

SUMMARY OF ROMAN INGARDEN, *QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO ESSENCE*

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In early 20th century Poland, as in other European countries of that time, a candidate for a teaching position at a university (Roman Ingarden, in this case) was required to achieve a post-PhD¹ habilitation status. The process was demanding. It consisted of several steps: a “habilitation work” (akin to a PhD dissertation); a summary of that work; a habilitation colloquium (akin to a dissertation defense); a habilitation lecture.

At some point during a dinner at the Husserls on the evening following his doctoral defense (officially awarded February 23, 1918), Husserl (Ingarden's PhD advisor) enjoined Ingarden: “*In drei Jahren müssen Sie sich habilitieren* [You have to get your habilitation done in three years].”² It would take a while longer.

In a letter to Ingarden, dated August 11, 1923,³ Kazimierz Twardowski (his habilitation supervisor) acknowledges having received his habilitation work. He proceeds to explain to Ingarden that once he endorses the work as acceptable, he will recommend it for publication to the Historical-Philosophical Section of the Scientific Society. This phase of the process will involve submitting to the Society his assessment of the work, as well as a résumé (in their subsequent correspondence, they referred to this account predominantly as a “summary,” occasionally as a “report”) “containing the [work's] salient thoughts” – and asks Ingarden to write one. Approximately two months later (10/5/23, 254), Ingarden informs Twardowski that he will send his summary “no later than on October 15.” Apparently this did not happen, since Twardowski responds

1 Ingarden, “Intuition und Intellekt bei Henri Bergson,” 285-461.

2 Husserl, *Briefe an Ingarden*, 135.

3 Ingarden & Twardowski, *Korespondencja*, 251. In subsequent references to the *Correspondence*, only the date of the letter and the page of the book will be listed in the body of the text. This letter, e.g., would be referred to by: (8/11/23, 251).

two weeks later (10/29/23, 256) that Ingarden “need not rush” with it, because it will not be needed before he can “complete studying the work in its entirety.”

Ironically, due to recently revised rules, the work itself did not have to be published in order to complete the habilitation process, but the summary did. In addition, if the work *was* published prior to completing that process, the publication of the summary had necessarily to precede that of the work. As Ingarden recounts in his “elucidations” to Husserl’s *Letters*, when he exhausted all current options for publishing the work in Poland and learned that the prospects for its publication would have to wait for “some two years,” he inquired whether Husserl would be willing to publish a German version of it in his *Jahrbuch* – to which the latter agreed.⁴ This created a possible conflict, whereby, in violation of the Polish governing body’s precepts for habilitation, the habilitation work might be published (in the *Jahrbuch*) prior to the appearance of the Polish summary; Twardowski warns him of this possible conflict (2/10/24, 264). Hence, a “rush” of sorts did in fact materialize. In his response to this last letter (2/14/24), Ingarden inquires whether the summary he had sent is “suitable for print as an announcement in the journal issued by the Lwów Scientific Society,” and informs Twardowski in the following letter (2/28/24) that Husserl accepted his proposal, asked him to submit *Essentiale Fragen* for print in April, and that he (Roman Ingarden) expects his work to “see the light of day [in vol. VII of the *Jahrbuch*] by the end of May.” “At present, therefore,” he continues, “the only issue is the appearance of the summary before that date....”

In his reply (3/16/24, 271) to this letter, Twardowski writes: “In view of what you write concerning the time of the appearance of v. VII of the *Jahrbuch*, I am worried that your work in German translation could appear before the issue of the *Reports of the Scientific Society* that will contain the summary of your work. This, however, as I wrote in my preceding letter, needs to be avoided.” In his response (3/19/24, 272), Ingarden can only say that there is nothing he can do to influence the course of events at the *Jahrbuch* (“however, I am not sending my work until the end of April”), and he expresses “the hope that everything will work out for the best.” In a P.S. to this letter, he tells Twardowski that he would “definitely like to come to Lwów during Easter.” And so he did.

4 In this case, the elucidation is to a letter in fact written by Malvine Husserl. (Husserl, *Briefe*, 146)

It is this visit that must account for a six-week hiatus in their correspondence. It is also during this interval that a pivotal transition must have occurred: not Ingarden but Twardowski will be the author of the summary. We learn this from the letter (5/6/24, 274) written by Ingarden upon return from this visit to Lwów, in which he recounts an episode of a meeting he had with Twardowski at the academia-favored Scottish Café:

I forgot to note during the last conversation with the Professor that I obviously agree most fully, and with great joy, to have printed in the *Reports of the Scientific Society* a summary of my work penned by the Most Esteemed Professor, as the Professor brought it up during the conversation in the Scottish Café. It will be nothing less than an honor for me that the Professor devoted so much work and time to it, to the point of being so kind as to write its summary Himself. The Professor's reservations as to the faithfulness of his presentation of my assertions are surely completely unavailing. So, should the Professor still foster to this very day the intention of that occasion, I could only be grateful from the bottom of my heart to the Most Esteemed Professor for carrying out that intention.

Thus, the authorship of the summary is established – Twardowski refers to it five times as “my summary” in his very next letter (5/13/24, 275-6). About a month later (6/14/24, 287-8) Ingarden writes that he is “completely enthralled” with the summary “composed by the Professor,” and that he did not expect his treatise “to gain so very much in beauty in the Est Professor's account.” “For not only is this Summary wholly faithful – and captures completely my intentions, but is moreover immensely clear and conveys transparently the construction of the work – even improves that construction ... The whole Summary is marked by what Husserl – in a conversation with me concerning the Est Professor's writings – called ‘*diese fabelhafte Klarheit*’ [this marvelous clarity].” “...I have no doubt that I could not myself manage to write such a summary.”

There is, however, one more thing to be settled – “literary ownership.” In this same letter, Ingarden points out:

Nowhere in the text sent to me is it indicated that it is the Most Esteemed Professor's creation. I don't know what the Est Professor's policy is in this matter. Notwithstanding, I would be very grateful to the Est Professor (and if I knew that this does not conflict with the Professor's views, I

would graciously request this!) if the Professor would be willing to put His name to this Summary, or even indicate in a footnote that it was penned by the Professor. As I see it, this rather goes without saying, and I would find it rather surprising if no such indication were included. However – as I say – not knowing the Professor’s policy, I would not wish to influence the decision here, although I hope that my views are not in conflict with those of the M Est Professor.

Twardowski promptly responds (6/19/24, 289): “I make no claim whatsoever to the literary ownership of the Summary, and wish that it not be noted anywhere as stemming from me. The provenance of the summaries printed in the *Reports of the Scientific Society* belongs either to the authors themselves whose works are being presented at its sessions, or to the members of the Society who present them. Which of these situations prevails is never noted in the *Reports*, hence let it be so also in this case.”

This concludes the travails of Ingarden’s “habilitation summary.” Authorship of the Summary continues to be attributed to Ingarden in all the bibliographies (published prior to 1990) with which I am familiar.⁵ But the issue has been long since settled, and bibliographers either overlooked or ignored the fact. In an “Introduction” to a volume of his Collected Works in which the Polish version of *Essentiale Fragen* was first published, Ingarden declares categorically that the Summary “was written by K. Twardowski”.⁶ Ingarden’s assistant, D. Gierulanka, estimates that this “Introduction” was written between 1963 and 1968 (he died in 1970). However, a definitive ruling on the issue is given by a recent (n.d.) Ingarden Bibliography (no earlier than 2017), assembled by Olivier Malherbe, in which the Summary is simply not listed. I have chosen to respect both the journal’s policy and Twardowski’s wishes by not naming its author.

Finally, in a technical vein, when I cite a definitive German correlate to a Polish term, I employ the ‘=’ sign, e.g., [*doświadczenie* = *Erfahrung*]; when the equivalence is less than definitive, I make use of the ‘≈’ sign (is approximately equal to), as in [*czerwonobarwność* ≈ *Rotfarbhaftigkeit*].

Also, contrary to convention, but for the sake of ameliorating slightly the irritability of punctuation, I shall omit the commas that ordinarily

5 Even in a 1990 Bibliography, its editors attribute authorship of the Summary to Ingarden, (Rudnick & Wawrzycka, “Roman Ingarden: An International Bibliography (1915 – 1989),” 245.)

6 See Ingarden, *O pytaniach esencjalnych*, 7.

follow the abbreviations. ‘e.g.’ and ‘i.e.’, for example.

I shall also omit the period at the end of sentences (embraced by quotation marks) that are employed as examples.

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The task of the analyses at hand is to differentiate the various meanings of the questions “what is that?” and “[the]⁸ x, what is that?”, in contradistinction to the question “what is [the role of]⁹ x?”;¹⁰ it is also its task to examine what comprises the object of each of the first two questions – given the singular way of understanding them owing to which we call them *questions pertaining to essence*.¹¹ Accomplishing this task entails, on the one hand, juxtaposing and analyzing <120> the content [*treść* = *Inhalt*] and ontological foundations of the answers we receive to the above questions, and on the other, coming to grips with the difference in the motives for asking them. The analyses at hand will thus contribute to illuminating and doing away with misunderstandings that have accumulated around the *problem of the essence of an object*; accumulated, among other reasons, precisely as a result of confounding the various meanings of the first two questions.

7 Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego we Lwowie, v. 4:1924 nr. 3, 119-135. The Summary was written by Kazimierz Twardowski [KT]; the book summarized is Ingarden’s “habilitation work”: Ingarden, O pytaniach esencjalnych, in: *Z Teorii Języka i Filozoficznych Podstaw Logiki* [Theory of Language and Philosophical Foundations of Logic], PWN, Warszawa, 1972, 327-507. German version: *Essentiale Fragen. Ein Beitrag zum Wesensproblem*, *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, VII, Halle, 1925, 125-304 (henceforth, EF) (tr. forthcoming). All footnotes are the translator’s.

8 The definite article in brackets, [the], will be omitted in what follows.

9 The brackets will be omitted in what follows.

10 These questions in Polish and Ingarden’s counterparts for them in German read, respectively, as follows:

“co to jest?” ↔ “was ist das?”,

“co to jest x?” ↔ “was ist das, das x?”, and

“czym jest x?” ↔ “was ist x?”.

For a brief discussion of the English formulation and translation of these questions, see Translator’s Note to EF.

11 Occasionally rendered by the abbreviated “essence-questions”.

A *question* differs from a judgment first and foremost because, though it possesses a formal object (as does the judgment), it does not possess – in contradistinction to the judgment – a material object. By a formal object of the judgment¹² is understood an intentional state of affairs intended in the judgment's content; e.g. the formal object of the judgment "this iris is purple" is the "being purple of this iris." The formal object of the judgment exists only insofar as the judgment that specifies it exists, and [that formal object] does not possess autonomous being. By the material object of the judgment is understood not an intentional state of affairs intended in the content of the judgment, but rather a state of affairs that exists independently of the cognizing subject [or agent of cognition] and of that content. A false judgment does not possess a material object – only a true one does. And so, the question too possesses only a formal object – a certain intentional state of affairs, which can be called the "*problem*" of the question.

A problem differs from the formal object of a judgment – that is to say, from an intentional state of affairs intended in the content of the judgment – by the occurrence in it of a *variable*, whose discovery is the point of the question, and the whose removal the question demands; e.g. in the question "what is the aggregate state of sulfur at a temperature of 1000°C?", the problem is the state of aggregation of sulfur at a temperature of 1000°C, and the unknown contained in it is precisely what is concealed behind the words "what is the aggregate state?". The purpose of the question is to disclose this unknown. This is connected with the fact that the formal object of the question – the problem (the state of aggregation of sulfur at a temperature of 1000°C) – is encumbered with a character of undecidedness as to whether the state of affairs specified by the formal object obtains in reality. Apart from the unknown, there exist *knowns* in the problem that contribute to characterizing the unknown.

Alongside the knowns and unknowns, we also need to distinguish in the question what it prejudices – that is to say, *assumes* – what is contained *implicite* in the knowns of the question and must not only be taken into account when constructing an answer, but also stakes out a direction toward that answer. For the answer must take over from the question all the knowns contained in its problem, and hence *eo ipso* also whatever they

12 An underlined word or phrase signals definition, which is normally signaled by quotation marks (as in the case of the term 'problem' at the end of this paragraph). As translator, I refrain from introducing quotation marks where they do not appear in the original.

presuppose. For example, the question “what angle do the diagonals of a square form?” assumes that the diagonals at issue <121> are the diagonals of a square; which however presupposes the existence of a square’s constitutive properties – which then in turn assumes that only two diagonals exist in a square and that they 1) bisect each other; 2) are of equal length; and 3) are bisectors of the square’s interior angles; a fourth property is the unknown of the problem. And so, these states of affairs presupposed by the knowns condition the problem, and it is on this basis created by the question that the answer first provides a known in place of the question’s unknown. Hence, if we wish to come to grips with the meaning of some question, we need to indicate its unknown, its knowns, and their assumptions.

The question “what is that?” does not have the same meaning as either “what is this called?” or “what kind of object is this?” – although occasionally, expressing ourselves imprecisely, it is indeed the latter questions that we have in mind – but has its *very own* meaning. This meaning is explained with the aid of the concept of *lowest species*, whose exemplar is an *individuum* indicated by the expression “that.” For in the reply “that is an A” (e.g. “that is a dachshund”), the A designates the object’s individual nature, its constitutive nature, i.e. that which makes the object into precisely object A – hence, it is its τί, in distinction from its ποῖον and γένος. We at first apprehend this object – namely, “that”, either with the aid of one of its characteristics or with the aid of some relation of it to the agent of cognition (when, pointing to it, we say “that”), but subsequently we apprehend *this same* object by means of the nature that constitutes it, which is to say, from the perspective of this nature. Identifying the object initially apprehended only in the first manner with an object subsequently also apprehended in the second, we receive the answer “that is an A”, in which answer we adduce *implicite* by what kind of *individual nature* the given object is constituted.

Consequently, the *unknown* of the question is here an individual object apprehended through the individual nature constituting it; the *known* is the object apprehended with the aid of one of its characteristics (but not with the aid of its nature), or of some relation to an agent of cognition; the *problem* of the question is the subsistence of identity between the known and the sought value of the unknown; the *assumption* of the question is that every individual object is constituted by an individual nature.

In the question “ x , what is that?” – where x designates some non-individual object – for example, “square, what is that?” – the copula “is” performs the function of *identifying*, just as in the question “what is that?”; however, these questions differ with respect to both the known and the unknown of the problem. In order to expose the problem of the question “ x , what is that?”, we need to take our start from the fact that the x appearing in the question is a general concept (in the cited example, the general concept of a square). <122> Yet when we ask what the object of this general concept is, we run into difficulties. The object of a general concept is not a kind [or species]; nor is the explanation satisfactory that the object of a general concept is a so-called “general object”. Thus, we need to come to grips with what the expression x in this question designates; in the cited example – the expression ‘square’. To that end, we need to get acquainted with the views on: 1) the individual essence of an object, 2) ideal qualities, and 3) ideas – as formulated by the phenomenological school.

Now by the individual essence of an object is understood – following Jean Hering – the $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ of this object, taken in the whole fullness of its individual structure.¹³ That $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ – which is to say, the “being-so” (*das Sosein*) – of the individual object is the same as what others (Husserl) call its *Bestand an wesentlichen*¹⁴ *Prädikabilien* [ensemble of crucial predicables]. Hence, neither its relative characteristics nor its $\pi\omicron\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$ and $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$ belong to the essence of an object. E.g. it does not belong to the essence of this pen that it sells for such and such a price, nor that I am now holding it between my fingers; “being capable of writing finely” does however belong to it. Within what does not belong to the individual essence of an object, we need to distinguish between what follows from its essence (e.g. that this sphere has a smaller volume than a cube whose side-length equals the sphere’s diameter), and what is completely contingent for the object (e.g. that the sphere is now covered by my hand).

From the $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\nu\ \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$ – that is to say, from the object’s individual essence¹⁵ – we need to distinguish the $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\nu$ itself. This $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\nu$ may be taken in a twofold sense. In the narrower sense, it designates the object’s

13 Hering’s formulation of this qualifying phrase is: “*in der ganzen Fülle seiner Konstitution genommen*”

14 See also n. 12 in Hering, “Remarks Concerning Essence, Ideal Quality, and Ideas,” being a translation of Hering’s “*Bemerkungen über das Wesen, die Wesenheit und die Idee*”

15 The reader will note that K.T. omits here the qualifying phrase from the characterization of essence given in the preceding paragraph.

properties (e.g. this rose's redness) in contrast to its individual constitutive nature (that is to say, to its *τί*, or immediate *μορφή*, or *Washeit*);¹⁶ in the broader sense, *ποῖον* embraces both the object's properties and its individual constitutive nature. And the possessing by the object of its properties along with its individual constitutive nature comprises the *object's essence*.

That *τί*, that immediate *μορφή*, that individual nature of some object, is what we have in mind when, to the question, "What is the *τί* of the individual object 'this horse'?", we reply: it is the "equinity" (*ἰππότης*) which the object harbors within itself, contains in itself. Similarly, the "redness" contained in some color is the *τί* of this color, and the "squareness" contained in the square is the *τί* of this object. But alongside the squareness or redness contained in a certain object as the nature constituting it, we can also speak of squareness or redness "for itself." As individual nature constituting an object – hence, as *τί*, as immediate *μορφή* – squareness and redness require the object they constitute, and are therefore something non-autonomous; but taken in itself, <123> it is something autonomous that does not require any object in order to exist. Squareness or redness so understood is *εἶδος*, *ideal quality* (*Wesenheit*).¹⁷ In contrast, no ideal quality corresponds to the non-autonomous immediate *μορφή* "equinity."

From ideal qualities we need to distinguish *ideas*. By idea we understand that identical something of which perhaps many exemplifications may (but need not) exist *realiter*. E.g. in saying "this event occurs quite often", we do not literally think that one and the same event occurs often, since that is impossible; nor do we have in mind that "there are many events that are the same," since this statement differs from the preceding; we are indeed concerned here with a certain multiplicity of individual events, but at the same time [concerned] with each of them being an exemplification ("particular instance") of something one and the same. This one and the same is precisely an idea. We can consider an idea *qua* idea, i.e. from the perspective that it is neither real nor individual, and has its own distinct characteristic structure that distinguishes it not only from individual objects, but from ideal qualities and concepts as well; in doing so, we examine the characteristics of

16 On *Washeit* [whatness, what-quality], see "Remarks", <509>, <519>, <520>, <522>, <532>, <534>, <535>.

17 The parenthetical term is Twardowski's. "Ideal quality" is the literal translation of the expression *jakość idealna* that Ingarden employs to render Hering's *Wesenheit*.

the idea as such. We can also consider the idea from the perspective of what it reflects, as it were, the properties, structure and nature of that of which it is idea, and what can at the same time be termed its *meaning-content* [*zawartość* = *Gehalt*],¹⁸ understanding by the term precisely that, owing to which the given idea is the idea of a certain particular something, and which distinguishes one idea from some other of the same order.

The meaning-content of every idea consists of the *ideal correlates* of the qualitative endowment of the objects that are its individual exemplifications; some of these correlates – that is, constituents of the idea's content – present themselves as *constants*, others as *variables*. E.g. one constant in the content of the idea of a triangle is the ideal correlate of the triangle's three-sidedness; whereas the ideal correlates of the triangle's side-lengths are variables. The more general an idea is, the smaller the ensemble of qualitative constants, the greater the number of qualitative variables. The qualitative constants of the content of a *general idea* never exhaust the complete qualitative endowment of any individual object that is an exemplification of that idea. If, however, the qualitative constants of an idea's content do exhaust this complete endowment, we are then dealing with a particular idea. Then, to the constants belong the correlates of all the actual properties and capacities of that individual object which is the idea's exemplification, whereas to the variables belong the ideal correlates of the moment of individuation, say, or of the moment of localization in time and space (hence, that the given object can in this or that instant be in this or that place). The presence of variables in the content of a particular idea <124> makes it an idea not of *this* object, situated here at precisely this instant, but rather the idea of *this kind* of object, i.e. exactly so qualitatively endowed. Now whether such an object exists *realiter*, whether only one exists *realiter*, or many of them, is in no way indicated in the idea – only experience [*doświadczenie* = *Erfahrung*] decides that. From this it follows that an individual object is a direct exemplification of a particular idea, and an indirect exemplification of a general one.

18 All five instances of the word “content” that appear in the preceding text correspond to the Polish correlate of *Inhalt*. There are only two more occurrences of the latter in this sense in the remainder of the text (<131, 133>), which will be noted. Therefore, beyond this point, the occurrence of “content” (barring the two exceptions to be noted) will always serve as abbreviation of “*meaning-content*” (with occasional reminders of the full-fledged phrase), which corresponds to the Polish correlate of *Gehalt*. Something a bit more substantive on this much too neglected *Inhalt/Gehalt* distinction will appear in the Translator's Note to *EF*.

Because the qualitative constants that exhaust the complete qualitative endowment of a corresponding individual object enter into the composition of a particular idea's content, and because within the scope of this qualitative endowment is contained its essence, the ideal correlate of the object's essence enters into the content of the idea. That is why the essence of an individual object can be investigated by examining the content of the corresponding particular idea.

Returning, following these elucidations, to the question "square, what is that?", we need to state that the object of the concept "square" is a certain general idea, to which, however, the concept does not pertain *qua* idea, but rather [pertains to it] in terms of its meaning-content; the concept captures this content through one of its constant moments. This moment is the ideal correlate of the nature that constitutes any individual (ideal) square. In other words: the *object of the concept* "square" is the meaning-content of a certain general idea, [that content being] grasped through the ideal correlate of the individual square's constitutive nature.

This ideal correlate of an individual square's constitutive nature is in the given case a *concretization* of a certain specific ideal quality – namely, of squareness – and plays an analogous role in the content of an idea to the one played in the individual object "a certain square" by the individual nature constituting it. The concretization of the ideal quality "squareness" is – to put it another way – the immediate *μορφή* of the content of the general idea "square." However, that which shows up in the predicate of the answer to the question "square, what is that?" – namely: "regular, right-angled polygon" – is a certain selection, a certain ensemble, of constants of the given idea's content. The word "is" situated in the answer performs the function of *identifying* what the subject of the answer designates with what is designated by its predicate. Hence, what the subject designates and what the predicate designates are one and the same object, but apprehended in two different ways – once directly, through the immediate *μορφή*, then again by means of a certain selection of constants of the idea's content.

Formulating the issue in general terms, we can say concerning the question "x, what is that?" that: 1) the *known* of the problem of such a question <125> is the meaning-content of a certain general idea apprehended through its immediate *μορφή*; 2) the *unknown* of the problem is an ensemble of constants of the idea's content, which content is a known of the problem, namely an ensemble necessary and sufficient for identity to subsist between that which is encompassed by this ensemble

and the known of the problem; 3) the *problem*, finally, is the subsistence of this identity between known and unknown (the sought value of the unknown). We may also say that the unknown is what “belongs to the idea” if its content is constituted by the immediate *μορφή* adduced *implicite* in the known.

It is worth noting that we ask the questions “what is that?” and “x, what is that?” with different *goals* in mind. One of them is the unequivocal specification of the object. The only thing vital to achieving that goal is that the feature (or set of features) we adduce to single out the object be characteristic of it, whereas it is a matter of indifference which of its characteristic features is invoked. A second goal is to classify an object, i.e. to assign it to one of a system of sets agreed upon in advance. The choice of system is then dependent on the subjective interests of the agent carrying out the classification, but not on the nature or the essence of the object. Thus, we can achieve both the unequivocal specification of the object and its classification, despite being unfamiliar with the object’s essence or its nature; we therefore have to distinguish carefully the questions aiming at one of these two goals from questions that are posed precisely with the objective of cognizing the essence or the nature of an object; and so, the questions “what is that?” and “x, what is that?” are essence-questions in the strict sense of the word only when they are employed in such a sense that their goal is to achieve cognition of the object’s essence. It is also worth keeping in mind that questions of the form “what is the role of that?” or “what is the role of x?”¹⁹ ordinarily aim at classifying an object, and for this reason cannot be generally regarded as essence-questions. By carefully differentiating in the above manner the meanings that the cited questions can have, we avoid confounding different sets of problems.

For the purpose of penetrating further into the whole issue of essence-questions, and especially of the question “x, what is that?”, we need to deal with the *judgments* that comprise an answer to them, as well as with the *ontological* foundations of these answers.

The answer to the question “x, what is that?” is a judgment of the type “x is a y with characteristics a b c” This judgment states that identity obtains between “x” and “y with characteristics a b c” which is to say, between the meaning-content of a certain idea, apprehended through the given idea’s immediate *μορφή*, and a certain selection of constants from this very content. It is now incumbent upon us to examine the connection

19 A discussion of this form of question is forthcoming in the Translator’s Note to *EF*.

that obtains between <126> the qualitative moment of the immediate *μορφή* of the idea's content and the selection of qualitative moments of the constants indicated by the predicate of the answer; this selection is of a kind that not only omits the variables of the content, but also acknowledges from the totality of its constants only those that are necessary and sufficient for the identity to obtain that was ascertained in the judgment serving as answer to the question.

Taking into account the mentioned qualitative moment of the immediate *μορφή* of the idea's content, three *kinds of ideas* need to be differentiated.

The first kind consists of ideas in which the immediate *μορφή* of the content is a conglomerate devoid of inner cohesion. Although the content of such ideas (e.g. the idea of a plate) is constituted by an immediate *μορφή*, we would search in vain for an ideal quality of which this *μορφή* would be the concretization. Such ideas can be called inexact.

The second kind of ideas consists of exact ideas, that is, the kind in which the immediate *μορφή* of their content forms a distinctive unity, and in the content of which shows up such a selection of constants that their qualitative moments in this assortment are "equivalent" to the qualitative moment of the immediate *μορφή*. So e.g. the immediate *μορφή* of the content of the general idea "square" is the concretization of a certain ideal quality; owing to this, however, cognition of the qualitative moment of the *μορφή* is possible without resorting to any other element of the idea's content, therefore without appealing to its constants and variables. For we are dealing here with something that – contrary to the way it is with inexact ideas – is its own peculiar qualitative unity, for which it is contingent, as it were, that it is concretized as immediate *μορφή* of the idea's content, and which can just as well exist without this concretization. We can cognize such an immediate *μορφή* only by cognizing its qualitative moment, and thereby indirectly indirectly the corresponding ideal quality.

The fact that the immediate *μορφή* of the exact idea's content is a concretization of a certain ideal quality entails that the *μορφή* specifies unequivocally the ensemble of the idea's remaining constants and variables. And from amongst all the constants, a certain group of them is singled out, [a group] into the composition of which a finite number enters that are independent with respect to each other. This group of constants is indeed spelled out in the predicate term of some judgments of the type "x is a y with characteristics a b c" Knowing the immediate *μορφή* of the exact idea's content and this group of constants, we can in principle deduce by way of

logical operations all of the remaining constants of the given idea's content. And because, furthermore, the immediate *μορφή* of the content of exact ideas specifies not only all the remaining constants, but also the variables – amongst which <127> also occurs a finite group on which the remaining variables are dependent – it is possible in the case of exact general ideas to predict, on the basis of analyzing their content, the kind and number of immediately less general ideas that are subordinated to the given one.

The third kind of ideas consists of ideas in which the immediate *μορφή* of the content is an absolutely simple moment, incompatible with being equivalent to any assortment of constants. All of them are ideas of absolutely simple ideal qualities, e.g. A: the idea “pure red,” the idea “coloration,” or B: the ideas “point,” “straight line,” or “surface.” In examples of type A, the content of the idea is comprised of the pure concretization of a certain absolutely simple ideal quality; in examples of type B, only the immediate *μορφή* of the content is a concretization of a simple ideal quality. So even though in the content of an idea of type B there exist, apart from the constant comprising its immediate *μορφή*, also other constants²⁰ – and variables as well – there is no ensemble of constants here whose qualitative moments could be equivalent to the qualitative moment of the immediate *μορφή*. It is indeed for this reason that a definition of such ideas cannot be given.

It is not as if every judgment of the type “x is a y with characteristics a b c ...” is a *real definition*; alongside this type of judgments (that are real definitions), there are also judgments of this type that are ordinary expositions of an exact idea's content. In this second case, they can be called *predicative judgments*.²¹ Predicative judgment and real definition,

20 In *EF*, Ingarden inserted the following parenthetical expression in order to clarify the distinction between types A and B of simple ideas: “(e.g. the constants ‘something spatial’ [*etwas Raummäßiges*] and ‘[something] dimensionless’ [*Ausdehnungsloses*] occur in the geometric idea ‘point’”).

21 In regard to the expression ‘predicative judgment’, Ingarden writes to Twardowski, in a letter of 4 Nov. 1923, that he was never satisfied with it, because he did not deem it appropriate, “due to the fact that every judgment is after all ‘predicative,’” but he is at a loss to find one that is “more suitable”. He suggests that “perhaps it would be better to replace it with ‘explicative’ [*eksplikujący*] or ‘expository’ [*wytuszczający*] judgment’ in view of the fact that such a judgment explicates or expounds [*wytuszcza*] the meaning-content of a certain idea.” *Wytuszcza* might best be rendered by “fleshes out” in more recent jargon. In *EF*, he replaces ‘predicative judgment’ with *Wesensurteil* [judgment pertaining to essence]. *Correspondence*, 257.

though identical in terms of their verbal articulation, differ in their formal objects, whereas their material object – that is to say, a state of affairs existing independently of the agent of cognition – is no doubt the same in both cases.

There is a prevailing view – especially among mathematicians – to the effect that *various* real *definitions* of the same object can be given, and that the choice from among them is arbitrary. And so, a square can be defined as: 1) an equilateral, right-angled quadrilateral; or 2) a regular quadrilateral having side-length $r\sqrt{2}$ (where r is the radius of a circle circumscribing this quadrilateral); or 3) a polygon having two equal, right-angled, mutually bisecting diagonals. Indeed, the freedom to choose one from among these definitions does exist, provided that by definition we shall understand a certain methodical device, be it for the unequivocal specification of an object, or for classifying it, or for characterizing a concept, or, finally, for conferring a meaning on a certain drawing or some other symbol. But if our goal is to issue a predicative judgment or to construct a real definition, only the first of the cited judgments will fulfill this objective. Those are wrong who maintain that we are free to choose any one of the enumerated judgments as <128> the real definition of a square, because a) the characteristics named in the predicate of any one of them can be derived from the characteristics named in the predicate of any of the others; and b) it is a matter of a freely adopted consensus from which of these judgments we may wish to launch that process. Such a view overlooks that the relation prevailing between the moments designated by the terms of the predicates of judgments 2) and 3) and the immediate *μορφή* of the content of the general idea “the square” is different from the one that prevails between the moments designated by the predicate term of judgment 1) and that *μορφή*. For to assert that the characteristics adduced in judgments 2) and 3) accrue to the object “square” requires *proof*; that is, demonstration that all those dependencies obtain which mediate between the fact that the given object is a square (and therefore that the nature constituting it is a concretization of the ideal quality “squareness”) and the fact that all the mentioned characteristics accrue to it. In contrast, that the object “square” is an equilateral, right-angled parallelogram is *directly* connected with the nature constituting that object being a concretization of “squareness.” This direct connection is not, however, something wantonly adopted, but has its basis in ideal qualities, where the qualitative moments of the various constants of the exact idea’s content are the

concretizations of those qualities. It is these ideal qualities that occasion the connections of the contemporaneous occurrence of certain elements in the content of an exact idea to obtain directly in some cases and only indirectly in others. That is, if we analyze the relations prevailing among the particular *μορφαί* that go into composing the structure of one and the same object, we can distinguish *two cases* that are of interest to us here. In the *first* case, distinct *μορφαί* unite [*jednoczą się* = *vereinigen sich*] directly into a new *μορφή*, [the latter] being not a conglomerate, but something uniform, indissoluble. The reason for this union is here the essence of the two ideal qualities involved, capable of uniting into a new ideal quality, the concretization of which is precisely the given *μορφή*. All the ideal qualities that come into play here demand mutual completion; and so, having been realized as *μορφαί*, they can exist in no other way than in such union; e.g. “redness” and “coloration” as original ideal qualities (or *μορφαί*), and “red-coloration” [*czerwonobarwność* ≈ *Rotfarbhaftigkeit*] as a union of original qualities – that is, as a derivative ideal quality (or *μορφή*). In the *second* case, however, we are also dealing with a homogeneous *μορφή*, though a derivative one; still, *μορφαί* that unify in it directly are of a kind that do not demand necessarily reciprocal augmentation – which is to say, the one *μορφή* can occur in the object without the other. Here too, the ultimate basis of this phenomenon is the peculiar essence of the corresponding ideal qualities, which, <129> though completely autonomous with respect to each other, do nonetheless produce a certain new ideal quality in which moments can be made out that point to those [more original] ideal qualities. The quality of any mixed (composite) color, e.g. of orange, can serve here as example.

It is precisely “squareness”, which – in relation to the (at least relatively more original) qualities “parallelogramness,” “equilaterality,” “orthogonality” – is such a derivative ideal quality of the second kind. This derivative ideal quality is not an ordinary sum, [not] a conglomerate of original qualities, but a new, distinct quality. The derivative quality “squareness” therefore indicates a certain finite number of original qualities, namely: “parallelogramness,” “equilaterality,” “orthogonality.” But the whole ensemble of these original qualities, properly ordered, “becomes equivalent” to the derivative quality, in which [equivalence] is expressed the remarkable interconnection between a derivative quality and a corresponding ensemble of original qualities. This interconnection entails that where we are dealing with the concretization of a derivative quality – as in the content of an exact idea – concretizations of the

relevant original qualities must also occur. It is this very interconnection, and the equivalence between the derivative quality and a corresponding ensemble of original qualities that is affiliated with it, which is the reason, and at the same time the condition, for the identity between the content of an exact idea, apprehended conceptually through the immediate *μορφή* constituting it, and that *μορφή*, apprehended by way of a corresponding combination of concretized qualities that is equivalent to the derivative quality. This equivalence is therefore the ultimate *ontological basis* of the predicative judgment.

The subsistence of this equivalence enables us at the same time to understand why, when explicating in the predicative judgment the meaning-content of an exact idea, we *select* a certain special group of its constants, and in this way assign them *priority* over other constants. We do this because the equivalence among ideal qualities discussed above not only gives us the right to do so, but imposes on us an obligation to do it. That is to say, a certain derivative quality comprises in its concretization the immediate *μορφή* of an exact idea's content; it decides "what" that content is. And the concretization of that derivative quality goes ineluctably hand in hand with the concretization of the corresponding original qualities. The concretizations of these original qualities take part, as it were, in this decision; they enter into the composition – and are at the same time an *explicite* unfolding – of the entire meaning-content of that "what." Hence, an answer to the essence-question "x, what is that" – and the predicative judgment is such an answer – must single out *this* group of constants, and pass over in silence other constants whose occurrence in the idea's content is just a necessary consequence of the group that has been singled out. This group, for its part, is conditioned by the <130> immediate *μορφή* of an exact idea's content being a concretization of precisely such, and no other, derivative ideal quality.

In conjunction with these analyses, a *determination of the concept of "essence"* can be set forth – differing from the one adopted by Hering – according to which only those individual objects in which the individual nature constituting them is a concretization of a derivative ideal quality. That is to say, the essence of such an individual object will be the individual nature constituting the object, along with all those of its properties whose immediate (and therefore mediate with respect to the object) *μορφαί* are concretizations of ideal qualities; those qualities exhaust the ensemble of qualities which is equivalent to the corresponding

derivative quality that comprises in the concretization the qualitative moment of the object's nature.

The view expounded here – endorsing the existence of an object's essence and of a nature constituting the object, along with everything that presupposes them – is opposed to a view that could be called *epistemological conventionalism*; this view claims that the nature, or essence, of an object is something that the cognizing subject foists onto the object in a completely wanton manner. According to this conventionalism, we select some characteristic of the object that is particularly important to us for this or that practical, or even theoretical, reason and ascribe a dominant role to it in the object, speaking of it as of the object's nature; however, precisely which characteristic we select depends entirely on our volition, just as does the construction of one kind of object rather than another. This view is especially widespread among mathematicians who philosophize, and manifests itself, among other ways, in the postulate of complete freedom “to define.” Sometimes this view is also applied to real objects. And so, the fundamental thesis of this view is the dependence of the object of cognition on the cognitive act, or on the agent of cognition. The issue therefore is to resolve the quandary of whether, and within what bounds, such a dependence exists.

Two positions can be distinguished with regard to this matter. *The first* asserts that there are objects that exist autonomously and entirely independently of both the cognitive act and the cognizing subject. “Entirely” – that means both as to the existence of the object, and as to its possession of all of its characteristics. These objects are *self-existent* [*samo-istne* = *selbstseiend*],²² which means they exist irrespective of the simultaneous existence of some cognitive act (or subject) whose intention would be directed at the given object. These objects are *independent*, which means that there is none among the object's characteristics which would accrue to it when, and only when, the object is the target of the intention of a cognitive act, nor is there any characteristic that would change <131> under the influence of an act of consciousness (of a cognitive act, in particular). Hence, if such objects do exist, then it follows *ex definitione* that the view of *epistemological conventionalism* cannot apply to them; such objects must have some nature that distinguishes them from other objects; however, of what kind this nature will be depends under what kind of idea

22 An expression that Ingarden employs as synonymous with “existing autonomously” (e.g. in the next paragraph). He increasingly favored the latter in subsequent writings.

the given object falls. In no case is it then possible to foist a nature onto its object, or to ascribe one to it.

The second position maintains that there are no objects of the kind just discussed, that the only objects that exist are dependent on a cognitive process. These objects are then dependent on a cognitive process either in their very existence, or else, while existing autonomously in relation to cognitive acts, are dependent on them with respect to some of their characteristics. For if this dependence pertained to all characteristics, the existence of these objects could not be independent of cognitive acts; some core of characteristics must accrue to them independently of the cognizing subject.

The view which accepts that objects are dependent for their existence on cognitive acts assumes that cognitive acts are capable of creating objects, and of sustaining in their existence those created. This assumption is incompatible with the essence of cognitive acts. The retort that our mind does after all create such objects as centaurs, and the like, forgets that it is not the cognitive act that creates here, but rather our imagination. To be sure, our opponent can respond that this is good enough for him, for once the imagination is able to create various objects, it can then also ascribe to them this or that nature – and to such objects, created by us “in the imagination”, also belong, among other objects, those of mathematical investigations. We cannot forget, however, that we employ the term “create” in one sense when we speak of creating (say, a centaur) in the imagination, and in another sense when we speak – in the spirit of the conventionalists – of our creating some geometric figure. For in speaking about the creation of a centaur in the imagination, we have solely in mind the formation of a new whole of imaginative or conceptual content [*Inhalt*] out of imaginative-conceptual elements previously acquired on the occasion of experiencing certain real objects; in a word – [we have in mind solely] the formation of a certain image or concept that refers to a certain object. We can also issue judgments about the object of such an image or concept, yet these judgments do not ascertain what kind of object this *is*, but what kind it *could be*, were it to exist. We can also speak in this sense of “cognizing” this kind of object, and pronounce about it a series of true, but hypothetical, judgments. For in the strict sense of the word, there is no such object.

<132> Objects *that exist in an ideal mode*, examples of which can be the objects of Euclidean geometry, cannot be set on a par with fictive [

fikcyjnymi] objects fabricated by our imagination. The objects of Euclidean geometry can neither arise, nor change in respect of any of their properties: hence, they either do not exist at all, or, if they do exist, we cannot create them. But that these objects and other ideal objects (ideal qualities, ideas) do exist, we know from immediate *a priori* cognition. A conviction grounded in such cognition cannot be imparted to anyone else; everyone must draw it from his own immediate cognition. We can, however, note that a denial of the existence of ideal objects, ideas, or ideal qualities leads to consequences that make impossible the existence of any science and its knowledge.

Conventionalism could still defend itself by appealing to the second of the possibilities mentioned above, namely, that the objects of Euclidean geometry, even though they have autonomous being relative to the agent of cognition, do after all possess some *characteristics* that depend on the subject and act of cognition, and among these can occur the individual nature constituting the object. An object autonomous in its existence relative to a cognizing subject does after all have a certain core of properties that accrue to it independently of its connections to other objects, and owing to which it possesses a whole series of relative characteristics. So these core properties cannot be dependent on an agent of cognition; nor can they depend on a subject that cognizes characteristics which may possibly accrue to it owing to *real* relations obtaining between it and any other real object. In contrast, there exist characteristics of which we can say that the object sort of possesses them, yet does not “truly” possess them: relative characteristics, in the strictest sense of this word, which are, as it were, a gleam [*refleks* = *Reflex*] cast over the object as a result of the cognizing subject juxtaposing it in some respect to another object, or other objects. E.g. in juxtaposition to an object A, a certain object is small; in juxtaposition to an object B, it is large. Characteristics of this kind – which is to say, *relative quasi-characteristics* – need to be contrasted, on the one hand, with the case in which some object *seems* small in comparison with another (whereby we preserve the awareness of how big it really is), and on the other hand, with those “dimensions” of the object that it has irrespective of being juxtaposed to an object with different dimensions, which can only undergo change as a result of some real process having been consummated – e.g. heating – and which are a property of the object. And so, this property is not in any <133> sense dependent on the agent of cognition; in contrast, it can be said of relative

quasi-characteristics that they are dependent on the cognizing subject in a *figurative* sense. In other words, dependence in a non-figurative sense would exist whenever it would pertain to characteristics of the object that are inextricably bound with it, i.e. capable of undergoing change or annihilation only by means of the occurrence of some real causal process. In contrast, owing to the very essence of the situation, the connection of the relative *quasi*-characteristics with the object to which they accrue can be severed. No real, causal process is necessary for “changing” an object with respect to such a characteristic, or for its loss by the object. Everything depends on the choice, made by the agent of cognition, of the relation that prevails in a certain respect between the given object and other objects, a relation in which there is no agency at all between its terms; change of choice does not of itself entail any real change in the object. It is indeed here that we can speak correctly in a figurative sense concerning the dependence of the discussed characteristics on the agent of cognition. This is the only case of its kind, for in cases in which some object *seems* to be of one kind or another, those fictitious [*fiktywne*] characteristics are specified neither by the properties of the objects, nor by relations prevailing between them objectively, but by a certain order in the contemporaneous or successive occurrence of certain contents [*Inhalte*] experienced by the agent of cognition as a result of performing cognitive acts – e.g. [the act of] contrasting. Therefore, it is because it is possible to speak of a dependence on a cognizing subject only with reference to relative *quasi*-characteristics – and of a figurative dependence at that (whereas the object’s nature is no relative *quasi*-characteristic) – that the thesis of epistemological conventionalism is untenable.

The concept of a relative *quasi*-characteristic also enables us to display in a general way the unknown of a question of the type “what is the role of x?”, where x designates a certain *individual* object. This question can be answered in a variety of ways. E.g. the question “what is the role of this horse?” may be answered in the following ways: [A] “this horse is a mammal; [B] “this horse is my property”; [C] “this horse is one of the horses bought by the Polish State for such and such purposes.” However, it is always critical here – as the grammatical form of the question already indicates²³ – that the subject of the question (this horse) be considered not

23 Ingarden is referring here to the instrumental case of the word “what” [*czym*] in the Polish formulation of the question “*czym jest x?*” for which in English I employed the surrogate phrase “the role of”. See the immediately following exposition.

as something for itself, but as something that is “something [in a context]” [*czyms*]. Now to be “something [in a context]” is only possible by playing some role in certain additional circumstances that have their source beyond the given object. The meaning of the question “what is the role of *x*?” varies in accordance with these circumstances, causing now this judgment, now another, to be the fitting answer to it. In the cited examples the subject of <134> the question appears, in concert with the three-fold reply, in three roles, each of which is constituted by the manifestation [*refleks* = *Reflex*] of [A:] a relation of a subject falling under one of its genera, or [B:] a relation of its belonging to a certain set of objects, or [C:] any other relation to any other object. Now since this role makes up the unknown of the problem of the question “what is the role of *x*?”, we can say in general that this unknown consists of the role of the object contained in the subject-term, [a role] constituted by some relative *quasi*-characteristic – indeed, the one unknown in the problem.

In the first of these cases [A], the question “what is the role of *x*?” is a question *pertaining to essence*, for wishing to classify the given object with respect to the genus under which it falls, we must first examine its individual nature and the moments that go into composing it, as well as the mutual conditions to which they are subject. In the second and third cases [B, C] such a state of affairs does not obtain: in both these cases we are asking about something that has nothing directly in common with the object’s nature, nor does it demand of the recipient of the question familiarity with it; consequently, the question “what is the role of *x*?”, in the interpretation corresponding to these two cases, is not a question pertaining to essence.

But even the questions “what is that?” and “*x*, what is that?” cannot in all their multiple meanings be reckoned among the essence-questions, but only in those interpretations of them in which the question “what is that?” has as the unknown of the problem an object constituted by an individual nature, and the question “*x*, what is that?” demands an answer in the form of a judgment that explicates the meaning-content of a certain idea (perhaps, [in the form] of a real definition). Truth be told, none of these questions asks directly about the essence or the nature of the object, meaning that in none of them is the essence or the nature of the object the unknown, nor is possessing a certain essence the problem – as is the case in the questions “what makes up the nature of this?” and “what belongs to the essence of an individual object?”. In the question “what is that?”,

however, the nature – hence, the most important moment of its essence – goes into composing the unknown, whereas in the question “x, what is that?”, the immediate *μορφή* of the idea’s content goes into composing the known, and the unknown of the problem is a certain singular assortment of its constants, necessary and sufficient for the subsistence of identity between the idea’s content apprehended through its immediate *μορφή*, and it [*μορφή*] itself apprehended by way of this assortment of constants. In the case of a certain individual object of which we know neither the nature nor the essence, we first obtain the answer to the question “what is that?” in the wording “that is P,” and then the answer to the question “P, what is that?”; consequently – though we do not directly ask concerning the essence (or the nature) of the object – the answers to these questions will [either] supply us information about the most important elements of its essence (in the <135> broader sense), when at issue is an object falling under an inexact idea, or we shall learn from the answers about all the elements of the essence (in the narrower sense), when at issue is an object falling under an exact idea. It is impossible here to give an answer to these questions without knowing the nature of the object and the meaning-content of the corresponding idea.

In view of this, it is necessary to constrain the concept of essence-questions once more, and to reckon among them only the following *pair* of questions taken together: 1) “what is that?”; 2) “x, what is that?”. For the answer to *both* these questions can first supply us with sufficient knowledge of the object in its essence.

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