

FOLLOWING MARÉCHAL

Brevis consideratio

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According to Maréchal, our mind, by forming particular existent terms, aspires to the Absolute being and it first affirms it in the term with the existent copula “is”, and only then with the following part of the predicate that one “is” (the Absolute) delimits it, which gives this particular term its absolute value. Mind, therefore, individually grasps in some grasp “original possible reality in a generally non–thematic way” (K. Rahner) what is a personal metaphysical experience. That metaphysical experience is a non–thematic knowledge, and it is an ‘a priori’ condition of every individual cognition. Without it, we would not be able to judge absolutely, because it would not be possible to compare or connect without it. Therefore, along with its subject, there is the assertion of original entity in every particular existent term. However, the abstract concept of entity, according to K. Rahner, which is realized in every limited existence, is formed as an “a posteriori term.” However, considering that the aspiration of mind manifested through a metaphysical experience cannot remain unsatisfied, the Absolute, to which mind aspires, exists in reality. There is a difficulty with that opinion: To assert that our mind, in forming particular existent terms directly aspires to the absolute and knows it intuitively by a metaphysical experience, means representing ontologism.

How should this problem be viewed?

We will bring here a wider analysis of the problem as we understand it, by solving difficulties that may arise.

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Entity, or that which is, is the first concept that we form. We encompass all there is with it, both the Absolute and all other entities, i. e., all possible reality. When forming a particular existent term with absolute certainty, we apply that concept on a particular case by discerning, but keeping the order of discerning. What order is that? First, by intuition we discern the main property of the concept that is virtually included in it, and that is: the entity must exist in a subject, must be realized and that is why that entity is infinite. Why must the entity be realized in one subject? If the entity did not exist in any subject, it would not be capable of existing at all. In that case, it would be indifferent regarding its existence, and there is nothing outside the entity that could make it exist. Experience teaches us that entities exist. And why the entity, which necessarily exists in a subject, must be infinite? Because the subject of the necessary entity excludes the possibility of existence of other entities and that means, it realizes all there is in itself, it exhausts the entire content of the concept of entity. Namely, if the whole human nature had to be in Peter, no other really different human being from Peter would be possible. Namely, if human nature had to be in Peter, Peter would be included in human nature as its property, so that its realization would include Peter, and exclude every other subject that is not Peter. Therefore, entity is first necessary and then infinite and, of course, because it is necessary, it is from itself (*a se*).

Now we make another step in our discerning of the most abstract concept of entity by asking: What with other beings that we know exist? How are they entities? They can only be relative entities, dependant on the necessary entity if they are entities. Thus dependency manifests, above all, that they are what they are by limiting the necessary entity. This applies to all things and all facts. Because facts are entities, or “they are” if they limit the necessary infinite fact of the Absolute. Therefore, beings are as ‘possibilia’ necessary entities in the necessary entity. As existent entities, they are entities of entity of themselves, and as limited entities, they are the limit of the infinite entity.

What gives us this discerning of the concept of entity?

This discerning shows that the most abstract concept of entity has the property to realize itself in two ways: as the necessary Entity and as the unnecessary entity in the necessary Entity (‘possibilia’); as the Entity of itself and as the entity of the entity of itself; as the infinite entity and as the finite entity that limits the infinite Entity.

We emphasize that following pairs: the necessary Entity — the unnecessary entity in the necessary Entity (‘possibilia’); the Entity of itself — the entity of the Entity of itself; the infinite Entity — the entity (of the) limits (of) the infinite entity (‘actus’), present the ways of realization of the concept of entity

pertinent to that concept. This is to emphasize this: Every property is present in a virtual way in some essence, e. g., the essence of man or human nature in a virtual way contains human sociability, so that in the concept of being the given pairs representing the way of its realization are virtually contained.

Further we warn, that beings as entities in the given pairs are always expressed in their dependence on the Absolute, so that without it they cannot be conceived. We usually say that the entity is divided in the entity of itself and the entity of the other. This is actually expressed correctly, but incompletely, because a being is not the entity of anything but the Entity of itself. Or, we say: the entity is divided on the infinite and finite. That is true, but not completely, because ontology says for beings that they are composed of the act and potential, limiting the act. Which act? Isn't it the infinite act? That is why we rightly say: a being is an entity, which with its essence, as a potential, limits the infinite Being. Or we say that the entity branches in the necessary and unnecessary (contingent). And that is true, but the foundation of contingency is neglected, i. e., the essence as a possibility. Why are beings contingent? Because their essence, which is necessary, is a pure possibility of existence. That is why more completely and truly we say: beings are unnecessary entities (of the necessary essence, possibilia) in the Necessary Entity. Therefore, beings as possibilia are properties of the Necessary Entity. A property of the Necessary Entity is that its essence is the foundation of the essences of beings, that other entities can be by it, that they can be by limiting its essence or its necessary unlimited Being, that they necessarily be of it considering their essence.

We draw special attention to the assertion that other beings in light of the aforesaid, exactly because they are properties of the necessary Entity, considering their essence (possibilia), are actually entities in an analogous sense, that they are beings inasmuch as they are a trace and mirror of the necessary Entity, so that the necessary Entity is 'analogatum primarium', and beings are 'analogatum secundarium'. Therefore, "entity," the common term, as a paramount abstraction, is an analogous concept, and because of the important connection between the created entities and the necessary Entity, it is a special analogous concept.

In the light of the aforesaid we can easily discover what we are stating in a particular existent term, e. g., in the term 'Peter Is (exists as) a man'. That Is (=exists) says that Peter is an existent entity. An entity, namely, is what there is, and what necessarily is and what is of itself and what is infinite. However, by this, we have exhausted only a part of the predicate. The predicate also contains "man", i. e., that Peter Is a man. If we substitute the word "man" with those attributes of a being, because a man is a being, than we get this picture of the term: Peter is an unnecessary entity with the necessary essence in the necessary entity, an entity of Entity itself, finally, an entity limiting an infinite

Entity, or an infinite entity limited by the essence of an entity. This latter brings us to Maréchal, who teaches that in every particular term we first, with that *Is*, assert an infinite entity, and then, with the next concept, “man” in this example, or human nature, we limit that Entity to a particular entity. And we cannot disagree with it, and we will immediately answer to the difficulties. However, let us first say that our consideration, like Marachel’s, boldly stands for the thesis: Every particular existent term directly implies God’s existence, so that the perception of God’s existence is a condition of our daily statements because it is contained in their predicate, in that “is”, although we need not be explicitly aware of it.

Now the difficulty: The above exposition can be allowed, which infers everything from above, from the real concept of essence and real existence of many entities around us, and in the scholastic sense *a priori*. That means that in this procedure the existence of God is inferred first as a necessary Entity from the real concept of entity and then, the important attributes of entities are inferred from the existent God’s Entity, in order to apply all of that to particular terms. However, Maréchal in his procedure starts in the reverse way, i. e., he begins with the analysis of a particular existent term and rises to the existence of God.

The answer: The statements expressed in the difficulty are correct. We do not want to deny them. However, we assert that the stated difference between Marchel’s exposition and ours is only illusory, considering the moment where our analysis made entrance. We did not say at all when the discerning of the concept of entity begins, but we said how that discerning progresses. However, now we are forced to say that too. It begins with our encounter with the concept *Is* in our particular term, or generally, with our encounter with the concept of entity, what happens in our encounter with the copula of these particular existent terms, which is not only a common bond between the subject and the predicate, but a form of a foundational verb to be. Here, in forming these terms, everything we said about entity unveils, of course, it all happens implicitly, but if it were not unveiling, these terms, according to our exposition, which goes from above, from the real concept of entity, would not be possible. Therefore, we agree with Maréchal on the moment of (executing) the above reflection about entity. The difference is in something else.

You will say: If that discerning occurs in forming of a particular existent term itself, the first moment of that discerning should be put in the existent copula of the term, in the “is”, and that “is” is common (*esse commune*) to God and entities, therefore, stating e. g., “Peter is”, we still do not say who this pertains to, to the Absolute or to that entity. Both of these are (are existent).

This is a well forged confusing difficulty, which constantly decoys us and by which we reduce the concept of entity to a common universal concept.

In that way, namely, as it is described in the difficulty in our judging, behaves a common universal concept. However the concept of entity does not behave like a common universal concept. It is, namely, the concept, as we said, which has the property to be necessarily realized in Oneness, so, therefore, it is in that sense a singular concept, and the possibility that at the same time that singular necessary entity (the Absolute) is the foundation to other entities dependent on it (possibilia), so that in that sense it is a universal concept. We must keep this difference in mind, when we discuss terms in which “is” is asserted. When we assert that Peter is with the intention to finish the term that Peter is a man, then that “is” we first take in its singular sense of a necessary entity or the infinite act of essence, in order to compress it, limiting it by human nature, dependent on the infinite act, to the concept of man. Particular existent term: Peter is a man, means: Peter is, by limiting that “is” with human nature, a man. Is it not so? If not, what is the analogy for? If it is not so, what for the thesis of entities: Created entities are composed entities ex actu et potentia or what for that actus limitatur per potentiam? We again emphasize that in our judgement the concept of entity, which differs considerably from other concepts, because no other concept virtually contains the necessity to be realized as its property, cannot behave in the same manner with other concepts. It makes obvious that Maréchal has the right to claim that our mind in particular existing terms with that “is” is directed towards the Absolute, i. e., the “is” that is by abstraction separated from the essence of entities, in the way e. g., the “color” is by abstraction separated from all possible kinds of colour. However, while we see our most abstract concept in a concrete form of entity, God–entities, Maréchal rightly elevates himself to a greater abstraction and that most abstract form of entity views in the abstract form of entity, i. e., in Being itself (in existence itself, in ipsum esse, in pure act), in that what makes entity an entity. And he has a right to it, not only a right, but an obligation. One thing, namely, is to be alive, and another is life, one thing is to be beautiful and beauty is another. Considering that somebody is alive by life, participating in life, and that somebody is beautiful by beauty, participating in beauty, life and beauty precede being alive and beautiful. The same is with entity. We understand being before we understand entity. That is why Rahner rightly asserts that entity comes afterwards, he is wrong only inasmuch that concept is realized only in entities as if he had forgotten that the Absolute is both a Divinity and God, first a Divinity and then God, Being and Entity, first Being and then Entity, that is why Maréchal rightly asserts that the momentum of our mind in forming existent particular terms is directed towards Being or, as Rahner puts it, in a metaphysical experience we directly grasp the original whole of at all possible reality. There are many of those who do not make a distinction between entity and being (pure act) so that they burden Maréchal with their own burden not his. However, does it

mean that we must give up the analysis given above on the basis of entity, and not on the basis of being or pure act? We do not have to give it up, because the two forms of supreme abstraction, concrete entity and being, i. e., entity in its concrete and abstract form (are) not differentiated as two different concepts. They are differentiated as the same concept in two different forms, so that it can be asserted that the Absolute is pure being and concrete being. That is why we agree with Maréchal's and Rahner's metaphysical experience and assert that our reasoning in particular terms is being done on the basis of a metaphysical experience right towards the Absolute grasped by non-thematic concept of Being (pure existence). Thus we in a twofolded way show the same thing. We are left only with an obligation to show that being (existence itself, pure act of existence) must be in reality and not only in mind as we have shown above, that entity cannot not be, because there would nothing exist. So, how are we going to prove that? We cannot say: "Entities around us are in reality those that participate in being. Therefore, being itself must be in reality". Such a proving would look like this: "People in reality are people by human nature. Therefore, human being in its abstract form must be in reality". This is obviously wrong. That being itself is in reality, and not only in mind, should be proved in other way. There is again the need for the principle of causality. Namely, if being itself did not have to be in reality, nothing would have to be in reality, consistently, nothing would be in reality.

Further difficulty: The principle of creative cause was used in the above exposition, and that happened now: Being must exist necessarily of itself in the expressed sense, otherwise it would not be able to get into reality. Maréchal does not act that way. He bases his way to the existence of God from particular existent terms on the aspiration of our mind towards the absolute Being as its goal, which cannot be left frustrated, unfulfilled.

These assertions are correct too. We cannot deny them. However, our exposition, different from Maréchal's, proves Maréchal's, including that Maréchal can more easily confront Kant's opinion that the pure reason cannot reach necessary being as a real concept. Our way in relation to that opinion of Kant is not burdened with the principle of causality, because, about that opinion, Kant says that everything that can be best said about that opinion is that we must think so, as the principle of causality says, but another question is whether that happens this way in reality. We respond to Kant, that we used the principle of causality in our proof, perceiving it not from experience, but from the real concept of being, which we have from experience by direct evidence, such as we have in analytical terms. The principle of causality is, truly, a synthetic a priori term, but an analytical term is, as a matter of fact, a synthetic term. Thus, e. g., in the principle of equality $A=A$ equality is affirmed, and that concept is not in the subject A. "A" is not equality, but A. A priori synthetic quality is not in itself an obstacle to direct certainty. So, is the

principle: only an existent entity can bring an inexistent entity into reality, it can cause it — is a self-evident analytical term. Kant accepts the principle of contradiction as self-evident objective principle. And that is a principle, although in the form of a self-evident 'a priori' term. That is why he should accept the objectivity of the principle of causality.

A further difficulty involves the concept of being, as shown in the exposition. That term is exemplified as a supreme abstraction from experience, therefore it is supremely universal. On the other side, from the exposition it seems a singular concept, because just one entity follows from it (God). That difficulty comes to the point. The concept of entity is truly singular, if it is realized only in God, but it is also universal at the same time if its singularity is based on the universality of created entities. Therefore, the concept of entity is both singular and universal, it expresses both Singular and plural being.

You will ask, is this not Rosmini's delusion condemned by the Church: *Esse indeterminatum, quod procul dubio notum est omnibus intelligentiis, est divinum illud, quod homini in natura manifestatur.* (D-S 3202) Yes, this is it. But it should be added: ... (*quod homini in natura manifestatur*) *ut a Deo realiter distinctum* (as the unnecessary in necessary being). Nevertheless, the procedure to beatificate Rosmini is under way.

You will certainly continue with the question: If the Absolute (God) is expressed through the concept of entity, and we have a direct insight into that concept, does it not imply classical ontologism. With the burden of this difficulty they are breaking Maréchal, and that can be only done in a superficial view of the thing. If we know, from Revelation, that there are three divine persons in God, has it been granted us to look at God face to face? If experience gives us one concept that expresses (watch out: not with which we see God, but with which we express God), has it opened our eyes for celestial watching? Experience, and especially metaphysical internal experience, gives us the concept of entity. Through reflection, thinking further, we realize that the concept of entity must necessarily be realized in one subject, otherwise it would be unfeasable. This way we realize that the concept initially expresses God, and only secondarily beings dependent on God, and all that construction, which Rosmini, without discerning, calls "esse dividum", and we can also call it that, after we explained the construction. Nothing else. Where is ontologism here? And if Maréchal in the momentum of our mind sees the goal of mind in that "esse divinum," and then the wish to reach it, why should he be an ontologist or dynamic ontologist? He is only a dynamic theist, what Rosmini is statically, and we are joining Rosmini. Why are people confused with the statement that 'esse' (entity), which we call 'commune' (common), is actually the concept by which we express God, precisely, the essence of God, as a pure act, and in that essence as a pure act all created essences as possibilities ('ut possibilia')? We pose that question in wonder. Certainly, no

created essence can be used for expressing God, which Kant especially emphasizes. If we could not express God's essence not even with the concept of entity as a necessary pure act, then we would not be capable of saying anything of all about God's essence. And then, through his essence (his pure act) we would not be expressing ourselves either, we would not be capable of coming into contact with him in any way, because we would not be there in him in any way. God would be a stranger to us, and in this way he is only Another, who we can "translate in our human language" (Guardini), and He can translate us into his divine language.

You may additionally ask: Let us return to that point in the exposition where it is said that the essences of beings, or unnecessary entities, are actually the essence of God, or God 'immitabilis ad extra' (inferable lookalike). Considering that the essence of God is eternal, necessary and of itself, does it mean that all of it applies to the created natures? Of course, they are also of themselves, necessary and eternal as well as 'possibilia', therefore well provided in God. That is why I can say that I too, if I am possible as a copy of God's nature by my nature, I am necessary, possible and of myself. Now it is easier to understand the inexorable power and unbreakable imperative of all ethical principles that follow from human nature. Why are these ethical principles unchangeable? Because the absolute necessity is unchangeable, because being-of-itself is unchangeable, because eternity is 'nunc stans' — standing now. If it is so, and it is so, then we can in one healthy sense, or one wider sense admit certain pantheism. However, considering that the word has a pejorative meaning, we rather say: Everything is entity, Panontism.

And the last question posed to me personally: It is known that you support the thesis that the Absolute is the absolute natural mystery. However, if by Being itself we directly express the Absolute (God), and to be Being itself is a clear concept, how can the Absolute then be the absolute mystery? It is well said that to be Being itself is a clear concept, i. e., that with it we express an object detached from all other objects ('idea clara'), the only question is whether that concept is so articulate ('distinct'), that we have a positive insight in the internal capability of that concept after the proved existence of the expressed object. It is easy to see that we do not have the latter. The Absolute, by being Being itself, is necessary, of itself ('a se'), endless, and we do not have a positive insight in the internal possibility of it all. Being itself is a clear concept, and so far we are out of the mystery, but Being itself is not so articulate concept that we could have a positive insight in the internal possibility of something like that. As such we are in the mystery with it. The mystery actually lies in the fact that we express it with a clear concept ('idea clara'), i. e., that we know what we are expressing (the light of mystery), but we do not positively know how is that what we express internal, actually possible, or we do not have an articulate concept ('idea distincta') in the area of Being. In

as much as “being itself” (existence itself) is a clear idea (‘idea clara’), it gives us, in the spirit of Maréchal, ‘visionem Dei inchoativam’ (starting vision of God). It is significant that we directly and positively express (“visualize”) God inasmuch it is different from all other entities. We express in the phenomenological spirit of St. Thomas: We watch God his being from the distance of time in the distant endless eternity. What does it mean to express one thing? To know what it is in itself, isn’t it? Do not say: But we know God through the analogous concept of entity. That too, but also through the concept of being itself or necessary entity, and these two concepts, “being itself” and “necessary entity” are not analogous concepts, because we are neither of it. It would be even more fatal to understand these concepts as divided “itself” + “being” or “necessary” + “being” and say: all of these concepts taken individually are analogous. They certainly are. But God is not ‘itself’ plus ‘being’ or ‘necessary’ plus ‘being’, but he is simply being, where itself and necessary are virtually contained as properties.

What could have learned a well-intentioned reader in this consideration? He could have learned about our own path to the existence of God, which goes from above, either from the real concept of entity or from the real concept of being, i. e., from the abstract concept of entity with a help from the principle of causality. We presented that path of ours, as much as it was necessary, parallel to Maréchal’s and Rahner’s way, without an ambition to go deeper into their thought. Nevertheless, it would be our pleasure if our way helped a better understanding of their way.