

fundamental analogy of *esse* and its attendant features, transcendentals and perfections. That analogy is the intelligible side of the hierarchial participation of *esse*. The participation of *esse* is the creature's link with the divine being. It is the intelligibility of God's life that secures meaning, and not any catalogue of essences. To think otherwise is to imagine that the quality of understanding is the quality of entities.

Josef Seifert has raised fundamental questions in a serious and illuminating work. I have tried to suggest ways in which he has not entirely answered those questions, ways in which he has not come to grips with his opponents. But it would be dishonest as well as discourteous to end without saying how much of Seifert's essay is plainly *true*.

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NOTES

1. The First Part of the monograph is published in *Aletheia*, 1 (1977), 17-157. I will cite the article parenthetically by page number.
2. The accolade of "founder" would have to go either to Cornelio Fabro or, more justly, to Joseph Maréchal, whose major writings on *esse* antedate Gilson's by more than twenty years. See H. J. John, *The Thomist Spectrum* (New York: Fortham Univ. Pr., 1966), p. 38, p. 148 n.2.
3. Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Presses Universitaires, 1961), pp. 53-63, 208-44, *et passim*.
4. Van Riet's criticism quoted in John, *Thomist Spectrum*, pp. 46-47.
5. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, K.3, 1060^a 36-1061^b 7; St. Thomas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, c.34; and so on.
6. For a summary treatment, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, c. 54; but this does not mean that there are 'no Ideas in Aquinas,' as Henle and others would want to infer.
7. Plato, *Republic*, VI, 510b-511a; *Meno*, 82b-86b; *Epinomis*, *passim* (if this is not spurious). Cf. J. Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 79-99.

Answer To "Disputed Questions" Concerning "Essence and Existence"

By Josef Seifert

I am grateful to Dr. Mark Jordan for having very well formulated a number of "Disputed Questions" concerning my paper on "Essence and Existence." I am particularly grateful because I am convinced that the concerns which he expresses are not exclusively his but are shared by many other Thomists. These questions and the attempt to answer them cannot fail to be extremely helpful in clarifying the meaning of my position and, far more importantly, the issues at stake.

Answer 1. On my Interlocutors.

Before even starting to answer this question, I should like to stress that the main goal of "Essence and Existence" is *not* a "critical investigation of existential Thomism," but a "new foundation of classical metaphysics on the basis of a phenomenological realism." This applies especially to the first chapter of the essay to which Jordan's first "disputed question" exclusively refers. This chapter is primarily dedicated to the thematic and systematic task of exploring the different data to which the term "essence" can refer. Moreover, to the extent to which this chapter contains many historical references, those refer primarily to the great contributions made to the topic of essence within the *philosophia perennis*, especially by Plato and Aristotle, and more recently by members of the movement of "phenomenological realism." Even in the second part of the essay I did not consider it my task to analyze *all* important versions of existential Thomism. Rather, I restricted the critical analysis to *some* of the most articulated positions of existential Thomism as they are defended by Gilson, Phelan, Owens, Wilhelmssen, Carlo, and others. I cannot see why such a restriction — especially in a paper which presents primarily thematic and systematic investigations on metaphysical issues — should be illegitimate.

I shall not even attempt to judge here whether Gilson has presented "existential Thomism" in its philosophically *strongest* version or not. I definitely think, however, that Gilson is the "founder" and the most original exponent of the school which calls itself and which has been referred to by others as "existential Thomism." I definitely agree with Jordan that I should attack not the weakest but the strongest version of the "school" I want to analyze critically. Yet not only did I try to do precisely this, but

Jordan also fails to show me an "abler defendant" of this view. In fact, it clearly implies in my opinion a misunderstanding of Gilson's position and a misconception of the school which is called in my essay "existential Thomism," to maintain with Jordan that J. Maréchal or C. Fabro are the "founders" of existential Thomism, or that E. Coreth is an abler defender of this position than Gilson — for the simple reason that theirs is a completely different position.

Maréchal could well be called the "founder" of "transcendental Thomism," a position which has certainly exerted some influence on Gilson but which is quite different from his position and is in many fundamental ways radically opposed to it. Gilson and his followers would above all repudiate the "cognitive implications" which, according to transcendental Thomists, establish a link between *esse* and Kant's transcendental idealism. Gilson, Wilhelmssen, and others, defend a clearly realistic epistemological position which is quite at odds both with Kant's and with Maréchal's epistemology.

In saying that the positions of existential Thomists are radically opposed to those of transcendental Thomists on many points, I do not deny that there are some similarities between them. I have referred to some of them in several footnotes to the second part of my essay. Yet the fundamental disagreements between the two Thomistic "schools" become apparent when one considers that some "existential Thomists" even strongly oppose the epistemological position of J. de Vries and see "transcendentalism" in it, simply because de Vries makes positive mention of Descartes and Augustine and thinks (with Thomas) that we can gain indubitable certainty about our own conscious self. (De Vries, however, defends a clearly realistic epistemology, although he was to some extent influenced by Maréchal.)

Cornelio Fabro's position is undoubtedly much closer to that of Gilson, at least as far as Fabro's epistemology is concerned. Fabro does not seem to intend to bring about a reconciliation between Thomism and Kantianism, nor does he seem to interpret *esse* in a transcendental sense (in Kant's usage of the term). Yet Fabro's Thomism is also quite different from Gilson's. It centers around the notion of participation and makes a sharp distinction between *esse* as existence (more or less identified with "facticity") and *esse* as grounding *act* of being. I do not see how an author could be credited with being the "founder" of *existential* Thomism, if he rejects the translation of *esse* as *existence*. Above all, Fabro's position is certainly quite different from Gilson's. The significant difference between these two versions of Thomism have been brought out in several lengthy articles by J. Owens and by F. Wilhelmssen, for example in the latter's article "Existence and *Esse*," *The New Scholasticism*, Vol. L, No. 1, Winter 1976.

As far as my own position is concerned, it is decidedly opposed to any form of transcendental idealism (see my book, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit, Die Transzendenz des Menschen in der Erkenntnis*, sec. edition, Salzburg 1976) not only to transcendental idealism in the form in which Kant, Fichte, or the later Husserl (from 1907, more outspokenly from 1913, on) have defended it, but also in the form of any compromise between a transcendental idealistic interpretation of knowledge and realism (Thomism) in the fashion in which Maréchal, Coreth, K. Rahner, Muck or Lonergan have defended it. Also in two articles on the split between the Munich phenomenological realism and Husserl's transcendental idealism, and on Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* I have attempted to show that Kant's "Copernican Turn" and transcendental idealism in any form is absolutely irreconcilable with any well founded form of "realistic" epistemology. More importantly, I have tried to bring to evidence that the most important foundations and reasons from which Kant took his point of departure in the development of his transcendental idealism (especially his thesis that experience can only give us amorphous impressions and no necessary and apodictically certain truths) are false and can be refuted. In this I follow the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations* and especially A. Reinach and D. von Hildebrand, and also R. Ingarden, M. Scheler and others. From this it is clear that I thoroughly disagree with the way in which Maréchal and others tried to develop the "epistemological implications of *esse*."

It is also clear that the position defended in my essay is epistemologically speaking incomparably closer to Gilson's than to that of transcendental Thomism (Maréchal's). I consider it as one decisive strength of existential Thomists and as one of the many points of union between their position and mine that they hold a realistic epistemology and reject any compromise with Kant's basic epistemological position. (One could criticize them, however, for not having provided a critical and profound enough foundation for philosophical realism.)

In the present issue (installment) of *Aletheia* W. Hoeres has an article on transcendental Thomism, and already in his earlier important book, *Kritik der transzendentalphilosophischen Erkenntnistheorie*, (Stuttgart, 1969), Hoeres offers a profound and brilliant critical study of transcendental Thomism, according to my conviction the most powerful refutation of the epistemological position of transcendental Thomism which has been published so far. (This does not mean that I agree on all single points with Hoeres, yet I think that the thrust of his argument is powerfully presented and true.)

A critical investigation of the position of transcendental Thomism is, thus, a task quite different from a critical analysis of existential Thomism.

And I think that this important task has been carried out in an excellent way by Hoeres.

In regard to Fabro's position I cannot but confess that I am not well enough acquainted with it so that I cannot pass any judgment as to whether it is philosophically superior to Gilson's position or not. Since it is however very different from the position I study, its investigation falls clearly outside the scope of my essay.

Answer 2. *Esse, Existence, Facticity, Act of Being, etc.*

In answering Jordan's second question, I see my first task in defending Gilson against the accusation that he conceived of *esse* as existence in the sense of "mere facticity" rather than in the sense of a grounding *act* of *to be*. He may see a less radical distinction between *to be* as a fact and *to be* as an act than Fabro. Yet the many quotations in my paper from the works of Gilson, Phelan, Owen, Wilhelmsen and other adherers of Gilson, clearly show how radically and explicitly the existential Thomists conceived of existing as *act*, as synthesis, as synthesizing act, etc. It is also obvious that they do not refer to the fact of existence "as it is grasped by everyone," but to the metaphysical ground of facticity: to that metaphysical dimension of existence which "*makes*" things *be*. As a matter of fact, one could easily criticize Gilson for conceiving of existence in too radical (and too undifferentiated) a fashion as an *act*. I tried to make it clear in the second part of the essay that only in quite unique a sense can existence be called the *act* or interior actuality of a being. From Jordan's statement of the issue it does not become evident that he acknowledges this irreducible sense of act any more than Gilson. Rather one cannot help but get the impression that the act of being is conceived here even more in analogy to the act of a cause or even in analogy to a quasi-substance preceding the being whose existence it causes.

Jordan also might have overlooked that the twofold aspect of existence as an *act* and as a *fact* is discussed in the second chapter of my paper. I would say that both of these aspects necessarily go hand in hand with each other and that one grounds the other. It would, however, certainly take further investigations before one could be sure to understand the exact meaning of "act" and of "fact," and before it could legitimately be ascertained that existence as "act" grounds existence as fact. In the fifth chapter I took a first step in the direction of such an investigation and tried to delve into the exact meaning of the phrase "act of existence." I tried to show that this expression is only then rightly used when it is understood that existence is the *act* or *inner actuality* of a being in a quite unique sense. I applied the phenomenological method (in the sense of "phenomenological realism") in order to distinguish the sense of "act of existence" from

other kinds of act and actuality. To insist upon the character of existence as an (grounding) act is by no means sufficient. One has to grasp the *absolutely irreducible datum* of (*real*) existence, which is radically misinterpreted as soon as it is viewed in light of other meanings of act and actuality.

In listening to Jordan's way of speaking about *esse*, his calling creatures "variously delimited versions of the divine *esse*," his denial of the transcendental meaning of essence, I fear that Jordan misinterprets essence as well as the act of being at least as much as Gilson and his school. Jordan, too, seems to conceive of essence as necessarily implying limitation; he, too, seems to speak of *esse* and of the *act of being* as if it were a quasi-substance on its own right and as if a "pure *Esse*" without essence (or whose essence is only "*to be*") were anything but a self-contradictory term. I may refer in this context to the criticisms made in chapters v-vii of various misinterpretations of the "absolute priority of existence over essence."

Moreover, I have to criticize Jordan in one point in which I should like to praise Gilson. I cannot see any definite sense of the term "*esse*" in Jordan's remarks. His comments on the relation between *esse* and the transcendental properties of being, between *esse* and intelligibility, do not refer to any single datum, so it seems to me. The first transcendental is according to St. Thomas and classic interpreters of Thomas (such as Gredt) not *esse* but *ens* (the being, a being). Within "*ens*" Thomists rightly distinguished *id quod est* (that — *the being* — which is) and *esse* (*est*). The *esse* — as the act of being — is not the first subject of the transcendentals but rather the act of *to be* in virtue of which — not *esse* but — *the being* (*ens*) is. In complete harmony with Thomism on this point, I have attempted to show that the *being* which is the subject of existence is itself a *tertium* both in regard to *esse* and to *essentia*. It is also not my discovery (and still less my invention) that *res* is the (transcendental) essence but Thomas (*De Veritate* q. 1 a. 1 *corp*) and his traditional interpreters themselves translate *res* as *quidditas* or *essentia*. On this point, like on others, I follow Thomas in a much stricter sense than either Gilson or Jordan follow him — for no other reason but for my conviction that Thomas simply sees here important metaphysical truths. When Jordan calls *esse* the ground of the transcendentals he seems to melt into one term three completely different meanings. On the one hand, he seems to mean the being which is (the *ens*) and of which alone according to truth (and according to Thomas also) the transcendentals can ultimately be predicated. Jordan seems at other times clearly to mean *esse* in the same sense as Thomas, namely as the *act* of being which is the existence of the being. Finally, in calling *esse* the most intelligible object and the ground of all intelligibility, the thought suggests itself that Jordan means here with *esse* the essence of a being. While *all* of

these three fundamental data appear to be envisaged in Jordan's talking about "esse," he seems also to exclude *any* of these three meanings from his concept of "esse." Does he mean all of these data, or something else behind them? I must confess that this concept of *esse* seems to be based on similar equivocations as Heidegger's notion of "*das Sein*."

Gilson's notion of *esse* as existence (act of existence) is a much clearer and a more "honest" notion than Jordan's. In fact, I found that Gilson (in radical contradistinction to Heidegger and the latter's notion of "being") grasps in an admirable way an *arch-datum* metaphysically speaking: *existence* (as act). At the origin of Gilson's work I see a genuine "*prise de conscience*" of existence in its central metaphysical significance. The contradictions in his notion of being only arise when Gilson isolates *esse* (to be) in the case of God totally from *ens* and from *essentia*. (I prescind here from other contradictions which result from his denying any concept of existence, etc.)

In Jordan's notion of *esse*, however, I find an inherent contradiction or/and lack of clarity. Various fundamental data are meant by *esse* and also excluded, but no single original datum is referred to.

I should like to defend Gilson's position also against Jordan's comments in which he downgrades the problem of *existence* as if it were a "mere" problem of "facticity." Not only, as Wilhelmsen has pointed out in the article quoted above, is the meaning of "facticity" unclear, but existence is also a classical topic of metaphysics. Existence in the various senses of the term, the problem of existence (being) versus non-existence (nothing), are absolutely crucial metaphysical issues. By bringing out the central impact of the question of existence (which each of us is pre-philosophically aware of when we hear the term), Gilson makes a significant contribution to the *philosophia perennis* and must not be referred to almost contemptuously as someone who has occupied himself with something shallow: *mere* "existence."

Answer 3. On the Analogicity of Essence.

It is certainly correct that (in the first chapter of "Essence and Existence") I paid more attention to the *various* meanings of essence than to their analogous unity, to the *analogon* which binds all of these senses together. This is perhaps in part justified by the topic of the chapter: "the Manifold Meaning of Essence." Yet Jordan rightly points to an important task which this chapter does not sufficiently carry out.

Yet I am not quite sure which of two very different things Jordan wants me to explain further: to concentrate more on the analogous content (the *analogon* in the traditional language), or on the first analogate (the

primum analogatum) in which the full meaning of the analogous datum is exemplified. These two tasks are undoubtedly both very important and closely related, but nevertheless very different.

A further elucidation of the *analogon* (the analogous content which is, as St. Cajetan has explored in his famous and magnificent work, *De Analogia Nominum*, abstracted in a unique form of abstraction quite different from the abstraction of specific or generic features) would have to go into the direction suggested in the second part of Jordan's third question. I would have to develop further what exactly the transcendental sense of essence (*res*) is. I doubt whether very much can be said about it, for not only is "essence," understood as a transcendental property of being, an extremely abstract analogous notion: its analogous content is found as well in the absolute being, as well in a human person, in an acorn tree or in a corn of sand (and it is extremely "little" that is "in common" here). "Essence" in the transcendental sense is also an absolutely irreducible datum. When I call it the "quidditative determinateness" of being, Jordan is quite right in pointing out that this term as such is not unmistakably clear and that it could moreover be understood as a pleonasm (essential essence). Yet Jordan forgets that I introduce (p. 38-41) the term "*quidditative* essence" (content) precisely in order to delineate unmistakably the arch-datum of essence in the transcendental sense from what I call the "first" and the "third" meaning of essence. I consider this distinction as especially important for either understanding or criticizing Gilson's position. Above all — because of some of its many meanings — the term "essence" (by itself) is insufficient as a tool for grasping the arch-datum of essence in the transcendental sense. The term "quidditative content" is thus coined not as a pleonasm or tautological expression, but as a conceptual means for referring unmistakably to the irreducible datum of essence.

I cannot pursue here further the investigation of "essence" as an *analogon* which binds together all senses of essence (with the exception of the first and third sense of essence which I exclude because the first one is misleading and too broad and the third one self-contradictory). I would anticipate the result of such an analysis as being quite different from the one Jordan seems to visualize. The result cannot be a reduction of essence to *esse* or to existence, like Carlo or Jordan imply; in regard to such irreducible aspects of being as essence and existence one cannot "resolve one thing back into another thing." I consider precisely this attempt of reduction as the most crucial mistake of existential Thomism as well as of Jordan's position as far as I can discern it from his comments. Here lies the heart of my criticism. One cannot succeed in reducing one arch-datum to a completely different one: essence to *esse* (as act of being, existence). Certainly, it is legitimate for the philosopher to look for the ultimate unity

of essence and existence. Concerning this question I suggest that it lies in the fact that essence and existence — while fully preserving their absolutely irreducible metaphysical perfection — are intimately united in every being (*ens*), that this *ens* is the *tertium* which binds essence and existence together; and that essence and existence are necessarily and perfectly *one* in the absolute Being.

This brings us to the second metaphysical task which Jordan exhorts me to perform (in the first part of his third question). This second task consists in analyzing the “first analogate” of essence — which exemplifies the full and perfect archetypal meaning of essence — and in showing how all other senses of essence are related to it. The importance of this task is obvious. In general, the concrete shape of such an analysis varies greatly depending on which kind of analogy is at stake: analogy of inequality, of extrinsic and, incomparably more importantly, intrinsic attribution, extrinsic (metaphoric) and intrinsic (proper) proportionality. These kinds of analogy (masterfully treated by Aristotle, St. Thomas and especially by St. Cajetan) would have to be elucidated even beyond what the classical tradition of philosophy has already done in this respect. Then it would become evident how different the concrete form of the second task is in regard to the study of each different kind of analogy. It appears to me that Jordan has in his comments only one type of analogy in mind: the analogy of extrinsic attribution (“health” is an analogous term in this sense when applied both to a man and to food, color of skin, etc.). It is exclusively here that one can “resolve” the analogous meaning into one meaning only which is found in the “first analogate” (all other senses of “healthy” indicate only a relation to one and the same sense of health found in the organism). But the analogy of “extrinsic attribution” is not even a real metaphysical analogy at all, for it does not consist in any *similarity* between two beings (or two relations) of different kind. In the case of all other (real) analogies the task to relate all expressions of the analogous content to the “first analogate” is far more complex and difficult. In these cases the analysis of the “first analogate” is only the (admittedly most important) first step in the task of unfolding the relation between first and second analogates.

It should also be noted that there is a great difference between analogy in the *metaphysical* sense (as similarity between two beings or relations which is not constituted by a commonality of specific or generic features), in the *logical* sense (where alone the differences between univocity, analogicity and equivocation of terms are found), and in the *epistemological* sense (where it refers to a knowledge which does not grasp a being directly but only in the mirror of analogous data). My investigation is restricted to the metaphysical sense of analogy.

In my essay I give mainly three answers to the question: what is the first analogate of essence? (and the ensuing question: how are the second analogates of essence related to the first one?) In the first place, as Jordan correctly observes, I try to show that it is essence in and of really existing beings which contains the meaning of essence in the primary sense. (In this regard I follow Aristotle, not Plato, and my result could be compared to his: that substance contains the primary meaning of being.) I even hope to have gone further than past thinkers in elucidating that the essence of really existing beings is a unique datum and that it is the *primum analogatum* of essence. (For example, Gilson does not concentrate on the difference between “real existence” and other meanings of existence, and he overlooks or denies the radical distinction between *real* essence and possible essence — *quâ* essence — by calling essence “being minus existence.”) I even reserve in the rest of the essay the term essence (without quotation marks) exclusively for this primary sense of essence and call the other data which are often called essences “essential plans,” “essences” (in quotation marks), etc., in order to bring out this point as clearly as possible. Also the second question that poses itself in the context of exploring the *primum analogatum* of essence: how are the secondary senses of essence related to the primary one? , is partially answered in the essay. Against Plato, Hering, and other phenomenologists, I try to show how all other senses of essence (especially the εἶδη, ideas, etc.) are related to the essence of really existing beings (see pp. 86 ff., 110), and I continue pursuing this task in the second part of the essay. (It should be emphasized that the *person* who realizes all values on the level of his ποιόν εἶναι possesses real essence most perfectly in the realm of contingent being.)

I do not deny, however, that Plato has also won a decisive insight, when he holds that the eternal immutable εἶδη contain the meaning of essence in the primary sense. This leads to a second answer to the question about the “prime analogate” of essence. Not only can “essences” in the sense of εἶδη, ideal objects, ideas, ideal rules, etc. not be reduced to essences of really existing beings and constitute another irreducible datum in the universe, but some ideal “essences” also contain perfections (such as absolute necessity, incomparable intelligibility, immutability, etc.) which no really existing being in this world possesses. *In this respect* those ideal “essences” contain (as far as their absolute necessity, intelligibility, and especially their role as exemplary causes and archetypes is concerned) the primary meaning of essence and are closer to the *primum analogatum* of essence than the essences of really existing *contingent* beings.

In this attempt of a “synthesis” between Plato’s and Aristotle’s contributions — a synthesis called for by reality — I think that the crucial difference between these two basic meanings of essence (essence of the

really existing being, and "essential plan") has to be seen much more clearly than this has been achieved in the past. (Plato confused to some extent "ideal essences" with the most "real ones" and Aristotle mistook to some extent the real essences in things as universal ones only "individualized" by matter.) Also the relation and ordination between these two kinds of "essence" has to be brought out much more clearly than this has been done either within Platonism or within Aristotelianism. I even think that many disagreements between the Platonic and the Aristotelian tradition go back to the failure of both sides to analyze sufficiently the difference and relation in question here. I try to make a first step in my essay in the direction of exploring both this difference and this relation more carefully.

At this point, Jordan might ask, but can you not give any simple single and ultimate answer to the question: what is the *primum analogatum* of essence and how are the secondary analogates related to it? This brings me to my third main answer to the question concerning the first analogate of essence, to which all other senses of essence must be referred. Neither the reference to real essences of contingent beings nor to ideal "Wesenheiten" suffices to answer this question in an ultimate manner. Only the essence of the *ens realissimum*, of the most real and simultaneously absolutely necessary divine Being answers this question fully, because it alone combines, grounds and infinitely transcends the perfections of both real essences of contingent beings and ideal "necessary plans" of (contingent) beings. Since however the topic of my paper is not a philosophy of God, it was impossible to develop this third and ultimate answer to my question in my essay. The fulfillment of such a task would necessitate — especially in an age of growing atheism and agnosticism — the development of proofs for the existence of God. It was impossible to do this in a limited paper. However, I pointed out already in the first chapter of the essay that the ultimate realization and union of the perfection of *real* and necessary ideal "essences" can only be found in the absolute Being. Also all other partial answers to the question about the most proper meaning of essence climax in the answer: the absolute Being alone possesses all perfection of the *τί εἶναι* and of the *ποιόν εἶναι*, of substance, goodness (value) and personhood, in an ultimate and unspeakably perfect union. I also point out in the second part of the essay that in the absolute Being alone is found the perfect union of both essence (quidditative content) and *esse* (existence) in a unity of infinite simplicity and perfection — but *without* any reduction, i.e. the different perfections of both essence and existence (*esse*), and of the *ens* uniting them, are fully preserved and infinitely increased in God. I do not hold a fideism according to which such a knowledge of God presupposes faith and Revelation and cannot be attained on the basis of philosophical (rational) knowledge. But

the justification and development of a *philosophy* of God falls beyond the scope of my essay.

Answer 4. "Ideal Essences" and *Esse*?

In answer to the fourth question it has to be pointed out that essence can be shown to be an irreducible ontological *archē* even *before* one refers to ideal "essences" existing outside all contingent real beings. Essence in the sense of the "essence of really existing beings" is equally irreducible and fundamental an aspect of being as is *esse* (in the sense of real existence). Both have their own respective priorities and dependencies on each other as I tried to show in chapters v-vii. There the attempt to elucidate the irreducible and irreplaceable ontological role of essence is made almost exclusively by reference to the primary meaning of essence of and in really existing beings.

Thus, only for the understanding of *some* of the senses of the priority essence has over existence is it necessary to grasp that there are ideally existing "essences" related to real contingent beings. And here again the point is made that it is only possible on this basis (of *true* Platonism, as I called it in *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit*) to arrive at a true realism and to do justice to the impact of real existence; for the ultimate foundation upon which all meaning and significance of contingent really existing beings rests is inextricably bound up with eternal and immutable "essences" (essential plans).

Jordan questions this latter point in the form of two objections. In the first objection he charges me with weakening the classical notion of God-Creator. Since Jordan seems to have overlooked the passage pp. 87-89, in which I have exactly tried to answer the question he raises here, I do not want to repeat what has been said already. Only two points should be made. First, Jordan's easy-sounding "explanation" of what "Ideas" are strikes me as too dogmatic (the sense of his theses is hardly clarified and his claims are not substantiated by offering any evidence). Further if I prescind from his polemical points and look only at the statements in which he positively describes "Ideas," I fail to see where exactly our difference lies. Jordan seems to be repeating the classical doctrine of Augustine in *De Ideis*. He seems to interpret Thomas Aquinas (and I think rightly so) as an Augustinian on this point. He seems to agree, as I do, with both of them. Where does our difference lie?

Secondly, Jordan does not take enough notice of the distinctions I draw within the sphere of Ideas or ideal "essences," notably of the distinction between *εἶδος* and *idea*. On the basis of such distinctions I hope to have succeeded in giving a more differentiated speculative account of how the "Ideas" are reconcilable with God than this was possible before such

distinctions had been made. Concerning this difference (of additional differentiation) between my view and the traditional treatment of Ideas Jordan does not make any comment. Insofar as my speculative attempt (like all speculative attempts) of "reconciling" the absoluteness of God with immutable essential plans does not remove all riddles and mysteries from this issue, let me state the following important philosophical principle: we should never deny a clearly given datum because it is difficult for the human mind to reconcile it with all other truths. Even if it is altogether impossible to comprehend how two truths can be reconciled both of which are known (e.g., the existence of spatial movement and the infinite divisibility of space, the foreknowledge God possesses of our future actions and their freedom), Newman's word applies: ten thousand difficulties do not justify one single doubt. In accordance with this principle, which has often been stated in the past (by Augustine in *De Civitate Dei*, V; by Descartes in the *Principia Philosophiae*, by D. von Hildebrand in the Prolegomena to his *Ethics*), one of the greatest temptations of a philosopher consists in the following. The philosopher can take an attitude in which a false rationalism is combined with a false irrationalism. He wants to understand and to explain everything (rationalistically forgetting the limits of our minds), and in order to achieve this goal he has to deny (irrationally) truths or difficulties which are related to what is clearly given. We should not cease to investigate all given facts sincerely simply because they do not seem to fit into a preconceived theory or into our limited powers of comprehension.

Regarding the second objection Jordan raises against "ideal essences," I should say the following. In the first place, my "conflating epistemological and ontological qualities" in my arguments for "essences" outside really existing contingent beings is only a mistake if I do either of two things. Either my arguments are affected by this confusion in the sense that, while some of my arguments (based on ontological qualities of essences) hold, others (based on purely epistemological qualities) do not hold; or, none of my arguments hold because I infer ontological qualities of essences from strictly and exclusively epistemological properties of them. Jordan does not seem to prove that I committed either of these two mistakes, and upon careful reexamination of the issue at hand I do not believe that I did commit in fact either of them.

Jordan further claims that I bring only two arguments for ideal "essences." This is not even correct for the passage (pp. 78-79) which he seems to consider as the main *locus* where I develop the arguments. It is even less correct for the far more important passages in which the arguments are developed (pp. 90-94; 81-90). Secondly, however, Jordan mis-

understands the two arguments which he considers. He does not see the limited scope of what I want to do with the first (Augustinian) argument from the artisan. I do not want to prove at this point that ideal "essences" are necessary, that they are not brought into being, or that they precede *all* contingent beings. At this point of the essay, no more should be demonstrated than the fact that essences are (in *some* sense of the term "being") "outside" or/and before having being in a really existing contingent entity ("whose essence" they are). My claim that I reached this modest goal, however, is not refuted by Jordan's remarks. In fact, neither does it seem to me to be doubtful that it has actually been achieved nor that Jordan agrees with it. As I state in the cited passages, all Thomists agree that in this sense an essence can have being before existing in the respective real being. They explain this kind of being of an essence before the really existing thing ("whose essence" it is) by calling it a "being in the mind," which they distinguish from the "being in the real."

The second argument in the passage considered by Jordan not only contains many diverse arguments (unmentioned by Jordan) within itself but is also incorrectly rendered by calling it the argument "from the mathematics." It is true that the main example I use in the passage considered by Jordan is a mathematical one. But other examples which I mention there in the context of this argument (justice, beauty, love), show that the argument is in no way bound up with the question of the mathematics but is valid in regard to *all* necessary "essences." Jordan does not even show that "my examples are not helpful," because he fails to provide any evidence for his claim that mathematical entities do not have the kind of ideal existence I ascribe to them. Still less does he disprove that the other timeless, immutable and necessary objects possess the predicates I ascribe to them. Nor does he cope with any of my arguments for the fact that those timeless, absolutely necessary, immutable, incomparably intelligible objects which we can know with absolute certainty cannot be understood as being identical with the essences of really existing beings or with universal natures abstracted from them. Since he does not even mention, still less refute these arguments I can only refer back to them.

A misunderstanding hard to explain is Jordan's statement that my position is Platonic in the sense that I would conceive of the mathematical objects of which I speak as of "really existing substances" or "approaching the fullest subsisting Forms," etc. I take, namely, a markedly anti-Platonic stance on this issue by elaborating how even the most sublime ideal "essences" in the Platonic sense are inferior in *reality* to any insignificant contingent being such as a really existing fly (see p. 28), and by sharply distinguishing between the essences of really existing beings and ideal

"essences," in the sense already explained above.

In regard to Jordan's comments on essence *absolute considerata* and essence *considerata in esse* I can refer to the second part of my essay where I deal extensively with these notions. It can be added that "essence considered in abstraction" is not the same as "essence absolutely considered" — at least not in St. Thomas' *De Ente et Essentia*. (This difference is discussed in the cited passage.)

Jordan's interesting but rather cryptic remarks about the metaphorical character of *all* human knowledge neither solve the issues at stake nor are they very clear in themselves. Certainly one cannot say that they constitute a refutation or even a statement of a criticism of the arguments for ideally existing "essences" which I present in the paper. If they contain such a criticism *implicitly* they have to be further clarified and applied to the proofs in question before they can be responded to.

I wish to conclude these remarks by thanking Dr. Jordan again for his "disputed questions." I hope that their discussion contributed to a further understanding of the central issues at stake. I for my part have certainly profited a lot from them. May their fruit be that each of us love and more passionately seek the truth about being, about essence and existence. Such a desire constitutes a profound bond of union even between philosophers who hold different views on some important issues. Above and beyond all other basic agreements between us, however, we certainly agree with Plato when he writes in the sixth book of the *Republic* that the philosopher is somebody who loves the truth (even the smallest part of it, especially when it reveals something about unchangeable being), who hates falsehood, or when he has Socrates formulate the attitude which should animate our philosophical discussion:

"I therefore, if you are a person of the same sort as myself, should be glad to continue questioning you: If not, I can let it drop. Of what sort am I? One of those who would be glad to be refuted if I say anything untrue, and glad to refute anyone else who might speak untruly; but just as glad, mind you, to be refuted as to refute, since I regard the former as the greater benefit, in proportion as it is a greater benefit for oneself to be delivered from the greatest" (from a great "evil than to deliver someone else. For I consider that a man cannot suffer any evil so great as a false opinion on the subjects of our actual argument. Now if you say that you too are of that sort, let us go on with the conversation; but if you think we had better drop it, let us have done with it at once and make an end of the discussion . . . lest you imagine I am contentiously neglecting the point and its elucidation, and merely attacking you." Plato, *Gorgias*, 458 a ff.; 457 e.

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