since it excludes the special forms of being proper to all the others» (*RE*, 57). «Becoming, therefore, does not unite being and privation more closely than being unites them in itself, even without change or existence» (*RE*, 56), which «existence is that realm of Becoming which combines Being and Non-Being» (*PSL*, 300). In other words, like the realm of existence or becoming, the realm of essence or «pure Being, which lies in all essences» (*RE*, 50), unites being and non-being, too<sup>26</sup>. But, the meaning of «being» by which we must understand both being and non-being is different in essence and existence. Being in essence is «ideal being» and being in existence is «factual being»<sup>27</sup>. This

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24. *RE*, 54. In this sense, as Santayana remarks, «the non - existent' is accordingly not a bad name for the realm of essence, seen from the point of view of existence. But this point of view is adventitious; no essence is non - existent intrinsically, since for all it contains or suggests it may very well exist» (*RE*, 54).

25. *RE*, 55. See also the title of the paragraph in the same page: «Privation or not - being presupposes essence and defines it».

26. Compare on this point Santayana's doctrine with Hegel's acceptance of «Being» (*Sein*) in the first stage of his *Logic*. Hegel begins the argument of his logic with the simplest term of thought, that of pure being, which just *is*, without assigning any qualities to it. But pure being — the abstract or unreal «is» — without any qualities is *nothing* definite. Therefore we are led to the antithesis of not - being (*Nichts*). From this thesis and antithesis we pass, according to well known Hegelian law, on a synthesis through the process of becoming (*Werden*) which as a unity of being and not - being always implies «something», a determinate being. This being, of course, is not the mere being of the beginning which is wholly indefinite but a definite being: the *Dasein*, a «being which is definitely determined in contrast to *Sein*, mere being which is wholly indefinite and underermined» (*Hegel's Logic; an Essay in Interpretation* by John G. Hibben, New York, Ch. Scribner's Sons, 1902, p. 298).

27. One among the seven meanings of the word *is* which Santayana finds in his essay on «Some Meanings of the Word *Is*», is that of the *essence* by which he understands «any ideal or formal nature, and thing always necessarily identical with itself» (*MWI*, 281); another meaning is also that of *existence*, as he understands the word, i.e. «that arena of action», «something peculiar to the flux of nature, and only as actually flowing» (*MWI*, 290).

latter, for example, that is, «factual being» or «factual existence» is, according to Kierkegaard, «subject to the dialectic of Hamlet: to be or not to be»<sup>28</sup> The distinction, therefore, between «being» and «non-being» in Hamlet's case is a distinction in terms of existence, it is a distinction between «existence and non-existence»<sup>29</sup>. Like Kierkegaard, 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»<sup>30</sup>.

(c) From what we said of pure Being in its relation to not-being, we can understand that pure Being as non-existent does not mean that it is «nothing». Confusion in this matter comes from the identity of pure Being with not-being. Santayana, identifying by hypothesis pure Being with not-Being or void of Parmenides, proves that «this void would not only exist but would be the only true theatre of existence, because it would be the only seat of change», «a result which would contradict the premise that Not-Being is not» (*RM*, 19). Therefore, the distinction of Santayana is not like that of Parmenides that «Being is and Not-Being is not» (*RM*, 19), but that Being is and Being does not exist, that is, a distinction between essence and existence. Pure Being, then, as an essence is, but does not exist which does not mean that pure Being is «nothing». As Santayana remarks, «confusion in this matter comes chiefly from the equivocation between being and existence» (*RE*, 46).

(d) It is the same confusion, derived from this equivocation, that makes others conclude the opposite by identifying pure Being not

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28. S. Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy*; trans. by D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 33n.

29. S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*; trans. by D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1941, p. 173.

30. *RM*, 14. As Santayana remarks in general, «it is a great misfortune, at least for philosophy, that the word 'is', which denotes the qualitative idiosyncrasy of any essence whatsoever, should also have been used to denote existence» (*MWI*, 290). In this sense, therefore, he finds that, in opposition to the English language, «the Spanish language is comparatively discriminating in this matter, having three verbs for 'to be' which cannot be used interchangeably. 'To be or not to be' must be rendered by *existir*; 'That is the question' requires *ser*; 'There's the rub' demands *estar*. Existence, essence, and condition or position are thus distinguished instinctively... The phrase 'there is' (like the German *ist da, es giebt, ist vorhanden*) also helps to distinguish existence from pure being» (*MWI*, 290-291n.).

with nothing but with existence. As every essence is exemplified in existence by substance, in the same way pure Being is «hypostasized into substance» (RE, 53). But this does not mean that pure Being is a substance as is confused by those who identify pure Being with existence<sup>31</sup>. Considering Santayana's aphorism «nothing given exists», pure Being, «like any other essence, perfectly open to intuition» (RE, 53) and given in it, is therefore different from existence. «Were pure Being an existing substance, nothing else could exist or arise, not even the occasional intuition of pure Being» (RE, 52). «In other words, in order to reach the intuition of pure Being, it is requisite to rise altogether above the sense of existence» (RE, 47). Not animal faith, therefore, which refers to existence, but intuition refers to pure Being. Here we approach pure Being on epistemological grounds.

2. Santayana speaks especially of intuition in *The Realm of Spirit* where, as he himself says in his *Apologia Pro Mente Sua*, «he has studied some of the phases through which intuition must pass in growing pure and being liberated from useless pain and distraction» (APMS, 580). Beginning with simple feeling and passing through different phases, intuition becomes pure. «Pure intuition is no vision of material things, but of the essences which we call and think to be the qualities of material things» (PSL, 306). This pure intuition is «the perfect function of spirit» (RS, 92). Now, concerning especially spirit in relation to its object, Santayana says: «When the object is pure, the spirit intent upon it is pure also» (RE, 60). And since, essences are the object to which spirit is addressed (RS, 49), «pure Being is the ultimate ideal for pure spirit» (APMS, 568) which ideal «is realized by the contemplative intellect absorbed in pure Being» (RE, 61). In other words, «this, absorption, the ecstasy or union» with pure Being is «the goal of the religious discipline», the ideal good itself of the mystics (RE, 61). Considering that intuition is not knowledge, i.e. animal faith, we can understand that «in mystical ecstasy possession renders all faith unnecessary» (RS, 111). For it is in this ecstasy, in the possession of the ideal good, that intuition approaches to the top. But, «were intuition possible only at the top, in the wisest moments of life», says

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31. Santayana says: «Pure Being, as far as it goes, is no doubt a true description of everything, whether existent or non-existent; so that if anything exists, pure Being will exist in it; but it will exist merely as pure colour does in all colours, or pure space in all spaces, and not separately nor exclusively» (SAF, 50).

Santayana, «it might be left to the saints and mystics to tell us about it» (RS, 93).

## II

### PURE BEING AND «BEYOND BEING»

#### (Santayana Compared with the Mystics)

... Οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ' ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας προεβεία καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος (The good is not essence, but beyond essence, for it exceeds essence in dignity and power) (Plato, Republic, Bk. VI, 509b).

Τὸ ἐν πάντα καὶ οὐδὲ ἓν... ἐκεῖνο γὰρ ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας ἦν... Τοῦτο δὲ καὶ νοῦ· ἐπέκεινα ἄρα τι νοῦ... Τὸ δὲ ὡσερ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἐπέκεινα γνώσεως... (The One is all things and no one of them,... for it is beyond being... and beyond intellect; and, therefore, something beyond knowledge... The One, at transcending intellect, transcends knowing, too) (Plotinus, Enneads, V, 2:1; 3:1; 4:2).

Τὸ ἐν, τὸ ἄγνωστον... πάντων μὲν ἐστι τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον... ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀλήθειαν ἀλήθεια... (The One, the Unknown... is the Cause indeed of all things,... the Truth above all Truth...) (Dionysius the Areopagite, Divine Names, I,V [PG 3 593B,C]).

Deus est plusquam verus, et plusquam veritas (God is the Truest, and above Truth) (John the Scot, De divisione naturae, I,14 [PL 122,460A]).

That which mystics call truth is something beyond truth... In reality, the mystic is passing beyond truth. Truth oppresses him, and something beneath or above truth satisfies him completely (G. Santayana, The Realm of Truth, p. 135).

#### A. «Beyond Being» in Mysticism

1. Concerning the intuition of pure Being, Santayana himself compares his doctrine with that of the mystics. His comparison, therefore, with them is made on epistemological grounds. For this reason, to understand better this comparison, we must talk of the epistemological distinction between «being» and «beyond being» in the mystics.

(a) To begin with Plato from whom philosophical mysticism starts, we find for the first time this distinction in his doctrine of the

Good at the end of the sixth book of the *Republic* where in Socrates' words he compares Good with the Sun, the «child of the good». He says:

[The sun is] in the visible world, in relation to the sight and the things of sight, what the good is in the intellectual world in relation to mind and the things of mind... The sun is not only the author of visibility in all visible things, but of generation and nourishment and growth, though he himself is not generation... In like manner the good may be said to be not only the author of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence, and yet the good is not essence, but far exceeds essence in dignity and power<sup>32</sup>.

In the above quotation, taken from Jowett's translation, after the words «the good is not essence» (*οὐκ οὐσία ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*) the Greek text cites also: *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας* which as referring, in agreement with this translation, to what «far exceeds essence» must be translated to a word as «beyond essence»<sup>33</sup>. What does Plato mean by «the good is not essence, but beyond essence»<sup>34</sup> since all ideas, according to him, are essences and therefore the Good as an idea must be also an essence? Does he mean an epistemological distinction between «essence» and «non-essence», that is, the impossibility of the intellect to understand the Good as «beyond being» as in the case of Socrates, for example, who, for this reason, in the request of Glaucon to give an explanation of the Good, is obliged to make its comparison with the Sun? Does Plato mean this by «the child of the good», or does he have in mind an ontological distinction, that is, the Good distinguished from the other ideas as their source? But, if the latter is

32. Plato's *Republic*, bk. VI, 508-509 (*The Dialogues of Plato*; trans. by B. Jowett, New York, Random House, 1937, vol. I, pp. 769-770).

33. Πλάτωνος *Πολιτεία*, VI, 509b.

34. *Οὐσία* (essence) in Plato is equivalent to what he himself calls also *ὄντως ὄν*, translated usually by Latin as *vere ens*, by French «véritablement être», and by English «truly being». However, É. Gilson remarks that the word *οὐσία* in Plato corresponds to «être» or «being» (Gr. *ὄν*). (See Étienne Gilson, *L'Être et l'Essence*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1948, pp. 24-25). He himself, speaking of Dionysius (Denis) the Areopagite in reference to Plato's passage from the *Republic*, translates *οὐσία* in it by «entity» (Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, Random House, 1955, p. 82). Speaking also in general of the Greeks, he translates *οὐσία* by «being» (*Ibid.*, p. 155.). Considering that the distinction between essence and existence appears in later years, it is better to translate *ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας* in Plato by «beyond being» than by «beyond essence».

the real meaning of the Good in the *Republic*, then we must say with A.E. Taylor that «not only will things 'participate' in Forms; Forms also will 'participate' in it»<sup>35</sup>.

However, in this case, the forms must also have, besides their epistemological, an ontological dependence on the Good. But, how can these forms, which as essences are the source of the things, depend on another source, i.e. on the Good? From what Plato himself says that the Good is not only the «author» (the source) of knowledge to all things known, but of their being and essence, we must conclude that he seems to accept both epistemological and ontological dependence on the Good. But is this the true meaning of «beyond essence»? Does he understand it in an ontological sense, too, and not in an epistemological sense only? It is sure that by the latter Plato means the unintelligibility of the idea of the Good in relation to the «divine madness» (*θεία μανία*)<sup>36</sup> by which one makes the «leap» or «jumb» (*πήδημα*)<sup>37</sup> to this idea as «beyond essence». But can we say with the same sureness that he gives to the Good by such an expression (beyond essence) an ontological meaning, too, seeing it as the source of all essences, i.e. of other sources? What is the exact meaning (epistemological only or ontological, too) of «beyond essence» or «beyond being» in Plato we can not know. What we really know is that Plotinus as a follower of Plato gives in his treatment of «beyond essence» an epistemological interpretation to it.

(b) In the fifth book of his *Enneads* Plotinus, the most representative exponent of Neoplatonism, speaking of the «One» or the «Supreme» or the «First», says that «the One is all things and no one of them»<sup>38</sup>. In other words, the One is the source of everything and yet the One is nothing. This is an obvious contradiction, if we do not understand the above expression in an epistemological sense. As Étienne Gilson remarks, «being can be reasonably defined; that which can be perceived by the senses or understood by the intellect. Consequently, whatever escapes the grasp of these two cognitive powers can

35. A. E. Taylor, «Plato», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 18 (1947), p. 57.

36. This madness is «divine» (*θεία*) as «derived from gods (*γυγνομένη ἀπὸ θεῶν*)» (*Phaedrus*, 244ad. See Jowett's translation, vol. I, p. 248: «madness which is a divine gift», and p. 249: «madness of divine origin»).

37. *Republic*, bk. VI, 511b. See Jowett's translation, vol. I, p. 772.

38. *Enneads*, V, 2:1 (See *Plotinus*; trans. from the Greek by Stephen Mackenna, Boston, Massachusetts, Charles T. Branford Co., [w.d.], p. 16).

rightly be called non-being»<sup>39</sup>. Thus, by calling the One nothing or non-being Plotinus means that the One is not knowable by the intellect. In this sense, he uses for the One exactly the same characterization that Plato uses for the Good. He characterizes the One as *ἐπέκεινα οὐσίας*, i.e. «beyond essence» or, as Stephen Mackenna translates, «that which stands above all Being»<sup>40</sup>. What Plotinus, therefore, means by this expression is that the One is unintelligible by us, something incapable of being known or comprehended by reason. He says:

The One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing: above all need, it is above the need of the knowing which pertains solely to the Secondary Nature. Knowing is a unitary thing, but defined: a defined One would not be the One-Absolute: the absolute is prior to the definite. — Thus the One is in truth beyond all statement<sup>41</sup>.

As such, then, the One-Absolute or Infinite, which is unintelligible by reason, is apprehended only, according to Plotinus,

by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer, in which the Divine Essence is communicated to you. This is ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite anxieties. Like only can apprehend like. When you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite. In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its divine essence, you realise this Union, nay this identity (*ἔνωσις*)<sup>42</sup>.

This goal of spiritual life in Plotinus is characterized by Santayana as «the primal bliss of contemplative union with pure Being» (*PSL*, 288), as the «ultimate good», attained by intuition, «by the contemplative intellect absorbed in pure Being». It is the goal that concerns all mystics in general: the «absorption, the union or ecstasy of which mystics speak» (*RE*, 61).

2. What Plotinus says of the One as «beyond being» and its contemplation, Pseudo - Dionysius the Areopagite (Ψευδο-Διονύσιος ὁ

39. É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 116.

40. *Enneads*, V, 4:2 (See trans. by S. Mackenna, *op. cit.*, p. 46).

41. *Ibid.*, V, 3:12-13 (S. Mackenna, p. 36).

42. *An Anthology of Mysticism and Mystical Philosophy*, with Notes by the Compiler W. Kingsland, London, Methuen and Co., [w.d.], p. 198. Concerning the «infinite», see what Santayana says about its relation to pure Being in his writing by the title «The Prestige of the infinite» in *The Works of Santayana*, New York, Triton Edition, Ch. Scribner's Sons, 1937, vol. X, p. 239.

Ἄρρεοπαγίτης) and John the Scot (Joannes Scotus Erigena or Eriugena) say of God.

(a) Pseudo-Dionysius, «the fountain-head of Christian mysticism»<sup>43</sup>, was influenced by Plotinus in his terminology of God Whom he characterizes as *μη ὄν, ὡς πάσης οὐσίας ἐπέκεινα* (not being, as beyond every essence)<sup>44</sup>. To understand the meaning of this characterization in him we must consider the method he uses in his epistemology of God. This method is double, positive or affirmation (*καταφατικὴ ἢ κατὰ θέσιν*) and negative or negation (*ἀποφατικὴ ἢ κατ' ἀφαίρεσιν*). Of the former he talks in his treatise *On Divine Names* (*Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων*) and of the latter in his treatise *On Mystical Theology* (*Περὶ μυστικῆς θεολογίας*).

The positive method studies the divine perfection. According to this method we can characterize God as «Being»<sup>45</sup>. In opposition to the positive the negative method which has the primacy over the positive considers God not as an object. «He is beyond everything that is, and hence beyond the knowable, since knowledge has being for its limit»<sup>46</sup>. According to this method, then, we can say that «... ἡ πάντων αἰτία, ὑπὲρ πάντα οὐσα... οὔτε ψυχὴ ἐστίν, οὔτε νοῦς... οὐδὲ λέγεται οὔτε νοεῖται... οὔτε ζῆ, οὔτε ζωὴ ἐστίν' οὐδὲ οὐσία ἐστίν... (the Cause of all, which is above all... is neither soul, nor mind;... neither is expressed, nor conceived;... neither lives, nor is life; neither is essence,...)»<sup>47</sup> etc., *ad libitum*. Professor S.C. Pepper who cites this quotation from William

43. See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York, The Modern Library, [w. d], p. 407.

44. Διονυσίου τοῦ Ἄρρεοπαγίτου, *Σωζόμενα πάντα: Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων*, ch. I, § 1, *Patrologia Graeca* (abbr. *PG*), J.-P. Migne, tom. III (vol. 3), 588B (See also *On Divine Names* in *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite*; trans. by the Rev. John J. Parker, Oxford, James Parker & Co., 1897, pp. 2-3). As Gilson remarks on Dionysius, whose Greek name *Διονύσιος* he translates by the French name Denis, «Denis often resorts to the terminology of Plotinus and of Proclus» (É. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 84).

45. *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite: On Divine Names*, ch. I, § 6, *PG*, vol. 3, 596A (trans. by the Rev. J. Parker, p. 10); see also ch. V, § 2, *PG*, vol. 3, 816C (p. 74), and ch. V, § 4, *PG*, vol. 3, 837B (p. 76).

46. Maurice de Wulf, *History of Mediaeval Philosophy*; trans. by Ernest C. Messenger, New York, Donver Publications, 1952, p. 102.

47. *Περὶ μυστικῆς θεολογίας*, ch. IV, § 1, *PG*, vol. 3, 1040D and ch. V, § 1, *PG*, vol. 3, 1045D, 1048A; also *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite: On Mystical Theology*; trans. by the Rev. J. Parker, pp. 136-137.



James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*<sup>48</sup> in his book, *World Hypotheses*, concludes that «in the momentum of these negatives this sort of mystic may even end by naming the reality itself 'Nothing'»<sup>49</sup>. This «Nothing», of course, is not ontological since in the beginning of the above quotation *It* is named as «the Cause of all» (ἡ πάντων αἰτία)<sup>50</sup>. The meaning of «Nothing», therefore, as Dionysius himself explains, must be understood on epistemological grounds, that is, something which «cannot be comprehended and contemplated by things of sense»<sup>51</sup>, the Unity which is «above mind above the Minds», the «One which is above conception», the «superessential essence and mind inconceivable, and Word unutterable, speechlessness (ἀλογία) and inconception (ἀνοησία), and namelessness – being after the manner of no existing being, and Cause of being to all, but itself not being, as beyond every essence, and as it may manifest Itself properly and scientifically concerning Itself»<sup>52</sup>. So, according to the negative method, as Maurice de Wulf remarks, «He [God] should be called non-being, so much so that the highest knowledge which we have of God is at the same time a mystic ignorance»<sup>53</sup>. By the negative method, then, we express ignorance as by the positive method, on the other hand, we express knowledge.

Now, between ignorance (ἄγνοια) and knowledge (γνώσις) is agnosia (ἀγγνωσία) which, according to John Parker, «is neither ignorance nor knowledge intensified: but a supra-knowledge of Him, Who is above all things known»<sup>54</sup>. Of agnosia, «a principle running through his writings»,

48. See in the above mentioned edition of the Modern Library, pp. 407-408.

49. S. C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses; A Study in Evidence*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1957, p. 132.

50. See what John the Scot says in *Expositiones in Mysticam Theologiam S. Dionysii*, ch. V, *Patrologia Latina* (abbr. PL), J.-P. Migne, tom. CXXII (122), 281B.

51. «Καθόλου τοιγαροῦν οὐ τολμητέον εἰπεῖν, οὔτε μὴν ἐνοησαί τι περὶ τῆς ὑπερουσίου καὶ κρυφίας θεότητος, παρὰ τὰ θεωδῶς ἡμῖν ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν λογίων ἐκπεφρασμένα» (*On Divine Names*, ch. I, § 1, PG, vol. 3, 588A).

52. *On Divine Names*, ch. I, § 1 (pp. 2-3): «...καὶ τῶν νοῶν, ἢ ὑπὲρ νοῦν ἐνότης· καὶ πάσαις διανοαῖς ἀδιανόητόν ἐστι τὸ ὑπὲρ διάνοιαν ἐν ἄρρητόν τε λόγῳ παντὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ λόγον ἀγαθόν, ἐνὰς ἐνοποιὸς ἀπάσης ἐνάδος, καὶ ὑπερουσίος οὐσία, καὶ νοῦς ἀνόητος καὶ λόγος ἄρρητος· ἀλογία καὶ ἀνοησία καὶ ἀνωνυμία, κατὰ μηδὲν τῶν ὄντων οὐσα· καὶ αἴτιον μὲν τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ ὄν, ὡς πάσης οὐσίας ἐπέκεινα, καὶ ὡς ἂν αὐτῇ περὶ ἑαυτῆς κυρίως καὶ ἐπιστητῶς ἀποφαίνουτο» (*Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων*, PG, vol. 3, 588B).

53. M. de Wulf, *op. cit.*, p. 102. See also what Gilson says about ignorance in *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 85.

54. See in Rev. J. Parker's Preface to *Divine Names*, p. XI.

Dionysius himself says the following: «*Agnosia*, in its superior sense, is a knowledge of Him, Who is above all known things»<sup>55</sup>. Thus, «agnosia (supraknowledge) of its superessentiality above reason and mind and essence – to it must we attribute the superessential science, so far aspiring to the highest...»<sup>56</sup>. Essentially agnosia is the same with the negative methods, for «the negative of abstraction denotes the superlative positive»<sup>57</sup>; or better, it is a combination of positive and negative methods, as we find this union in later years as a third method, besides those of positive and negative, in John the Scot to whom we now turn.

(b) Like Pseudo-Dionysius, John the Scot understands pure being as «beyond being» in an epistemological sense. He speaks of God as «beyond being» or «above being» (*Deus est qui plusquam esse est*) in the First Division of his principal work *De Divisione Naturae* (*On the Division of Nature*). By Nature (*quod graece 'φύσις', latine vero 'natura' vocitatur*<sup>58</sup>) John the Scot means *omnium quae sunt et quae non sunt* (all things which are and which are not)<sup>59</sup>. In other words, Nature, as John the Scot understands it, is a general name which includes both *being* and *non-being* (*esse* and *non esse*). This distinction between being and non-being is epistemological, for the things are determined as such in reference to the intellect. He says:

*Recte igitur dicuntur esse, quae ratione atque intellectu comprehendendi possunt. Quae vero omnem rationem ac intellectum exuperant, recte similiter dicuntur non esse*<sup>60</sup>.

As we can see, then, according to the above quotation, all that is comprehended by the intellect is said to be (*esse*). All that is not comprehended by the intellect is said not to be (*non esse*). God,

55. «First Letter to Gaius Therapeutes» (*Mystical Theology*, p. 141): «Καὶ ἡ κατὰ τὸ κρείττον παντελὴς ἀγνωσία γνώσις ἐστὶ τοῦ ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ γινωσκόμενα» (Διονυσίου Ἀρεοπαγίτου «Ἐπιστολὴ Α' Γαίῳ Θεραπευτῇ» (PG, vol. 3, 1065A-B).

56. *On Divine Names*, ch. I, § 1 (trans. by J. Parker, pp. 1-2): «...ἐκπεφασμένα. Τῆς γὰρ ὑπὲρ λόγον καὶ νοῦν καὶ οὐσίαν αὐτῆς ὑπερουσιότητος ἀγνωσία, αὐτῇ τὴν ὑπερούσιον ἐπιστήμην ἀναθετόν, τοσοῦτον ἐπὶ τὸ ἀναντες ἀνανεύοντας...» (*Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων*, PG, vol. 3, 558A).

57. J. Parker in the Preface to the *Divine Names*, p. XI.

58. *De Divisione Naturae* (*Περὶ φύσεως μερισμοῦ*), bk. I, ch. 1 (PL, vol. 122, 441A).

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 7, PL, vol. 122, 447A.

therefore, is said not to be since His essence cannot be comprehended by us who are below Him; He does not exist for us. This is true, of course, from the epistemological point of view because from the ontological point of view God exists. So, analogous to the distinction of God between *being* and *not-being* are the affirmative and negative (*affirmativa et abnegativa, καταφατική και ἀποφατική*)<sup>61</sup> methods similar to those of Pseudo-Dionysius from whom John the Scot borrowed them as he himself affirms<sup>62</sup>. By the affirmative method God is said to be *essentia* and by the negative He is said to be *non essentia*. A combination of these two methods, affirmative and negative, is a third one which expresses the nature of God by *super* (ὑπέρο). Thus by this method God is said to be *super-essentia*<sup>63</sup>. We have, therefore, according to John the Scot, three methods: 1) *essentia est, affirmatio* («God is essence», an affirmation); 2) *essentia non est, abdicatio* («He is not essence», a negation); 3) *superessentialis est, affirmatio simul et abdicatio* («He is super-essential», an affirmation and negation at the same time)<sup>64</sup>. It is especially the third method, by which God is said *superessentialis* (ὑπερούσιος), that refers to God as «above being» or «beyond being» (*est qui plusquam esse est*). As expressing such a supra-knowledge of Him, this method corresponds to agnosia (ἀγνώσις) of Pseudo-Dionysius and is essentially negative<sup>65</sup>. John the Scot himself explains saying the following:

*In superficie etenim negatione caret; in intellectu negatione pollet. Nam qui dicit, superessentialis est, non, quid est, dicit, sed, quid non est; dicit enim essentiam non esse, sed plusquam essentiam*<sup>66</sup>.

61. *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 13, *PL*, vol. 122, 458A: *Affirmativa quidem, quae a Graecis 'καταφατική', et abnegativa, quae 'ἀποφατική' vocatur.*

62. *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 13, *PL*, vol. 122, 458B and bk. I, ch. 14, *PL*, vol. 122, 461A-B.

63. "ὑπερούσιος" igitur est, id est, superessentialis (*Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 14, *PL*, vol. 122, 459D).

64. *Ibid.*, bk. I, ch. 14, *PL*, vol. 122, 462C.

65. *Ibid.* See also Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. II: *Mediaeval Philosophy from Augustine to Scotus*, Westmister, Maryland, The Newman Press, 1950, p. 118.

66. *De Divisione Naturae*, bk. I, ch. 14, *PL*, vol. 122, 462CD. Pseudo - Dionysius and John the Scot who in reality were influenced by Plato through Plotinus — especially Pseudo-Dionysius and through him John the Scot— both in turn by their «apophatism», as the most systematic representatives of this kind of approach to God, had an affect upon the mystic theology of the Eastern Church (Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas, etc.) and the Western Church (Meister Eckart, Jakob Böhme, etc.), corre-

### ***B. The Unintelligibility of God as the Truth «Beyond Truth»***

1. After our treatment of the meaning of «beyond being» in the most representative exponents of philosophical and Christian mysticism, let us see now what is the relation of «beyond being» in the mystics with pure Being in Santayana.

(a) When Santayana characterizes pure Being as *non-existent*, he uses a negative method, i.e. the second method as well as the third method of John the Scot; for, as we said, the third method, according to this mystic, is essentially negative, i.e. the second method. Now, considering that the third method in John the Scot expresses the nature of God by *super* (ὑπέρο), we can understand that the expression «above being» or «beyond being», which we ascribe by this method to God, may also apply to pure Being in Santayana, which in some sense is characterized by him as «supreme being» (*RE*, 58). To this Being the third method would be referred, too, for one more reason: As in John the Scot the third method is a combination of the positive method referring to *God as being* (*esse*) and of the negative method referring to God as *non-being* (*non esse*), so in Santayana pure Being is a combination of being and non-being (*RE*, 55-56), since pure Being partakes of non-being (*RE*, 57). But, the question is here if we can make in reality such a comparison of pure Being in Santayana with «beyond being» in the mystics, for between him and them there is a basic difference as concerns the relation of essence to existence. In Santayana, who distinguishes essence from existence, pure Being, or as he calls it, the realm of essence (*RS*, 285) is non-existent, but in the mystics, who see essence and existence in God as a unity, pure Being as essence is existent, too. Therefore, the distinction of the mystics is not like that of Santayana between being which exists and being which does not exist, i.e. an ontological distinction, but between «being» and «beyond being», i.e. an epistemological distinction.

(b) According to this distinction, by the expression «beyond being» the mystics (Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, John the Scot) mean

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spondingly (Concerning in general this whole line of influence in mysticism from Plato to our times, see the essays: Marios P. Bezos, *Der Apophatismus in der ostkirchlichen Theologie*. The kritische Funktion einer traditionellen Theorie heute, Athen 1986; and Michael K. Macrakis, «The Holy as superrational in Philosophy and Religion» in the collective volume (introductory essays) *The Saint and the Martyr in the Life of the Church*, Athens, Apostoliki Diaconia, Publishers, 1994, pp. 180-202.

the unintelligibility of pure Being, i.e. of the One or God. In this sense, John the Scot, for example, by his third method characterizes God as «beyond truth» or «above truth» which he attributes as super-Truth (*ὑπεραληθής*, and *ὑπεραλήθεια*, *plusquam verus*, *et plusquam veritas*)<sup>67</sup>. Similar to this is also the description of Pseudo - Dionysius who says about God:

*Πάντων μὲν ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων αἴτιον, αὐτὸ δὲ οὐδέν, ὡς πάντων ὑπερουσιῶς ἐξηρημένον. Τὴν μὲν οὖν ὑπερουσιότητα τὴν θεαρχικὴν, ... ὑμνήσαι θεμιτὸν οὐδενὶ τῶν ὅσοι τῆς ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀλήθειαν ἀληθείας εἰσὶν ἐρασταὶ* (It is the Cause of all things existing, but itself none of them, as being superessentially elevated above all. To none, indeed, who are lovers of the Truth above all Truth, is it permitted to celebrate the supremely - Divine Essentiality)<sup>68</sup>.

2. The characterization of God as «super-Truth» (*ὑπεραλήθεια*, *plusquam veritas*) or «Truth above all Truth» (*ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀλήθειαν ἀλήθεια*) concerns pure Being as «above being» or «beyond being» in an epistemological sense. In this sense, therefore, we can compare Santayana's epistemology of pure being with pure being in the mystics as something beneath or above truth.

(a) Treating the mystical truth at the end of *The Realm of Truth*, Santayana says «that which mystics call truth is something beyond truth». So, «in reality, the mystic is passing beyond truth. Truth oppresses him, and something beneath or above truth satisfies him completely» (*RT*, 135). This Truth «beyond truth» is identified by the mystic with God Who «not only knows the truth but *is* the truth existing in act» (*RT*, 137). But this Truth which, according to Santayana, is «the most egregious and egotistical error of all» (*RT*, 136), is also «a trick of identifying, or not yet distinguishing, intuition and essence» (*RT*, 137). In his book, *Platonism and Spiritual Life*, Santayana says:

Here the mystic – he who feels he has passed beyond the veil and seen things not to be uttered – if he lacks humility and discipline, may fall, and may lead us, into a sad illusion. He may take his dazzled feeling itself, the blinding glory of mere light, for the supreme

67. *De Divisione Naturae*, bk. I, ch. 14, *PG*, vol. 122, 460A.

68. Δ. τοῦ Ἀρεοπαγίτου: *Περὶ θεῶν ὀνομάτων*, ch. I, § 5, *PG*, vol. 3, 593C (See also *The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite: On Divine Names*; trans. by the Rev. John Parker, pp. 8-9).

reality, or for the true description of its nature. He may say that infinite Being is itself simply feeling, or intensity without quality or distinctions, or the pure light of spirit falling, not on everything, but only on itself. He would then be confusing his own incapacity with the object which infinitely exceeds it (*PSL*, 298).

(b) In opposition to the mystics, who identify intuition and essence, Santayana distinguishes the intuition of the datum from the datum itself which is an essence, for «that which certainly exists in such a case is only the intuition of that datum, not the datum in its own specious field, which is that of essence» (*RS*, 256; also 94, 95). In addition to that distinction, he makes another one in terms of existence, the distinction of the truth «between truth and knowledge of truth» (*RT*, 129). The truth itself, i.e. the Realm of Truth which is a segment of the Realm of Essence (*RT*, VIII; also *RE*, XV), like essence, is ideal and non-existential, in opposition to the knowledge of truth which is actual and existential (*RT*, 129). In other words, the knowledge of truth concerns animal faith, since Santayana reduces all knowledge of fact to faith; while the truth itself or the realm of truth as the «segment of the realm of essence» (*RE*, XV) concerns intuition which refers to essence. Therefore, intuition is not knowledge of truth. But, this does not mean, of course, that intuition is less worth than knowledge. On the contrary, Santayana prefers trust in intuition, for «the triumph that inwardly raises spirit to its height is intuition, not knowledge» (*RS*, 251). In other words, «the value of knowledge is moral»; it is «the function of free intuition» which «persists to enlighten the spirit morally about the truth that may have enlightened it intellectually» (*RS*, 251). But, what is important for Santayana from the point of view of truth is the knowledge of truth and not the moral value of knowledge. The knowledge of truth, i.e. the «possible discovery of truth or of some part of truth» must be distinguished from «truth itself» (*RT*, 40). Truth itself is «the wholeness of the truth» or absolute truth in opposition to «a part of the truth» which is relative truth (*RT*, 14, 40). The latter, as concerning the knowledge of truth, is what gives to our knowledge the characteristic of «relativity» (*RE*, XIIff.). 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).

But, though the absolute truth is undiscoverable, according to Santayana, the mystics, in opposition to him, claim that they discover it in their truth beyond or above truth when intuition in them approaches to the top. But this intuition filled with all truth is for Santayana «a trick of identifying, or not yet distinguishing, intuition and essence» (*RT*, 137). Their truth, therefore, is a confusion of incapacity with the object, the most egotistical error of all, a sad illusion (*PSL*, 298; *RT*, 136). But is really the mystical truth an error or illusion as Santayana thinks? This would be said only by the mystics themselves who experience the truth immediately in moments of ecstasy. This ecstasy or union, of which mystics speak, «has always been the goal of religious discipline in India» (*RE*, 61) where we now come to compare Santayana with the Indians.

### III

#### PURE BEING IN RELATION TO BRAHMA AND NIRVANA (Santayana Compared with the Indians)

*In theory it [pure Being] is entirely directed to identification with Brahma, that is, to eluding all finitude and existence (G. Santayana, The Realm of Essence, p. 58).*

*That [Brahma], standing, passes beyond others as they run... That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is outside all this (Isha Upanishad, IV, 5).*

*Other, indeed, is IT than the known, and moreover above the unknown... (Kena Upanishad, I, 3).*

*'Nirvana', as the Buddha teaches, neither is nor is not; is neither existence nor non-existence, being nor non-being... 'Nirvana', being thus beyond all 'sangsāric' concepts, transcends all human predication (The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation, pp. 4-5).*

*Nirvana embraces the whole realm of essence -- pure Being in its infinite implications -- from which, of course, existence is excluded (G. Santayana, Platonism and Spiritual Life, p. 300).*

#### A. Pure Being and Brahma

1 (a) According to the Upanishads, the sacred books of the

Indians, Brahma is distinguished into Para Brahma (higher Brahma) and Aparā Brahma (lower Brahma). The former is also called *Nirguna* because it is devoid of attributes in opposition to the latter, lower Brahma, which is called *Saguna* because it is endowed with attributes. The higher Brahma is indeterminate, unqualified, transcendent and non-phenomenal. The lower Brahma is determinate, qualified, immanent in the phenomenal world. The former is unknowable and unexpressible, the latter is knowable and expressible. «The former is the goal of the higher knowledge (para vidyā), while Īśvāra [the latter] is the goal of the lower knowledge (apara vidyā). Higher knowledge is suprainTELlectual intuition. Lower knowledge is intellectual and discursive»<sup>69</sup>. *Kena Upanishad*, for example, talks as follows about Brahma:

*Other, indeed, is IT than the known,  
And moreover above the unknown.*

.....

*That which is unexpressed with speech,  
That with which speech is expressed<sup>70</sup>.*

.....

As we can see, then, the distinction of Brahma into higher and lower Brahma, understood in an epistemological sense, is like that between «being» and «non-being» or «beyond being» in Christian mysticism. Similar is also the method which is used for its description. «The higher Brahman (Para Brahman) is described by the method of negation. The lower Brahman (Apara Brahman) is described by the method of affirmation»<sup>71</sup>. And, as in Pseudo - Dionysius, for example, according to the negative method, we can say that God is non-being so that the highest knowledge is at the same time a mystic ignorance, in the same manner in Brahmanism, too, the negative method is related to the highest knowledge and mystic ignorance. In *Isha Upanishad* we read the following about the identity of ignorance with the highest knowledge: «He who knows that are born in one, the Knowledge and the Ignorance, by the Ignorance crosses beyond death

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69. See Jadunath Sinha, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, India, Sinha Publishing House, 1956, pp. 5-6.

70. *Kena Upanishad* I, 3, 4 (See *An Anthology of Mysticism and Mystical Philosophy*; edited by W. Kingsland, p. 4).

71. J. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 6.



and by the Knowledge enjoys immortality»<sup>72</sup>; for, as Shri Aurobindo explains, «by development in the Ignorance the soul returns to the capacity of Knowledge and enjoys by the Knowledge Immortality»<sup>73</sup>. On the other hand, *Katha Upanishad* says about ignorance in relation to that which is known as knowledge:

*Far opposite are these two and divergent, —  
Ignorance and what is known as knowledge*<sup>74</sup>.

(b) According to Santayana, this ignorance in the Indians, which concerns their epistemology of Brahma, is «a *moral* ignorance only». «It is not scientific or natural ignorance;... but it is ignorance in the heart; ignorance of its spiritual vocation». «Ignorance which at the same time is knowledge of the world, and of the path to salvation» (RS, 188). This path to salvation is the return of the self to the true Self or Brahma, which is hidden in the heart of that creature. «Now, in that subtle essence (the root of all), all that exists has its self. It is the True [Real]. It is the Self, and thou.. art it»<sup>75</sup> (cf. *ayam ātmā brahma; tat tvam asi*: «that art thou»). In this sense, «Atman, our true self, is Brahman; it is pure indivisible Being»<sup>76</sup>. Upon this identity of the human self with Brahman in relation to intuition S. Radhakrishnan remarks:

The nature of this ultimate reality cannot be defined. It can be grasped, however, through intuition. This intuition is non objective like perceptual experience or communicable to others like inferential knowledge. We cannot give a formal exposition of it. To any suggested definition of reality we can only say, «not this», «not this» (*neti, neti*). Contradictory accounts are given to show that negative descriptions do not mean negation of all being but only the poverty of intellect<sup>77</sup>.

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72. Shri Aurobindo, *Isha Upanishad* (Text and translation), Calcuta, Arya Publishing House, 1945, verse 11, p. 7.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

74. Joseph Nadin Rawson, *The Katha Upanishad*, Oxford University Press, 1934, Second Valli, 4.

75. *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6: 8, 7; *Sacred Book of the East*, 1:124 (I borrow this quotation from Ross E. Hoople's *Preface to Philosophy: Book of Readings*, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1950, p. 317.

76. Shri Aurobindo, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

77. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, «Indian Philosophy» in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 12 (1947), pp. 249.

The ultimate reality of Brahma, then, is grasped not by the intellect but by intuition, in the state of highest immediacy which transcends thought and its distinctions; it is reached when intuition approaches to the top, in the wisest moments of life, in which «each sage... reverts to perfect identity with Brahma» (*RS*, 185). This identity with Brahma or absorption in pure Being, the union or ecstasy, «has always been the goal of religious discipline in India» (*RE*, 61). Santayana speaks of this intuitive ecstasy in his treatment of pure Being in comparison to the doctrine of the Indians. It is, therefore, an epistemological comparison similar to that of the mystics in general. But, especially in the case of the Indians, besides the epistemological, he makes an ontological comparison, too.

2 (a) The ontological comparison of pure Being in Santayana with Brahma in the Indians concerns the distinction between essence and existence in Brahma, corresponding to the epistemological distinction between *Nirguna* (Para Brahma) and *Saguna* (Apara Brahma). Santayana says:

I know what the Indians might say about Brahma at once hearing and not hearing, seeing and not seeing, etc. He *does* hear, in as much as whenever creatures hear it is only he that hears in them. Yet he does *not* hear, since in his own person he is free from all relativity or privation, seated in no particular station or organ, and not subject to the false intrusion of sensation or thought: things which are false because founded on ignorance of all the rest of infinite Being (*RS*, 23).

The distinction of Brahma as hearing and not hearing, as seeing and not seeing, etc., is an epistemological distinction, according to the positive and negative method, describing Brahma as *being* (lower Brahma) and *non-being* (higher Brahma). So, in so far as Brahma *does* hear, he *is* intelligible by us, but in so far as Brahma *does not* hear, he *is not* intelligible by us. It is, therefore, a distinction in reference to the intellect, which intellect in Santayana's philosophy is the same with spirit, for «spirit», as he explains, «is natively intelligent»<sup>78</sup>.

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78. *RS*, 219. As regards the components of man, Santayana is a trichotomist. He accepts that man consists of three parts: body, psyche (*ψυχή*, soul), and spirit (*RS*, 15-18). Concerning especially the spirit, he says that «it might be identified with the *pensée* or *cogitatio* of Descartes and Spinoza» (*RS*, VIII; also 18, 44, and *SE*, 29). So,

Now, considering Brahma himself as a pure spirit<sup>79</sup>, i.e. as a state of deep sleep in which spirit lies undeveloped (*RS*, 23), he is for Santayana something non-existent. In this sense, therefore, such «spirit» is not a spiritual reality but what Santayana calls an *essence* (*RS*, 23). He says:

In so far as he [Brahma] remained asleep in a dead calm, he would be only the non-existent possibility of spirit, the unused category of thought, the unexemplified essence of any consciousness that might arise eventually (*RS*, 23-24). —[Thus] in so far as Brahma is conceived as a universal readiness for thinking, undetermined to any particular thought, he is the *essence* of pure transcendental spirit, and non-existent until exemplified in some actual intuition (*RS*, 25-26).

On the other hand, considering Brahma in reference to the spirit, as Santayana himself understands spirit, i.e. «the actual spirit in ourselves» (*RS*, 23), the existing spirit which «finds itself thinking» (*RS*, 44), then Brahma is not simply an essence but an existence, too. Santayana says: «In so far as within particular psyches Brahma hears, sees, thinks, and suffers, he is existent spirit. He *exists* only diffused...» (*RS*, 26).

(b) Spirit in Santayana's philosophical system has a place between essence and existence, it is the bridge which unites these two realms of being, for «if, in its outlook, spirit rests in essences, in its origin it springs from matter» (*RS*, 49). So, «spirit depends on matter for its existence but not for its essence» (*RS*, 79). In this sense, therefore, in so far as spirit, in its outlook, rests in essences, Brahma is conceived to be the realm of essence or pure Being; for, as Santayana explains, «in theory it [pure Being] is entirely directed to identification with Brahma, that is, to eluding all finitude and existence» (*RE*, 58). In so

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«as Santayana uses the term», as W. E. Arnett remarks, «*spirit* is closely analogous to *mind*, to *intellect*, and especially to *nous* as it was conceived by Aristotle and Plotinus» (W. E. Arnett, *Santayana and the Sense of Beauty*, Indiana University, 1955, p. 137).

79. Santayana says: «We must understand by Brahma pure spirit present in all its instances, not any one instance, however extraordinary» (*RS*, 262). The name «Brahma» itself, according to Santayana, means «breath of life» (*SAF*, 19; also 51); and also the word «spirit» (L. *spiritus*) as akin to the Latin verb *spirare* (= to breathe, blow) means «breath of life». Cp. with «God is a Spirit» (John 4:24) and «The Spirit of God» (Gen. 1:2), Who «formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul» (Gen. 2:7).

far, on the other hand, as spirit depends on matter for its existence, Brahma is conceived to be the realm of matter or existence. «But then», Santayana remarks, «my name for Brahma would not be spirit but matter; because in my system as the name for the *intrinsic ideal possibility of all things* is essence, so the name for the *existing protentiality of specific things* is matter» (*RS*, 24). In this sense, therefore, according to Santayana, even spirit, though immaterial (*RS*, 3,6), would be arise in matter (*RS*, 38), for the «real potentiality of spirit [is] in matter» (*RS*, 37). As we can see, then, Brahma includes in itself, besides spirit, matter and essence, too, for «this Brahma is a state of deep sleep in which spirit, matter, and essence seem to lie concentrated and undeveloped» (*RS*, 23). Concerning especially the content of Brahma as essence (pure Being) and matter (existence), Santayana says:

In so far as he [Brahma] is conceived to be infinitely pregnant and to contain virtually the characters of all possible beings, but without any distinction of subject or any actual intuition, Brahma is pure Being or the realm of essence. —In so far as this potentiality is conceived to be something real and extant (since avowedly phenomena are not created by pure spirit but produced naturally by a regular development of works and physic heredities), Brahma is the inner reality of matter (*RS*, 26).

(c) What Santayana says about the distinction between essence and existence in Brahma the Indians say about the distinction between Para (higher) and Apara (lower) Brahma. But, though there is a correspondence of the distinction of Santayana to that of the Indians, we can not say that there is a similarity between them, too. Pure Being in Santayana or realm of essence as non existent is different from higher Brahma which, as is understood by the Indians, includes both essence and existence, for these two in them, as in the mystics, are unified. Concerning Brahma, therefore, the ontological distinction of Santayana is not valid from the point of view of the Indians. If we must accept an ontological distinction in them, this must be not between essence and existence in Brahma but between Brahma, as involving both essence and existence, and the temporal, spatial and causality - bound world, regarded sometimes by the Upanishads as a mere appearance, a «name and form». And, especially, here, we can see the great difference between the Indians and Santayana, because for the Indians the true reality is Brahma and not the sensible world which is

illusory<sup>80</sup>; while for Santayana the reality «that exists at all» is the realm of matter (*RT*, 47) which, as «the source of everything» (*RM*, XI), «creates spirit», too (*RS*, 284). Spirit, therefore, is not a power (*RS*, 12). Anyone who thinks of spirit as a power, it is simply a mythological name (*RM*, 171). And God, conceived merely as a power (*RS*, 284), «is such a mythological name for the universal power and operation of matter» (*RM*, 171; also *PP*, 128-129). In this sense, «matter is symbolized under the name of God» (*RM*, 205). So, «in respect to popular religion that thinks of God as a creator of the world and the dispenser of fortune», Santayana affirms, «my philosophy is atheistic. It puts all substance and power into the realm of matter» (*RS*, 284) and «I regard all immaterial things, in so far as they exist or are true, as qualities, products, of ideal implications of the physical world... Physics, not metaphysics, therefore reveals to us, as far as it goes, the *foundations of things*» (*RS*, 274). Pure Being or the realm of essence as a category «extravagantly metaphysical» (*RS*, 272) is not the foundation of things or the source of existence, for pure Being itself is non-existent. Santayana says:

Pure Being is not an existence or a power; therefore not the God of theism or pantheism (*RE*, 58). — Pure Being is not identified by myself with the idea of God... It cannot be a living God; yet unless the idea of God somehow included pure Being it would remain a wholly mythical poetic idea without philosophic or rational warrant (*RS*, 283).

From this alone it is plain that from the ontological point of view Santayana's doctrine of pure Being compared to that of the Indians is different. Pure Being or Brahma, as real God<sup>81</sup> in Brahmanism, not only is but also exists, for Brahma as essence involves existence, too. On the contrary, pure Being in Santayana is only an essence, the

80. «Life is a dream, they [the Indians] say: and all experienced events are illusions» (*SAF*, 51). See also Nik. Loubaris, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 26, 28.

81. Though Shri K. Saksena identifies the *Brahman* with the *Atman*, i.e. that which «alone underlies Man and Nature», he accepts that «at places [in the *Upanisads*] we also find the pantheistic thought which identifies the universe with the *Brahman*, and the theistic thought which looks *Brahman* as the Lord of the Universe» («The Story of Indian Philosophy» in *A History of Philosophical Systems*; edited by Vergilius Ferm, New York, The Philosophical Library, w.d., p. 5). In the theistic sense, by Brahma as the Lord of the Universe, we must especially understand the lower (Apara) Brahma. As J. Sinha remarks, «Apara Brahma is personal God (Īsvāra), who is the creator,... the moral governor...» (*A History of Indian Philosophy*, p. 5).

whole realm of essence, and therefore non-existent, for Santayana puts all existence in the realm of matter which is «the principle of existence» (*RM*, V 96; also 129), «the matrix and the source of everything: it is nature, the sphere of genesis, the universal mother» (*RM*, XI). In other words, the difference between Santayana and Brahmanism on pure Being lies in general in the difference between his own materialism or naturalism and the Indian mysticism and idealism. But, what about Buddhism which, though it is a development of Brahmanism, is a religion without God<sup>82</sup>. Is there, then, in Buddhism, as in Brahmanism, the same difference in comparison to Santayana? Let us consider now this question in our examination of Buddhism.

### ***B. Pure Being and Nirvana***

Because the several interpreters of the existence or non-existence of Nirvana are confused<sup>83</sup>, we must make here, in Buddhism, as we did in mysticism and Brahmanism, the same ontological and epistemological distinction. The question is: Does Nirvana mean «complete extinction of life»<sup>84</sup> (ontological interpretation) or does it mean unintelligibility like «non-being» of the mystics (epistemological interpretation)? So, according to these two interpretations, the comparison of pure Being in Santayana with Buddhist Nirvana is both ontological and epistemological.

1 (a) What is Nirvana? As we read in *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation*:

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82. In reality, God in Buddhism is, we would say, the Buddha himself. Though the older Schools insist that he was a man, other Schools «see him as an ultramundane being» (Anastasios Giannoulatos, *Introductions and Aspects of Indian Religions*, University Lectures, Athens 1989, p. 128, in Greek). There is even the theory of «the three bodies of the Buddha», in Mahāyāna Buddhism, which understands the Buddha as an absolute principle (*Ibid.*). But, if we believed the older Schools, which see him as a man, then it would be better to characterize Buddhism as a «moral-philosophical system» (*Ibid.*, p. 129).

83. Whether Nirvana, «blowing out», is a state of non-existence in the sense of final annihilation or complete extinction of life depends essentially on the fourth undetermined question that the Buddha has not explained, i.e. the question whether one who is emancipated (a Tathāgata, a Buddha) exists after death (See E. J. Thomas, «Buddha and Buddhism», *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4 [1947], p. 326).

84. See the word «Nirvana» in *Dictionary of Philosophy*; edited by Dagobert D. Runes, p. 210.

*Nirvāna*, the State Transcendent Over Sorrow, and, thus over *Sang-sāra*, is a state of vacuity, of the Voidness of the Mahāyāna, for it is empty of all conceivable things, of qualities, which are of the *Sang-sāra*, the opposite of *Nirvāna*. *Nirvāna*, as the Buddha teaches, neither is nor is not; is neither existence nor non-existence, being nor non-being, all of which are, as Nāgārjuna shows, illusory dualities. *Nirvāna*, being thus beyond all *sangsāric* concepts, transcends all human predication<sup>85</sup>.

But, if Nirvana «neither is nor is not; is neither existence nor non-existence, being nor non-being», then what is it since every thing either is or is not? Is there any third way? Of course, if «not-being is not the opposite of being, but only what is other (different) than being», as Plato teaches in the *Sophist*, then we can say with confidence that «not-being has an assured existence, and a nature of its own»<sup>86</sup>. During the period of his maturity, the Greek philosopher accepted in his above Dialogue that non-being is not against being, i.e. nothing, as Parmenides said, but «something else only» ( *ἕτερον μόνον* )<sup>87</sup>. Commenting on this characterization of non-being, Masao Abe, Professor of Religious Studies at Nara University of Education in Japan, remarks the following:

Parmenides said, 'what is is; what is not is not'. Plato made a distinction of 'what is not' into *me on* [*μη ὄν*] as the relative negation of being and *ouk on* [*οὐκ ὄν*] as the absolute negation of being. He rejected the latter as the unthinkable and unknowable whereas he grasped the former in correlation with *to on* [*τὸ ὄν*] as something different from being. For Plato, actual existence is always comprised of being mixed with non-being as in the case of a phenomenon which cannot escape coming into being, changing, and passing away. But pure being is unchangeable and eternal, being *idea* as the original prototype for which the phenomena are copies<sup>88</sup>.

However, Nirvana is different from being but not in the manner that Plato sees non-being as something which exists less than being in

85. *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation (or the Method of Realizing Nirvana through Knowing the Mind)*, introductions, annotations and editing by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, London - New York - Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 4-5.

86. *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, p. 210.

87. Πλάτωνος Σοφιστής 257b.

88. Masao Abe, «Non - Being and *Mu*: The Metaphysical Nature of Negativity in the East and the West», *Religious Studies*, Cambridge University Press, special conference number (No. 2), June 1975, p. 182.

relation to being itself; nor is it in the manner that Parmenides understands non-being ( $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$ ) as opposite of being ( $\delta\upsilon\nu$ ), i.e. as emptiness ( $\kappa\epsilon\nu\delta\upsilon\nu$ ) in a real ontological sense (something non-existent in all). Nirvana, as the Buddha says, neither is nor is not, neither being nor non-being; it is beyond being that means not a simple but double negation, the negation of the negation. This is what the above mentioned, in *The Tibetan Book*, Indian Buddhist monk-philosopher Nāgārjuna understands by *Sūnyatā* as «true Emptiness or wonderful Being»<sup>89</sup> which is beyond all sangsāric concepts, transcending all human predication. But let us see the true meaning of Nirvana as an expression of *Sūnyatā*, which as beyond being and non-being embraces in reality both of them.

(b) According to Masao Abe, Buddha's teaching of Nirvana as «that which is neither being nor non-being» must be «the very basis on which *both* being *and* non-being are embraced»<sup>90</sup>, a view that he treats thoroughly in his article «Non-being and *Mu*, the metaphysical nature of negativity in the East and the West»<sup>91</sup>. Referring, in the course of his discussion, to the Buddhist monk-philosopher Nāgārjuna (during the 2nd century), the founder of the famous School of Madhyamika, he remarks:

It is Nāgārjuna who establishes the idea of *Sūnyatā* or Emptiness by clearly realising the implication of the basic ideas transmitted by the earlier Buddhist tradition. [And he explains in the sequel:] It must be emphasised that Nāgārjuna's idea of Emptiness is not nihilist. Emptiness which is completely without form is freed from both being and non-being because 'non-being' is still a form as distinguished from 'being'. In fact, he [Nāgārjuna] not only repudiates the 'eternalist' view, which took phenomena to be real just as they are: he also rejects as illusory the exactly opposite 'nihilistic' view that emptiness and non-being are true reality... A view [the latter] which negates the former. [As such, *Sūnyatā*] is not based on a mere negation but on the negation of the negation. This double negation is not a relative negation but an absolute negation. And an absolute negation is nothing but an absolute affirmation because, logically speaking, the negation of the negation is the affirmation. Yet, it is not a mere and immediate affirmation. It is an affirmation which is realised through

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89. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 181ff.



double negation, i.e. absolute negation. Thus we may say that absolute negation is absolute affirmation and absolute affirmation is absolute negation. This paradoxical statement well expresses the dialectical and dynamic structure of *Sūnyatā* in which emptiness is fullness and fullness is emptiness<sup>92</sup>.

Concerning double negation especially, it is most clearly seen, according to Masao Abe, in Chinese and Japanese terms, *u* for being and *mu* for non-being, the positive and negative principles which «are completely balanced in relation to one another». Both *u* and *mu* are entirely relative, not being one without the other. As such they have equal force and are mutually negating: «*mu* is the negation of *u* and *vice - versa*». In this sense, «the Buddhist idea of *Sūnyatā* shows the standpoint realised by overcoming the antinomic, self-contradictory oneness of *u* and *mu*»<sup>93</sup>. Therefore, «the ultimate for Buddhists is not 'Being' itself [or God as understood in the West, that is Being which, having priority over non being, proceeds it] but formless 'Emptiness' which is neither *u* nor *mu* and which is often referred to as absolute *Mu* as distinguished from relative *mu*»<sup>94</sup>.

Similar to Nāgārjuna's absolute *Mu* or Emptiness (*Sūnyatā*) is also the «true nothingness» of another Japanese philosopher of our times Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945)<sup>95</sup> who was influenced to a high degree by Plato, and especially by his expression of «beyond essence». Like the absolute *Mu*, the true nothingness or the «place of nothingness», as otherwise Nishida names it, is the negation of the negation which here, according to the logic, too, is absolute affirmation, the absolute and ultimate reality. In this sense, the Japanese philosopher discovers the idea of «nothingness» in the depth of all eastern traditions<sup>96</sup>. Nishida himself moves in the area of Buddhism<sup>97</sup>, which, with Taoism, have the «nothingness» as their basis. As he writes, «Tao

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

94. *Ibid.*, p. 187; cp. p. 181.

95. Concerning this philosopher, see especially Stylianos L. Papalexandropoulos' Ph. D. Dissertation, *The Japanese Philosopher Nishida Kitarō: Presuppositions for a definition of his Buddhist Identity*, Athens 1991 (in Greek). See also M. P. Begzos' book review in *Theologia (Θεολογία)*, 63 (1992), pp. 892-896 (in Greek).

96. S. L. Papalexandropoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

97. See the subtitle of S. L. Papalexandropoulos' Ph. D. Dissertation. According to a circle of specialists, «Nishida is an eastern Buddhist, and especially a Zenist thinker» (S. Papalexandropoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 147).

is easily understood that it is 'nothingness'<sup>98</sup>. As such, as nothingness, he sees also Nirvana. To this similarity between Tao and Nirvana on their basis Masao Abe agrees, too. According to him, so much Taoists as Buddhists «have maintained that the idea of nothingness is central and essential»<sup>99</sup>. And, as Tao from which, for Chung - Tzū, both being and non-being have sprung, is «completely unnameable»<sup>100</sup>, so Nirvana is also unnameable, unknowable and unintelligible. Here we approach Nirvana from the epistemological point of view. But, before we treat it from this point of view, let us see how Santayana understands it in an ontological sense; for in the comparison of pure Being with Nirvana he is interested chiefly in their ontology.

(c) However, Santayana gives an ontological interpretation when he says that «in Nirvana, there would be no change, no division, and in that sense no existence» (*RM*, 192). It is obvious that in this passage Santayana writes according to the meaning of his ontological distinction between essence and existence. Existence by definition is in flux but, on the other hand, essence (that which is but does not exist) is unchangeable. Therefore non-existence in Nirvana, a state where there «would be no change», according to Santayana, must be an essence as such essence is also pure Being which, like Nirvana, is non-existent, too. Santayana says:

Nirvana embraces the whole realm of essence —pure Being in its infinite implications— from which, of course, existence is excluded; because since existence is necessarily in flux and is centred in some arbitrary moment, it itself exists only by exclusion and with one foot in the grave. Existence is that realm of Becoming which combines Being and Non-Being ( *PLS*, 300).

So, the comparison between pure Being and Nirvana could be perfect if we could understand it from the interpretation that Santayana gives to Nirvana. But, the question is if we can make the distinction between essence and existence for Nirvana because in Nirvana essence and existence are the same thing and, therefore, when we say that Nirvana is non-existence we must mean non-being, too, that is, a

98. *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū (The Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō)*, edn. 1980, vol. 7, p. 435 (From S. Papalexandropoulos' dissertation, p. 194).

99. Masao Abe, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

100. According to Lao-Tzū also, «Tao as the basic principle of the universe is completely unnameable, unknowable, and nonexistent...» (*Ibid.*, p. 184).

metaphysical nothingness and essencelessness, a nihilism. In other words, Nirvana in Buddhism is contrasted with the existence of this world from which Nirvana is a deliverance. As we remember, we found also the same distinction between Brahma and the phenomenal world, but with one difference. There, in Brahmanism, the most reality is Brahma in opposition to the sensible world which is illusory, while in Buddhism the sensible world really exists but not as Nirvana which is non-existence. However, in any case the ontological comparison of pure Being with Nirvana in terms of Santayana, that is Nirvana as non-existent being in the real sense of existence, is different.

2 (a) Rather the comparison of pure Being with Nirvana, as that with Brahma, would be more successful, if we could understand it on epistemological grounds. This comparison is based on the epistemological interpretation of Nirvana. Professor S. N. Dasgupta, commenting on some European scholars who try to comprehend the mystical state of Nirvana, says the following in reference to the epistemological interpretation:

It is indeed very difficult to describe satisfactorily the ultimate mystical stage of Buddhist Nirvana. For in one sense it is absolutely contentless... Some European scholars have considered the description of Nirvana by Buddhists to be incoherent or inconsistent. It is not surprising that European scholars, who are temperamentally often very different from the Buddhists of India, should fall into error in trying to comprehend the mystical state of Nirvana. Whether we read the teaching of Upanishads or of the yoga of Patanjali, the ultimate state representing the goal of all the spiritual quest and spiritual strivings of the sages is set forth as absolutely contentless and non-conceptual... To call it [Nirvana] blissful is not to understand bliss in an ordinary way. For this mystical bliss is uncomprehensible by the intellect<sup>101</sup>.

Santayana seems to accept also with Dasgupta the epistemological interpretation when he says:

If in order to avoid mythology we speak rather of Nirvana, we must understand by this no passive lapse from existence but a moral victory over it, occasionally possible, though never physically final. What is suspended is not existence but ignorance (*RS*, 262).

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101. S. N. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism*, Chicago, London, Northwestern University, The Open Publishing Co., 1927, pp. 89-90.

(b) Thus, in an epistemological sense Nirvana means the same thing as «beyond being» in the «superlative theology», according to which, «the whole truth about God is neither that he is substance, nor that he is non substance; the whole truth is that God is supersubstantial»<sup>102</sup>. Similar to this method is that of Buddha in describing Nirvana as that which «neither is nor is not; is neither existence nor non-existence, being nor non-being». In other words, like the existence of God in Christian mysticism, the reality of Nirvana in Buddhism, according to the epistemological interpretation, is not doubtful but it is prohibited by Buddha to interpret Nirvana as existence or non-existence, being or non-being because Nirvana, being beyond all these concepts, «transcends all human predication». This «Silence of Buddha», according to T.R.V. Murti, «can only be interpreted as meaning the consciousness of the indescribable nature of the Unconditioned Reality»<sup>103</sup>. Professor Radhakrishnan interprets Buddha's silence as follows:

If Buddha declined to define the nature of the Absolute (Nirvana) or if he contented himself with negative definitions, it is only to indicate that absolute being is above all determinations. Why, then, did Buddha not admit in express terms the reality of the absolute? Buddha refused to describe the absolute, for that would be to take a step out of the world of reality, the legitimacy of which he was the first to contest in others. The world of experience does not reveal the absolute anywhere within its limits<sup>104</sup>.

Brahmanism keeps also the same silence before Brahman (of neuter gender) which indicates the supreme power or the ultimate reality of the universe; and which as such must not be confused with Brahma (a masculine form), that is, one of the major gods of Hinduism)<sup>105</sup>. In opposition to Brahma as «being» is Brahman as «non

102. É. Gilson, *A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, p. 117.

103. T.R.V Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955, p. 48.

104. Cited by T.R.V Murti in his above book, p. 48.

105. See «Brahma» and «Brahman» in *Encyclopaedia Papyros - Larouse - Britannica*, Athens, Publishing Organism - «Papyros», vol. 15 (1985), pp. 290, 291, correspondingly (in Greek); and also the article of A. L. Basham, J. A. B. van Buitenen and E. C. Dimock, «Hinduism» in the same *Encyclopaedia*, vol. 29 (1987), p. 343. However, in opposition to others who follow this distinction, and even to those who prefer in both cases the «Brahman», Santayana always uses the «Brahma» (without n).

being» ('neti,' 'neti')<sup>106</sup>. So, T.R.V. Murti, who cites in his book, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, the above Radhakrishnan's interpretation, concludes:

A close parallel, as is pointed out by many scholars, is the Upanishadic way of defining Brahman as 'neti' 'neti,' as what cannot be grasped by speech, thought or senses<sup>107</sup>.

Santayana also, speaking of «silence» in relation to pure Being, says: «Could a man really be sublimated into his essence, he would be silent, as pure Being is silent» (*RE*, 120). On this point, therefore, we could make a comparison between pure Being in Santayana and Buddhist Nirvana. We call this comparison epistemological because silence refers to the mystical intuition which «intuition itself», according to Santayana, «is silent and private» (*RS*, 39). As such, therefore, silence is a kind of knowledge related to the negative method of the Indians as well as of the mystics who express ignorance in their negative way of defining Brahman or God as «neti» «neti» or «non Being»<sup>108</sup>.

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106. In this sense, Brahman is «That which is unexpressed with speech» (*Kena Upanishad*, I, 4); see also S. Radhakrishnan, «Indian Philosophy», *op. cit.*, p. 249 (Pt. III, note 77 of our essay) and Masao Abe, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

107. T. R. V Murti, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

108. Concerning Brahman, professor Radhakrishnan says: «We can not give a formal exposition of it. To any suggested definition of reality we can only say, 'not this', 'not this' (*neti, neti*)» (S. Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, p. 249). This negative way of defining Brahman, as we have seen, expresses ignorance. So, ignorance is closely parallel to silence which is characteristic not of Buddha only but of all the mystics in general. In reference to this mystical silence Plotinus, for example, says that «the One, name and thing, there would be more in silence» (*Enneads*, V, 5:6, p. 54). «Silence», according to Kierkegaard's definition, «is the mutual understanding between the Deity and the individual» (*Fear and Trembling*; trans. by W. Lowrie, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Co., 1954, p. 97). Such is the silence, for him, in the case of Abraham, who in the sacrifice of his son keeps silent, cannot speak for «if when I speak», as Kierkegaard explains, «I am unable to make myself intelligible, then I am not speaking» (*Ibid.*, p. 122). So, silence is a result of the unintelligibility of God (*Ibid.*, p. 121) who is characterized in the *Philosophical Fragments* as «Unknown» (*Op. cit.*, pp. 31, 36). Kierkegaard says there about this Unknown in relation to Reason that «the paradoxical passion of the Reason comes repeatedly into colusion with the Unknown, which does indeed exist, but is unknown, and in so far does not exist» (*Ibid.*, p. 35). As we can see, then, Kierkegaard's understanding of God is similar to that of the Christian mystics whose characterization of God as «non being» or «beyond being» has an epistemological meaning, since God exists for them in an ontological, but not in an epistemological sense, for His essence cannot be comprehended by us who are below

## CONCLUSION

*The Indians and the mystics are inspired people, and their language does not always bear critical examination. —As for me, I frankly cleave to the Greeks and not to the Indians, and I aspire to be a rational animal rather than a pure spirit (G. Santayana, *The Realm of Spirit*, p. X, *The Realm of Essence*, p. 65).*

In the comparison of Santayana with the mystics and the Indians on pure Being the differences are more than the similarities. The only similarities which can be found between him and them are on epistemological grounds.

1. The distinction of the mystics between «being» and «beyond being» (or non-being) is an epistemological distinction. God is the source of all being, and God is not. He is and He is not. What the mystics mean by «beyond being» or «non-being» of God is that there is something unintelligible at the root of things, incapable in itself of comprehension. God is unintelligible and incomprehensible.

The same distinction is to be found also in Brahmanism, the distinction of Brahma in higher and lower Brahma.

In the manner in which Brahmanism speaks about higher Brahma (Brahman), Buddhism, too, speaks about Nirvana as a state of non-existence distinguished from existence. And, there, is the real meaning of the «silence of Buddha».

It is obvious, then, that the agreement between the mystics and the Indians lies in the epistemology of pure Being. Both agree that God or Brahma[n] is something unknowable and inexpressible and, therefore, something apprehended only by mystical intuition; for, «as the mystics aver», according to Santayana, «we always have an adequate intuition of pure Being» (*LSK*, 306).

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Him. God, therefore, characterized as «beyond being» means that He does not exist for our intellect. In this sense, God is beyond reason and therefore unknown. But God, Who is unknown and unintelligible by reason, is apprehended, according to Kierkegaard, by silence (*Fear and Trembling*, p. 97) in the anxiety and anguish of the «paradox» or «instant» (*Ibid.*, p. 127; see also about silence pp. 96, 100, 103, 116, 117, 120, etc.). As G. Cattani remarks on Kierkegaard, «it is in the anxiety of the 'instant' that man comprehends God. For anguish and anxiety are the gates through which silence enters into us, penetrates and impregnates our lives» (G. Cattani, «Bergson, Kierkegaard, and Mysticism» in *Dublin Review*, No. 384, Jan. 1933, p. 71).

Santayana agrees also with them in his preference of «intuition» or «insight»<sup>109</sup> and in his acceptance that pure Being can be grasped by pure intuition and not by knowledge of fact. But he disagrees with the mystics in thinking that they identify intuition and essence (*RT*, 137) and that the truth of which they speak is «beyond truth» and, therefore, not knowledge of truth. This latter, i.e. the knowledge of truth which, as actual and existential, is distinguished in Santayana's epistemology from the absolute truth, which is ideal and non-existential (*RT*, 129), is a reflection of his ontological distinction between essence and existence. And it is especially this distinction that characterizes the main difference of Santayana from the mystics and the Indians in his comparison with them on pure Being from the ontological point of view.

2. Since essence in Santayana is distinguished from existence, pure Being as «the common character of all essences», is also separated from every existence. Therefore, pure Being, like any other essence, *is* but does *not exist*. This distinction of pure Being from existence is an ontological distinction in Santayana.

Santayana excludes existence from pure Being. The mystics, on the other hand, include existence in pure Being (God) besides its essence. For in God essence and existence are unified.

Brahmanism, like the mystics and unlike Santayana, accepts existence in pure Being (Brahman) which exists but not as the sensible world which is illusory. In opposition to Brahmanism, Buddhism attributes non existence to Nirvana or pure Being contrasted to *sāṅsāra* (the round of existence). However, the characterization of Nirvana as non existence from the ontological point of view is doubtful; it depends on the question whether one who is emancipated exists after death, a question that the Buddha has not explained. But, even in the case in which we must accept for Nirvana complete extinction of life, Buddhism does not agree with Santayana because in it existence is the same with essence and, therefore, by non-existence in the Buddhistic language must be understood as «nothing» which in reality, according to Buddha himself, «is neither existence nor non-existence»; something different, however, from illusory reality of *sāṅsāra*.

3. The similarities and the differences of Santayana with and

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109. R. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

from the mystics and the Indians on pure Being characterize in general his endeavour to harmonize within him two contradictory worlds: idealism and materialism. On the one hand, in his agreement with them in the contemplation of pure Being by intuition he finds something which he can sympathize with; on the other hand, because of his disagreement with them in the existence or non existence of pure Being, he cannot follow them in going «into the Indian wilderness and contemplate pure Being»<sup>110</sup>. So, in spite of the idealism that characterizes him in «the preference of intuition which alone can grasp the essences of things»<sup>111</sup>, he attributes to himself the characteristic of materialist. «In natural philosophy», he says, «I am a decided materialist — apparently the only one living» (*SAF*, VII). By this he means what exactly materialism means, that is, he accepts matter and not spirit as the source of everything (*RM*, V, *RS*, 79), rejecting the existence of God (*RM*, 171,205) and the immortality of the soul (*RR*, 240,273). In this sense, therefore, i.e. in natural philosophy, he prefers, as he concludes his treatment of pure Being in his book, *The Realm of Essence*, the Greek naturalists to the Indians. He says:

As for me, I frankly cleave to the Greeks and not to the Indians, and I aspire to be a rational animal rather than a pure spirit. Preferences are matters of morals, and morals are a part of politics. It is for the statesman or the humanist to compare the functions of various classes in the state and the importance or timeless of various arts. He must honour the poets as poets and the saints as saints, but on occasion he is not forbidden to banish them (*RE*, 65).

When Santayana writes the above words, he seems in one mood. And he seems in quite another mood, according to S. P. Lamprecht, when he writes: «I myself have no passionate attachment to existence, and value this world for the intuitions it can suggest, rather than

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110. *RE*, 65. Santayana teaches that there is no «liberation for the spirit to be removed from the world», as for example, «a hermit or a lover of nature may flee from the world of men» (*RS*, 194). However, in his own case, the avoiding of escape from the world in order to go to the wilderness and to live there as a hermit, did not prevent him, remaining within the world of men, to choose an isolated life, to be a lonely person most of the time, and especially after he went to Europe (About his loneliness, see the discussion between H. Kallen and C. Lamont in the *Dialogue on George Santayana*; edited by Corliss Lamont with the assistance of Mary Redmer, New York, Horizon Press, 1959, pp. 52-53, 62-63, 67-68.

111. R. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 37.



for the wilderness of facts that compose it»<sup>112</sup>.

As we can see, then, the explanation of Santayana's similarities and differences with and from the mystics and the Indians is to be found in these two different moods which led Santayana, according to M. K. Munitz, to «an equally thorough-going emphasis» upon both the material and the ideal aspects of being<sup>113</sup>. In other words, as the separation of essence from existence in Santayana, so his attitude to the mystics and to the Indians derives from the same reason or cause. This cause, as especially in the case of essence and existence, C. J. Sullivan remarks, «is to be found, I believe, not in the cogency of Santayana's thought on the matter but in the contradictory demands of his temperament, at once materialistic and religious, Heraclitean and Platonic»<sup>114</sup>.

He is at the same time Sancho Pansa and Don Quixote as it seems from his «quite frequent references» to Cervantes' novel<sup>115</sup>, in which he divides the mass of mankind into two classes, «the Sancho Pansas who have a sense for reality, but no ideals, and the Don Quixotes with a sense for ideals, but mad» (*IPR*, VI). This dualistic view, corresponding to Santayana's own temperament, can also explain his understanding of the two natures of Christ: the realistic interpretation of his human nature as a man only without being God and the symbolic interpretation of his divine nature as the intrinsic ideal of spirit represented by this divinity, by «the idea of Christ or God in man» (*ICG*, 253), that is, the Good in its *supreme* and *absolute* form<sup>116</sup>. But this Good as identical in the mystics with pure Being [which as «the common character of all essences» (*PSL*, 263) does not exist] is for Santayana a potential Good only. The Good, according to him, must be actual and as such it can not be expressed in his philosophy by pure Being which *is* (*RE*, 23) but does not exist; it is «inert

112. *SAF*, 171. This passage and also the previous one (*RE*, 65) are used by Lamprecht as characteristic examples of the two quite different states of Santayana's mind (See Sterling P. Lamprecht, «Animal Faith and the Art of Intuition» in *The philosophy of George Santayana*; edited by P.A. Schilpp, pp. 119-120).

113. K. M. Munitz, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

114. Celestine J. Sullivan, «Essence and Existence in George Santayana», p. 225.

115. Timothy L. Spigge, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

116. See in Michael K. Macrakis' dissertation, *The Life of the Spirit in George Santayana and Its Application to the Idea of Christ*, Part Two, Ch. VII, «The Idea of Christ as the Supreme Good or the Ideal of the Spirit», pp. 163-178.

and non-existent» (*RM*, 84). This means, concerning Santayana himself, that as a philosopher he has lost his faith in God as absolute Good or pure *Bieng*, mourning in one of his poems as a «romantic mourner» for his «dead faith», for his exile from the lost Paradise of his childhood, from «the spirit's realm celestial»<sup>117</sup>.

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117. See Will Durant, *op. cit.*, p. 425. See also M. K. Macrakis, *George Santayana's View of the Highest Good in Mysticism*, pp. 27-28.

(«Some Meanings of the Word *Is*» [MWI] and «Literal and Symbolic Knowledge» [LSK] in 13th vol.).

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