CHAPTER III
NOTION OF ESSENCE

I. Genesis of the notion of Essence in Santayana:

We have investigated the first phase of Santayana's metaphysics. His sceptical method, an instrument used to discover essence, which is ultimate and not subject to any further doubt, has been dealt with so far. Let us now approach the second phase of his metaphysics, the notion of essence which stands as the keystone of his philosophy. Essences, says Santayana, have a realm of their own. Metaphysical in its content and meaning, Santayana's doctrine of essence in its origin springs from the psychological demands of his nature. The realm of essence is oft-contemplated by him, as it is best suited to his temperament. It makes him feel solitary and detached from anything existential. The very solitude and detachment which he developed from his boyhood finds its reflection, as it were, in the realm of essence. The realm of essence gave him sincere friendship, solitude and confinement.

II. 'Realm' of Essence:

Now, the question is: In what sense does Santayana speak of the realm of essence? The term 'realm' has spatial and temporal connotations. Does he use the term 'realm' in the above sense? Definitely not. As the essences are devoid of all existential reality, the realm, therefore, they constitute is neither material nor temporal, but purely formal. In this realm every essence or datum is merely an appearance devoid of all existence. It is apparent
in the sense of being self-evident and luminous; its nature is wholly manifest. Again, it is apparent in the sense of being a specific being which lies simply in its own category. If it is a colour, it remains only as colour. If it is a pain, it is just this pain and not anything else. Each essence is identical with itself. It rejoices in its own quality.

A. Self-identity: Essence and the Monad:

Thus the principle of essence is self-identity. Each essence constitutes its own little universe, being devoid of all extrinsic relations to other essences. Each essence is immaterial and inert. It "is simply that which it inherently, logically, and unchangeably is." The self-identity of each essence implies its individuality. One essence is not another essence. The theory reminds us of Leibnitz's "monadology". Leibnitz's "monadology" which splits up reality into a multiplicity of spiritual entities (which are called monads) describes essence rather than existence. Like Santayana, he also says that self-identity is the principle of monad.

But the resemblance that is found between Santayana's essences and Leibnitz's monads is only superficial, their differences being more fundamental. First, each monad is self-identical, and yet there is continuity among the different monads in the sense that all represent the same universe in all possible grades of perfection. Santayana, on the other hand, observes that there is no continuity among the different essences. Moreover, all the

monads are the same in kind, in that they are spiritual in character. They differ only in their modes of representation of the universe. But essences are different in kind. Each essence has a quality of its own. Further, monads are active in being centres of energy. Otherwise, how can they represent the universe? But essences are inert. Furthermore, monads at least appear to act through space and time which, according to Leibnitz, are due to the confused perception of the monads. But essences are bare of all existential relations. They are spaceless and timeless. But if they are timeless, can it be said that they are eternal? This is a problem to which we shall pass over shortly.

Finally, what is important is that all the monads constitute the whole universe. But the realm of essence is not the whole of the universe. Santayana has referred to the other realms of being, the realms of matter, truth and spirit. These realms would be discussed later on, the realms of matter and spirit in the next chapter and the realm of truth in the chapter on epistemology.

B. Eternity of Essence:

From the self-identity of an essence, Santayana continues, follows its eternity. When the eternity of an essence is maintained, can it be said to possess an endless duration? Santayana is reluctant to include the idea of duration in that of eternity. "The eternity intrinsic to all essences is timeless." That time, according to Santayana, is forever exiled from the domain of eternity is what is also found in one place of his Scepticism and Animal Faith.

He says, "Eternity, taken intrinsically, has nothing to do with time, but is a form of being which time cannot usher in nor destroy." Eternity, being devoid of time, becomes empty; but it does not amount to saying that it is unreal. It is rather real. What is devoid of content remains perfectly silent, and eternity, which is also empty and hence internally undisturbed, is 'silent'. Moreover, eternity which belongs to all essences is 'indestructible'. If the notion of time be involved in eternity, essences fail to be eternal, for in that case they become moving essences, the notion of which Santayana cannot admit, since to him all essences must be inert. Thus time, instead of being applied to eternal essences, does apply to the objects of the physical world which are believed to be existent.

This theory of Santayana which relates to the infinity of abstract eternity is what echoes the ancient philosophy of Ideas. Such a philosophy treats Ideas or Forms as eternal in the sense of their being immutable. To say that Ideas are eternal is as good as saying that they are timeless. In the "Timaeus" Plato distinguishes eternity from infinite time. Spinoza also says, "Eternity cannot be defined in terms of time nor can it have any relation to time." But in Henry Bergson, as in modern science, we find that "duration is not a dilution of eternity." Eternity divested of time, according to this French philosopher, is an eternity of death. Eternity is always living.

and moving. In it duration is included "as the vibrations are in light". Bergson, then, does not, like the ancients and the modern Santayana, take eternity as immutable and devoid of time, but as absolute duration.

C. Eternity and Subsistence:

The eternity of an essence keeps it aloof from being subsistent. To say that an essence subsists is the same thing as to say that it endures. By subsistence Santayana means 'latent duration'. Hence subsistence is something proper to matter or existence, which is the negation of eternity. Subsistence is not identified with matter, though it applies to it. Subsistence means duration which again means 'steady persistence in time'. 'Existent' is that which comes-to-be, endures and passes away, i.e., in flux. Thus subsistence forms one of the phases of the existential flux, far from being identified with the flux itself. The notion of existential flux will be carried out more fully in the next chapter, entitled "Essence and Existence".

Russell and Santayana

Russell is of opinion that subsistence has no spatial reference which existence has. To say that something subsists amounts to saying that it has being. Russell has identified subsistence with being. But Santayana thinks that subsistence belongs to the category of existence, far from being identified with being. It has

already been noted that he has not totally separated subsistence from existence, nor has he identified the one with the other. Both Russell and Santayana take existence as the principle of change. But the former does not, while the latter does, take subsistence as duration which implies change.

D. Infinity of Essence:

If essences, according to Santayana, neither exist nor subsist, to which category do they belong? This is a query to which we shall attend later on, keeping it postponed now. It is here worth mentioning that essences are infinite in the sense that they are non-existent and therefore unlimited and undetermined by any extrinsic connotation. That an essence has not appeared to anyone's intuition does not annihilate its being. Whether it appears to anyone's intuition or not, in either case it maintains its being and in that sense it is infinite. To deny an essence because of not being realised is self-contradictory, for being unrealised "it must have a quality, distinguishing it from realised forms." Thus paradoxically, to deny an essence is to admit it.

E. Individuality and Universality of Essence:

From the self-identity of an essence, as it has been already pointed out, follows its individuality. Each essence is identical with itself. This means that it is self-contained and self-dependent. And it is individuated by its intrinsic character which is self-identity.

Each essence is distinct and clear, thus not allowing any shade of vagueness into it. Essences are primary. Santayana contends that the very individuality of each essence renders it a universal as well. It may appear to us that what is individual cannot be universal, since these two terms are contrary. But Santayana affirms that an essence which by its own nature retains its individuality is not (again, according to its nature) loosened from its universality, as he insists that the universal and the individual, instead of being contrary, are identical. Each essence is individuated by its intrinsic quality, not by its extrinsic relations. It contains no allusion to spatial and temporal setting. Thus being divested of all extrinsic relations it appears as an ideal term. In this sense, universality is predicated of essence.

Santayana, Plato and Russell

Santayana's theory of universals keeps its affinity with those of Plato and Bertrand Russell, at the same time not being totally identified with them. Plato's theory of ideas is substantially a theory as to the nature of universals. The 'idea' or 'form' is eternal, immutable and indestructible. The same adjectives are attributed by Santayana to essence. Plato says that the particulars of sense derive a sort of quasi-reality from the eternal ideas which are universals. Thus he maintains a causal relation between the universals and particulars. Santayana, however, notes that the universal essences

10. Ibid., p.19.
form a realm of their own, much like Whitehead's "realm of eternal objects" (p.20). Essences which are non-existent cannot be the cause of the particular objects of sense which are believed to exist. Matter, which is the principle of existence, is the matrix of all particular things. This is Santayana's contention which will be referred to in the next chapter.

Russell also holds like Plato that the universals are entities which are eternal and immutable. Santayana also cannot but admit this. He, again, is closely allied to Russell when the latter treats a universal as neither mental nor physical. Mental entities, like thoughts and feelings, and physical objects exist in so far as they are in time. But universals do not exist in space and time. An important difference, however, remains between Santayana and Russell. Santayana rejects subsistence with regard to the universals, since it implies duration which cannot be applied to the immutable inert essences. Russell, on the other hand, accepts subsistence with respect to the universals in the sense of their having 'being'. Santayana also affirms that essences have 'being', but not in the sense of being 'subsistent'. Anyway, he vitally agrees with Russell that universals form a realm of being which is different from the realm of existence, the first being unchangeable and the second fleeting. For Plato, the one is real and the other is semi-real; for Russell, both are real; but for Santayana, the realm of being alone is real, the world of existence being doubtful to him as a sceptic. Let it be noted that the next chapter is devoted to Santayana's discussion about the relation of essence and existence.
F. Pure Being and Essence:

Santayana considers pure being itself as an essence. Again, he takes it as the substratum of all essences. As Santayana says, "Pure Being supplies, as it were, the logical or aesthetic matter which all essences have in common, and which reduces them to comparable modes on one plane of reality. Pure Being is thus found in all essences as light in all colours or life in all feeling."

Santayana maintains that pure being which serves as the universal basis of all essences cannot be existent. It may be said in this connection that the query which we have raised before (p.57) whether essences which neither exist nor subsist belong to any category seems to have been answered now. Being is a category to which all essences belong. Existence is experienced as a "dull strain". But pure being is apprehended through, in the words of Henri Bergson, "intellectual sympathy" which both he and Santayana call intuition. We shall have to rise above the level of sense-experience if we like to apprehend pure being. We may now see how Santayana in his theory of being inclines towards the ancients.

Plato and Santayana

Plato speaks of the Supreme Idea, the idea of Good, as pure Being which must be perfection itself. Plato never regards Being as a mere abstract concept. It is a concept which comprises and includes all other ideas each of which is also a being or perfection of its kind. Thus

11. The Realm of Essence, p.45.
the Supreme Idea, according to Plato, is the ground of all other ideas. But in the Platonic philosophy the theory of ideas has a teleological significance which Santayana vehemently opposes with regard to his own theory. Plato asserts that all becoming, including human conduct, has its end or aim in a being which symbolises perfection. But according to Santayana, becoming or the realm of existence or matter does in no way aim towards the realm of essence, although the former is continually adopting an essence, but not the same essence always, since it is dynamic or fleeting in nature.

**Plotinus and Santayana**

Plotinus, as against Plato, urges that Being or God is absolutely one which is beyond all multiplicity. But Plato affirms that the Absolute Being can be no abstract unity, but only a unity in multiplicity. Plotinus cannot follow Plato in this respect. His Being is totally abstract. It is beyond all multiplicity. But still he pronounces multiplicity or the world as somehow coming forth from the one Being. Plotinus is not definitely consistent here, although he, being a mystic, easily evades, the logical absurdities of his theory. Santayana, having placed the realm of essence above the realm of existence which is the realm of multiplicity, leans towards Plotinus. But he disagrees with Plotinus, when the latter holds that the One gives rise to the multiplicity, including matter.

12. Santayana writes, "No essence..... is the goal of any natural process, much less its motive power." Scepticism and Animal Faith, p.79.
Santayana gives a different account of the source of multiplicity. He presumes that the plastic substance or matter explains multiplicity.

Santayana and the Advaita Vedanta in India

In the Advaita Vedanta we get the notion of Pure Being which can be compared to Santayana's concept of essence. The Advaitins demand a supersensible reality, much like Santayana's essence, which, being not within the world of change, is different from the phenomenal, the spatial, the temporal and the sensible. This supersensible reality or Pure Being or Brahman as the Advaitins call it, again like Santayana's essence, is not eternal in the sense of persisting changelessly through time, but in the sense of absolute timelessness and incorruptibility.

But the differences between Santayana's notion of essence and the Advaita view of Pure Being are more fundamental than the similarities existing between them. First, Brahman is one while essences are many. Secondly, Brahman is devoid of anything of a like kind or of a different kind, and has no internal variety. But Santayana speaks of the differentiation of essence. Each essence being self-contained is distinguished from another essence. Moreover, Santayana refers to the inward complexity of essence, thus admitting its internal differentiation. As he says, "The datum may seem purely qualitative, like a smell or like absolute Being, and yet some plurality may lurk in its very diffuseness or continuity, giving a foothold for

13. Sajātyayājītīyasvasvagatabhedaraḥhitam.
discrimination of different moments or pants within it." Euclidean space, for example, is a single essence, but its character, being inwardly complex, is subject to analysis, such as it has three dimensions, is without scale, etc. Santayana observes here that each essence may be taken as a unit in spite of its inward complexity.

Santayana speaks of general essence which is shared by all essences in common. This general essence is called pure being which keeps much affinity with Brahman of the Advaitin. Each essence has a special quality of its own, but pure being of which Santayana speaks has no special form, and Brahman of the Advaitin also is without any form. Both pure being of Santayana and Brahman of the Advaitin are absolutely self-identical. There is, of course, a difference between pure being of Santayana and Brahman of the Advaitin. Santayana lends objectivity to pure being, while the Advaitin identifies Brahman with Atman or consciousness. To the Advaitin the purely subjective is the purely objective. But again we find affinity between the Advaitin and Santayana. The former says that Brahman is of the nature of consciousness, and yet knows nothing, since empirical cognition is a modification of the internal organ; and like the Advaitin, Santayana also observes that pure being or essence knows nothing, and empirical knowledge arises out of the demands of the internal psyche (vide Ch. V, Sec.III-C).

G. Non-Being and Essence:

Each essence, Santayana observes, partakes not

only of the nature of being but also of the nature of non-being. To him it is not a contradiction in terms to state that essence is both being and non-being. Being and non-being are not antagonistic but complementary to each other. Non-being does not mean the absence or negation of being; it is what signifies a privation of essence. An essence partakes of non-being in the sense that it is not being of another sort, i.e., another essence. Thus non-being is the principle by which one essence is separated from another essence. It imparts individuality to every essence. Non-being, then, belongs to every essence separately, while pure being belongs to all essences as an omnipresent basis.

Pure being also does partake of the nature of non-being. It, being a universal, cannot be particular, and is devoid of all specific properties. It is pure self-identity divested of all extrinsic relations. It is perfectly inert and self-contemplated. Both essence and pure being partake of non-being, but the latter does so in a high degree. Each essence has a special quality of its own and thus it is distinguishable from any other essence; but pure being has no special form, it is purely what it is. It may be mentioned as a reminder to the reader that Santayana, albeit he discards the logical principles, has taken the principle of identity as constituting the very nature of essence or pure being.

III. What Essences are not:

Let us now see, after Santayana, what essences are not. We get the following negative results from the

15. The Realm of Essence, p.57.
fundamental assertion that essences are non-existent.

A. Essences are not facts:

Facts mean events in time and space which are found to occur in the existential world. Thus they are rooted in the external world. But essences, being spaceless and timeless, do not occur in the world of existence. They are all surface forms having no origin or locus in the external world. Facts are experienced, but since the appearance of an essence is not an event, its presence is not an experience. Again, facts, as they occur in time, are transitory, but essences being timeless are eternal. Moreover, facts have the character of contingency, since they are not out of all adventitious relations, and every fact that exists in the world might also not exist. But essences being entirely devoid of such relations cannot have "the contingency nor the fortunes proper to an existence." That is to say, essences have a necessity not had by facts. Furthermore, facts have a changing character due to their occurrence in the existential flux; but essence, since it is above all flux, "is simply that which it inherently, logically, and unchangeably is."

B. Essences are not images:

An image is a representation of percept observed in particular space and time. Thus though unsubstantial in its appearance, it refers to an existential

17. Ibid., p.39.
18. Ibid., p.267.
20. Ibid., p.39.
object; in other words, every image is a replica of a percept. But essences are not images, since they are not representations. Unlike images, essences are original in the sense that they lie simply in their own categories. Again, images as they are bound by space and time are fleeting in nature, but essences are eternal and not determined by space and time.

C. Essences are not sensations or thoughts:

Sensations and thoughts belong to the existential order. Sensation means a bare awareness of some object existing in the external world. Thinking is a cognitive process. Both sensation and thought occur as events whenever an object is presented. But essences, as they do not belong to the existential order, are not either sensations or thoughts. And for the same reason they are not events also. In this connection Santayana's distinction between 'eventual' essences and mere essences may be suggested here. Eventual essences are called by him 'tropes'. Tropes or eventual essences are those which are embodied in matter. Mere essences are those which are given as terms in intuition. Essence, says Santayana, "never occurs alone, but either as the form of some existing thing or event, or else as a term given in intuition." Here in this saying he refers to both eventual essences and essences which are not eventual. What is to be specially mentioned is that whether essences are embodied in matter or simply given in intuition, they shine always under the form of eternity.

Santayana writes that an essence may be conceived by sensation or by image or idea, but is not to be confused with them. As an example he refers to the intuition of essence yellow. If somebody sees a buttercup by opening his eyes, the intuition is called image or idea. If he, again, opens his eyes and sees yellow while there is no buttercup, the intuition is called hallucination. "These various situations", Santayana observes, "are curious, and worth distinguishing in optics and in medical psychology, but for the sceptical scrutiny of experience they make no difference." Whatever the process of intuition may be, what appears in all cases is an essence, the essence yellow which cannot be altered.

D. Essences are not forms:

Santayana opposes taking essence and form as identical. His distinction between essence and form seems to depend upon his criticism of Platonic Idealism. Plato's Ideas, though placed in an abode separated from the world of things, are regarded as the forms of things. Ideas are the formal causes of things in so far as they constitute the essence of the latter. Thus they are turned into supernatural powers or 'magic powers'. On this very point Santayana disagrees with Plato. Essences which are non-existent cannot be the forms of things which are believed to be existent. Santayana's essences have the texture and ontological status of Platonic Ideas, but the cosmological, metaphysical or moral prerogatives which are attributed to Ideas cannot belong to essences, since essences are 'neu-

Santayana, in spite of regarding essences as not forms, often interchanges the words form and essence, so that the distinction between them remains no more sharp and becomes blurred. For example, in one place he says that essences are the "forms of substance". Again, in another place he observes, "The flux of nature could not be a flux, nor at all perceptible, unless it was a flux through essences, that is, through forms of being differing from one another." It may, however, be said that Santayana's words are contradictory, but his meaning is not. He wants to mean by his theory that essences are not definitely forms. Santayana has not expressed himself as clearly as he should have.

E. Essence is not possible being:

The question of possibility and impossibility cannot arise in the realm of essence, since such a realm is always posited with certainty. It is a realm which is eternal. The notion of possibility or impossibility has applicability only in the field of discourse. In the field of discourse the possible essences are considered to the exclusion of other essences. Thus here essences are found to contradict themselves. But the realm of essence is such a realm where any one essence does not contradict another, as each is "a little universe, an immaterial absolute theme, rejoicing merely in its own quality."

I. Essences are not the constituents of things:

Essences cannot be regarded as the constitutive qualities of things, since each of them is a world apart and shines by its own light. If essences or universals have no existence, how can they constitute the particulars? Santayana gives an example of a man looking at the sky. The blueness and roundness of the sky are not its constituents. They are the qualities which are relative to the observer who happens to observe them. "So when a human eye", says Santayana, "is turned skyward, the sky truly acquires the quality of looking blue and round: those are its real qualities in relation to such an observer, as certain substances are truly poison for rats." What he means by an essence is the quality sensed. And that belongs no more in some brain cell or nerve tissue than in some sunbeam or thunderbolt outside the body.

According to Santayana, then, essences are the qualities sensed. And they cannot be held to be the constituents of things. Right is he, since any quality cannot be constituent cause or the substratum in which the effect inheres. The colour of the threads cannot constitute cloth, the threads being its constituent cause. In Indian philosophy the Nyāya doctrine describes constituent and non-constituent cause as samavāyi or upādāna and asamavāyi kāraṇa respectively. The effect is produced by its material or upādāna kāraṇa. The threads are the material cause of the effect cloth. Asamavāyi kāraṇa or the non-constituent cause is the mediate cause of an effect. It determines the

26. The Realm of Essence, p.44.
character of the effect in so far as it stands as an inherent attribute of the samavāyi or constituent cause. The colour of the threads is the mediate cause of the colour of cloth. It has been noted that essence cannot be the constituent cause. Santayana, again, cannot take it as a non-constituent or mediate cause. Since essence is what is independent, it cannot be mediated through, or stand in any intimate relation of, anything. Now, if essences or the qualities of the blue and the round be not non-constituent cause of the sky, i.e., if they do not determine the nature of the sky, how, then, is it possible to know and say that the sky is blue and round? Is it possible by animal faith? Santayana would say that any cognitive claim must be an act of faith. And the function of essences in cognitive claims is to provide descriptive terms by which we can think and speak about the objects we encounter. The problem cited here would be discussed in Section III-C, Chapter V.

G. Essences are not abstractions:

Essences are not abstracted from anything. They are immaterial and as such are not abstractions from matter. What is achieved by the process of abstraction cannot be called universal. But an essence is universal. Each essence is held to be 'rejoicing merely in its own quality'. This means, it is individual. Individuality indicates independence. An essence, being individual and hence independent, cannot be a product of abstraction. Essences cannot be abstracted from things for the reasons given below:

(1) They make experience of things possible.

Essences, Santayana observes, "are given before the thing
can be clearly perceived, since they are the terms used in perception." This means that they are apriori.

(ii) As essences are not parts of things, they cannot be abstracted from the latter. To say that essences are the parts of things is to imply that they are no more independent. "Having never been parts of any perceived object, it is impossible that given essences should be abstracted from it."

Thus each essence, being not abstracted from anything, is "a positive and complete theme" in its appearance. Or, in other words, it is concrete in the sense that it is the exact and total appearance.

Santayana, of course, recognises that essence can be a product of, and hence an abstraction from, cognitive process in a temporary sense. For example, a man sees an orange which in turn may suggest a sphere. In this instance 'roundness' comes as 'a late idea', and "for that person the sphere will be something abstract, not indeed in its essence, but in its mode of reaching manifestation: an act of abstraction happens first to have revealed this essence to this man." But Santayana never presumes that at first we know objects and then we come to apprehend essences by way of abstraction. It is within our possibility to intuit the essence 'roundness' without previously considering a round object.

It has been already noted (p.34) that essences appear in intuition. Hence it is worth while to point out

27. Scepticism and Animal Faith, pp.93-94.
28. Ibid., p.94.
29. Ibid., p.94.
30. The Realm of Essence, p.34.
31. Ibid., pp.34-35.
the relation between essence and intuition. We find an entire chapter on Essence and Intuition in Santayana's Scepticism and Animal Faith.

IV. Essence and Intuition:

By intuition Santayana understands "the light of awareness lending actuality to some essence." Sometimes he calls it "an act of attention". However, he means by intuition an immediate awareness. We can have an immediate awareness or intuition of essences. But this intuition is possible through the psyche, since Santayana takes the psyche as "the organ of the intuition". In The Realm of Matter the psyche is defined as a trope of matter, an unconscious movement towards goals and objectives. Let us see after Santayana how intuition arises from the first existence of the animal psyche. "A psyche, the hereditary organization and movement of life in an animal, must first exist and sustain itself by its 'intelligent' adaptations to the ambient world: but these adaptations are not conscious until, by virtue of their existence, intuition arises, and intuition arises when the inner life of the animal, or its contact with external things, is expressed in some actual appearance, in some essence given in feeling or thought." Essences arise in intuition by the special character and movement of both the psyche and the material circumstances. The role played by the psyche here is very important.

33. The Realm of Matter, p.254.
34. Scepticism and Animal Faith, p.151.
35. The Realm of Essence, p.9.
Being driven by the psyche intuition is absorbed in its object. In the act of intense contemplation of essence intuition forgets that it springs from the material psyche. Though material in origin, intuition is oblivious of itself and cognisant of immaterial themes. It may be thought that finally essence and intuition of essence become identical. But Santayana does not think so. He says that essences arise in intuition only through the operation of the psyche. If intuition becomes identical with essence, it loses its material source, i.e., becomes disconnected with its organ, viz., the psyche. But being disconnected it completely ceases. And this result leads to a further consequence that no essences can arise in intuition. Thus as Santayana shows, to say that intuition is absorbed in the contemplation of essence does not amount to saying that it becomes identical with essence. Essence without arising in intuition is valueless in the sense that it can no more become the object of contemplation, the goal of any effort and the secret ideal of life.

The distinction between essence and intuition, Santayana says, must be ascertained. There is a profound and certain difference between them. Essence and intuition belong to two different realms of being. The latter belongs to the realm of existence, since it originates from matter. Thus intuition is existent. That intuition has an existential character is also proved by the fact that it has a direction, that is, it exists for lighting up the essences. Essence is different from intuition in the simple fact

37. Ibid., pp. 128-129.
that it, being non-existent, does not belong to the realm of existence. Moreover, intuition is an event, as it arises at a point of time; a point of time I should say, since intuition arises "when the inner life of the animal, or its contact with external things, is expressed in some actual appearance" (p. 72). But while intuition is an event, essence is far from being an event, since it is timeless.

V. Summary:

Santayana's realm of essence is not existential in character, it is purely formal. Each essence is drained of all existential or external relations. No one essence is externally related to any other essence. Each essence is a world apart. It is individual in the sense of being independent. But its individuality is not at all in contradiction with its being universal. It is its wholeness, and rejoices in itself. It is the unity of all multiplicity that is contained in it. It is the pure datum or mute appearance. Again, each essence is inert. Being above the principle of existence which is the principle of change and activity, it remains perfectly inactive, non-existent and unchangeable.

Do essences subsist, when they are not existent? In answer it is said that subsistence cannot be predicated of them. Subsistence is also an event in time, and as such belongs to the realm of matter or existence. Essence being above time cannot subsist, since to be subsistent is to be in time.

If essences have neither existence nor subsistence, to which category, then, do they belong? It has been said that essences have 'being'. But Santayana confuses
essence with being. We shall presently refer to it in our
criticism of his notion of essence. He speaks of essence
as eternal. The eternity of essence does not mean that it
has endless duration. The word 'eternity', according to
Santayana, does not carry the notion of time with it. He
refers to some negative aspects of essence which have
already been referred to in details (pp.65-71). He speaks
much of essence, both positively and negatively, yet we
fail to have an accurate notion of it, since in some
respects it appears to us as paradoxical. The paradoxes,
some of which shall be referred to in the criticism part
of the present chapter, seem to be due to the absence of
harmony, which is, of course not for always, between what
Santayana intends to mean and his use of language.

VI. Difficulties in Santayana's notion of essence:

Santayana's notion of essence involves some
difficulties which must be examined.

A. Santayana confuses essence with being:

The metaphysical error lies in his confusion
of essence with being. Being is a two-term expression.
Being is 'what is'. In it there are 'whatness' and 'isness'.
'Whatness' by which is meant 'essence' is only a part of
being; it is not the whole of being. Santayana errs when
he takes essence as being itself.

Essence cannot be abstracted from being, since
the former is the essential part of the latter. It is, how­
ever, possible for us to conceive essence apart from being.
But to say that essence can be conceived apart from being
does by no means amount to saying that the former becomes
Santayana is that essences are not abstractions. Indeed, essentia always belongs to an esse. The former will be dead if it be divested of the latter. But unfortunately enough, Santayana abstracts essence from being and gives it an independent status. Essence cannot be independent of being. Essence being a part of being cannot be again universal. But it is universal, according to Santayana. At one time he says that essences are not abstractions. At another time he pronounces them as independent and universal; this becomes possible for him to say only by abstracting essence from being. Now, it is up to the reader to decide how far Santayana is consistent here. In this connection we can quote from M. Gilson:

"The most serious mistake made by the various metaphysics of essence is their failure to realize the nature of essence. They simply forget that essence is always the essence of some being. The primary error of the metaphysics of essence is to mistake a part for its whole and to speculate about essences as though they were the whole of both reality and its intelligibility. Essentia always belongs to an esse, and even while I conceive it apart, essence never cuts loose from actual being; it is, rather, bound to it by a life line, and, if that line is cut off, essence is dead. No knowledge will ever come out of it."

What Gilson says here sums up Santayana's position exactly. Santayana speaks of 'inert' essences of which knowledge is not at all possible. Yet, in philo-

B. Paradoxes and Contradictions:

We cannot have an accurate conception of Santayana's essence, as it sometimes appears to involve paradoxes.

(i) In Scepticism and Animal Faith Santayana says that the datum (essence) is an idea (p.35). Yet we find him to utter in The Realm of Essence that "it is not an idea" (p.41).

(ii) In Scepticism and Animal Faith we find Santayana saying that we cannot have any knowledge of essences. What is meant by knowledge is "belief in a world of events" (p.179). Yet he admits knowledge of essences when he says, "to know surprise by experience is the only way of knowing its essence" (p.276).

(iii) In Scepticism and Animal Faith Santayana pronounces essence or datum as "a pure image" (p.34). But in The Realm of Essence he contradicts himself when he says that essence is not "the imaginary" (p.29).

(iv) Santayana proclaims that essences are "terms of human discourse" (Scepticism and Animal Faith, p.177). Again, he utters in the same breath that essences are not to be confused with language (The Realm of Essence, p.41).

(v) In one place, Santayana says that essences are not possible being (The Realm of Essence, pp.26-27). Yet, in another place, he observes that they are "distinct forms of possible being" (The Realm of Truth, p.430). It is not understood how essence which is not a possible being
can be a form of the same.

(vi) Santayana explicitly urges that essence and intuition belong to two different realms of being, one to the realm of non-existence and the other to the realm of existence. These two realms are opposed, since the one is immaterial and the other material. Yet, Santayana says that essences are given in intuition, and intuition is absorbed in the contemplation of them. That is to say, the immaterial or the non-existent is given in the material or the existent, and the material or the existent contemplates the immaterial or the non-existent. It is not clearly understood how this interaction between essence and intuition, the immaterial and the material, the non-existent and the existent, becomes possible.

Again, when it is said that essences appear in intuition, does it mean that they come down to the level of existence from their lofty height of non-existence? If they do, they can no more be called essences, since their immateriality becomes lost. If they do not, they cannot be said to appear in intuition, since due to their immateriality they for ever elude the grasp of the material.

Further, essences are made completely transcendent by being placed beyond space-order and time-order and beyond everything contingent. They are thus inert and changeless. Intuition, it has been noted, is an event in time; it is not beyond the principle of change. Now, to say that essences appear in intuition does actually amount to saying that the unchanging essences thrive on change, and that, the timeless essences roll in time.

Paradoxes and contradictions are so profuse in
Santayana's essentialism that we get really confused and perplexed. In such a state of confusion we cannot get the true picture of the nature of Santayana's essence. Anyway, bearing in mind the notion of essence in Santayana's sense, we may proceed to the discussion of the relation of essence and existence which constitutes another important phase of his metaphysics.