

JAMES OF VITERBO ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

The relationship between essence and existence (*esse*) was a hotly contested issue among late thirteenth century thinkers.¹ Of the many analyses devoted to this problem, one of the more historically informative was provided by James of Viterbo, a Master in the Theology faculty at the University of Paris from 1293 to 1300.² However, James' position on this issue has often puzzled his commentators. Some have thought that James defended in some manner a real distinction between essence and existence.³ Others have viewed him as an opponent of the real distinction.⁴ Some have even thought that he defended an intentional

¹ For the historical background of this problem see M. D. Roland-Gosselin, *Le 'De ente et essentia' de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 1926), pp. 135-205; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1955), pp. 420-7; J. Wippel, "Essence and Existence," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, and J. Pinborg (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 385-410.

² On James' life and career, see D. Gutiérrez, *De B. Iacobi Viterbiensis O.E.S.A. vita, operibus, et doctrina theologica* (Rome, 1939); E. Ypma, "Recherches sur la carrière scolaire et la bibliothèque de Jacques de Viterbe † 1308," *Augustiniana* 24 (1974), pp. 247-82; J.F. Wippel, "The Dating of James of Viterbo's Quodlibet I and Godfrey of Fontaines' Quodlibet VIII," *Augustiniana* 24 (1974), pp. 348-86; E. Ypma, "Recherches sur la productivité littéraire de Jacques de Viterbe jusqu'à 1300," *Augustiniana* 25 (1975), pp. 223-82. For a general survey of James' philosophical thought, see F. Casado, "El pensamiento filosófico del Beata Santiago de Viterbo," *La Ciudad de Dios* 163 (1951), pp. 437-54; 164 (1952), pp. 301-31; 165 (1953), pp. 103-44, 283-302, 489-500. For a study of James' metaphysical positions, see my "The Metaphysical Structure of Finite Being According to James of Viterbo" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1998).

³ E. Hocedez, *Aegidii Romani Theoremata de esse et essentia. Texte précédé d'une introduction historique et critique* (Louvain, 1930), p. 88; D. Gutiérrez, pp. 83-5.

⁴ L. De Raeymaeker, *Philosophie de l'Être* (Louvain, 1946), p. 141; F. Casado, "El pensamiento filosófico ...," *La Ciudad de Dios* 164 (1952), p. 323. In a similar vein, R. Imbach views James as someone who has followed the method of Siger of Brabant by resolving the ontological problem of essence and existence through linguistic analysis. See his "Averroistische Stellungnahmen zur Diskussion über das Verhältnis von *Esse* und *Essentia*," in *Studi sul XIV secolo in memoria di Anneliese Maier*, ed. A. Maieru and A.P. Bagliani (Rome, 1981), pp. 299-339.

distinction.⁵ Still others have held that he defended an intermediate position.⁶

In this paper I present an explication of James' position on this topic by means of a careful reading of his texts. My focus will be on determining the kind of distinction that obtains between an essence and its *esse*. Since James' own solution arises from a criticism of the views of his contemporaries, I shall begin by briefly describing the main positions on the essence/existence relation that were popular in his day.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There was common agreement among medieval thinkers that essence and existence are wholly identical in God, though not in creatures. Controversy broke out concerning the precise kind of non-identity that must obtain between a created essence and its existence. By the time of James of Viterbo's Parisian regency, three kinds of distinction had been advanced. One view maintained that essence and existence are really distinct. This kind of distinction is present in things as they exist in reality, prior to any rational analysis by the human mind. A second theory maintained that their distinction is merely logical, having its origin in the work of human reason. A third theory claimed to find an intentional distinction between essence and existence. Such a distinction is regarded as intermediate between a real and logical distinction.

While contemporary scholars generally agree that Thomas Aquinas defended a real distinction between essence and existence, in the late thirteenth century it was Giles of Rome who was its best known advocate. One of the chief motives behind his position was the need to preserve the contingent and limited character of created being. Creation is viewed by

⁵ H. Rüssmann, *Zur Ideenlehre der Hochscholastik unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Heinrich von Gent, Gottfried von Fontaines und Jakob von Viterbo* (Freiburg, 1938), pp. 136, 138.

⁶ J. Wippel, "Essence and Existence," pp. 404-5. See also his "James of Viterbo on the Essence-Existence Relationship (Quodlibet I, Q. 4), and Godfrey of Fontaines on the Relation between Nature and Supposit (Quodlibet 7, Q. 5)," in *Sprache und Erkenntnis im Mittelalter*, ed. W. Kluxen (Berlin, 1981), pp. 777-87; "The Relationship between Essence and Existence in Late Thirteenth Century Thought: Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and James of Viterbo," in *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval*, ed. P. Morewedge (New York, 1982), pp. 131-64. According to M. Grabmann, James has tried to conjoin and harmonize the logical and real distinctions. See his "Doctrina S. Thomae de distinctione reali inter essentiam et esse ex documentis ineditis saeculi XIII illustratur," in *Acta hebdomadae Thomisticae Romae celebratae 19-25 Novembris 1923 in laudem S. Thomae Aquinatis* (Rome, 1924), pp. 131-90.

Giles as analogous to natural generation: the latter entails a real distinction between matter and form; the former between essence and existence. In his *Theoremata de esse et essentia* (1278-85), Giles offers a series of arguments to support the real distinction. One argument is drawn from the potentiality of created nature. From the fact that a created nature can be and not be it follows that it is not its own *esse*, but is in potency to *esse*, which has the character of an act. Another argument is based on the finitude of created nature. Since no creature is simply infinite, no creature could be identical with its *esse*. Creaturely *esse* must be limited by being received in an essence. Another argument is grounded on the composition found in created nature. Giles reasons that if creatures were identical with their *esse*, they would completely lack composition, because *esse* itself does not participate in a further actuality. It would follow also that creatures by their own nature would be wholly immutable. But this of course is contrary to the nature of the created.⁷

It is clear that in all of these arguments Giles wants to distinguish metaphysically between God and the creature. Creatures are contingent, limited, and composite; God is necessary, infinite, and absolutely simple. If a creature were really identical with its existence, it would in fact be God. On these points Thomas Aquinas would agree with Giles. Yet on two other points he appears to go much further than Aquinas. First, Giles places great emphasis on the "separability" of essence and *esse*. One sees this in an argument found in Theorem XII. There Giles provides additional argumentation to show that in everything outside of God essence and existence really differ. His first argument begins with the claim that one can understand the essences of sensible things without understanding their *esse*, and without these essences possessing actual existence. Thus one can know what a rose is, even if no roses exist. Essence and *esse* are separable, at least in thought. Things which can be separated only by the intellect differ at least logically; however, if these things are really (*realiter*) separated, then it is necessary that they be really distinct. Giles observes that although one might doubt whether things really distinct can be really separated, there can be no doubt that those things which are really separated are really distinct. Now the essences of sensible substances can be really separated from their *esse*, for these things are capable of not

⁷ *Theoremata de esse et essentia*, pp. 23-6. On the dating of the *Theoremata*, see *Aegidii Romani opera omnia*, III.1. *Apologia*, ed. R. Wielockx (Florence, 1985), pp. 241-60.

existing. Therefore, their essences are really distinct from their *esse*.⁸ Thomas Aquinas, by contrast, rejects the claim that an essence could be "separated" from its *esse*.⁹

A second point of deviation concerns Giles' frequent description of *esse* as a thing (*res*).¹⁰ This suggests that *esse* is itself a kind of essence. This is clearly a departure from Aquinas, who spoke of *esse* not as a thing, but rather as a principle of being. By using this kind of language Giles has left himself open to the charge that he has "reified" *esse*. Modern commentators are divided over whether his theory of real distinction is genuinely different from that of Aquinas.¹¹ At the very least, it appears

⁸ *Theoremata de esse et essentia*, pp. 67-8. "Prima via sic patet. Nam possunt intelligi hae res sensibiles absque eo quod intellegantur esse et absque eo quod habeant esse. Quod esse non possunt nisi essent in potentia ad esse. Possum enim intellegere rosam, nulla rosa existente. Postquam enim per sensum vel per doctrinam acquisivi scientiam de rosa, existere ipsius rosae vel esse eius nihil facit ad scientiam meam, quia obiectum intellectus non est esse sed quidditas. Advertendum tamen quod aliqua separantur secundum rem, aliqua vero secundum intellectum tantum. Sicut ergo invenimus aliqua ab invicem separari, sic ab invicem sunt diversa. Si ergo separantur secundum intellectum tantum, saltem differunt ratione, si vero realiter separantur, oportet quod realiter sint diversa. Et si dubium est utrum aliqua realiter diversa possunt realiter separari, tamen dubium esse non potest quod quae realiter separantur, realiter differunt. Si enim essentia realiter semper esset coniuncta ipsi esse, semper realiter haberet esse, et numquam posset non esse. Eo ergo ipso quod huiusmodi naturae sensibiles possunt non esse, vel non semper fuerunt coniunctae ipsi esse, quia aliquando inceperunt esse, arguere possumus quod sint in potentia ad esse et quod habent essentiam realiter differentem ab esse."

⁹ See Thomas' *De spir. creat.* q. 1. Note in particular: "Unde in rebus compositis est considerare duplicem actum, et duplicem potentiam. Nam primo quidem materia est ut potentia respectu formae, et forma est actus eius; et iterum natura constituta ex materia et forma, est ut potentia respectu ipsius esse, in quantum est susceptiva eius. Remoto igitur fundamento materiae, si remaneat aliqua forma determinatae naturae per se subsistens, non in materia, adhuc comparabitur ad suum esse ut potentia ad actum: *non dico autem ut potentiam separabilem ab actu, sed quam semper suus actus comitetur*" (italics added).

¹⁰ Note the following passages from the *Theoremata*: "Esse autem quod causatur a forma totius ut in decima nona propositione patebit, est res differens ab ipsa forma" (p. 101); "Verum quia in propositione quinta et etiam in duodecima multis rationibus probatur et etiam hic ostendetur quod esse et essentia sunt duae res ..." (p. 127); "Et, sicut materia et quantitas sunt duae res, sic essentia et esse sunt duae res realiter differentes" (p. 134). Giles accepts the Avicennian distinction between the *forma partis*, which is the substantial form of a thing, and the *forma totius*, which refers to the whole essence. For more on this, see *Theoremata*, pp. 39-46.

¹¹ For some discussions of this, see G. Suarez, "El pensamiento de Egidio Romano en torno a la distinción de esencia y existencia," *La ciencia tomista* 75 (1948), pp. 364-71; P. Nash, "Giles of Rome on Boethius' 'Diversum est esse et id quod est'," *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950), pp. 57-91; A. Pattin, "Gilles de Rome, o.e.s.a. (ca. 1243-1316) et la distinction réelle de l'essence et de l'existence," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 23 (1953), pp. 80*-116*; P. Nash, "The Accidentality of Esse According to Giles of Rome,"

that Giles formulated his teaching on essence and existence in a manner different from Thomas Aquinas. Although he followed Thomas in conceiving *esse* as an actuality, he seems to have gone much further than Aquinas in emphasizing the reality of the distinction.

Giles' theory of real distinction provoked a vigorous reaction from his contemporaries. Perhaps his most outspoken critic was Henry of Ghent. In his *Quodlibet* I, q. 9 (Christmas 1276), Henry charged him with having misunderstood the manner in which creatures participate being, and then proceeded to bring a series of arguments against his theory of real distinction.¹² In rejecting a real distinction, however, Henry does not wish to assert an identity between essence and existence, such that the essence of a creature would be pure subsisting *esse*. He agrees with Giles that a creature is not its own *esse*; however, the distinction found here is not real, nor merely logical, but rather "intentional."

Drawing upon Avicenna, Henry distinguishes a two-fold *esse* in creatures. The first, which he calls "essential being" (*esse essentiae*), is found in a creature essentially, although still by participation, insofar as the essence of the creature has a formal exemplar in God. By means of its essential being, the essence of a creature falls under the categories. The second *esse* found in creatures Henry names "existential being" (*esse existentiae*). A creature has this not from its own essence but from God, insofar as it is an effect of the divine will. According to Henry, a creature has existential being in the manner of an accident supervening, as it were, on an essence. However, he is careful to note that *esse existentiae* is not an accidental reality (*res accidentis*), because it does not modify something preexisting. Rather it is through its existential being that a thing possesses actual existence.¹³ Consequently, the essence of a creature does not have

Gregorianum 38 (1957), pp. 103-15; G. Trapé, "L' 'esse' partecipato e distinzione reale in Egidio Romano," *Aquinas* 12 (1969), pp. 443-68.

¹² For Henry's text see *Henrici de Gandavo Quodlibet I*, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1979), pp. 47-62. For the dating of Henry's *Quodlibets* see P. Glorieux, *La littérature quodlibétique de 1260 à 1320* (Paris, 1925-35), Vol. 1, pp. 177-99. For a general presentation of Henry's position, see J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique* (Paris, 1938), pp. 273-326; J. Gómez Caffarena, *Ser participado y ser subsistente en la metafísica de Enrique de Gand* (Rome, 1958), pp. 65-126. On Henry's quarrel with Giles, see E. Hocedez, "Gilles de Rome et Henri de Gand sur la distinction réelle (1276-1287)," *Gregorianum* 8 (1927), pp. 358-84; J. Paulus, "Les disputes d'Henri de Gand et de Gilles de Rome sur la distinction de l'essence et l'existence," *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 13 (1940-2), pp. 323-58.

¹³ *Henrici de Gandavo Quodlibet I*, pp. 53-4. "Et est hic distinguendum de esse, secundum quod distinguit Avicenna in fine V^{ti} Metaphysicae suae, quod quoddam est esse rei quod habet essentialiter de se, quod appellatur esse essentiae, quoddam vero quod

esse when it is considered purely in itself, but rather as it possesses a relation to the divine essence. Insofar as an essence has a relation to the divine essence as to a formal cause, there belongs to it *esse essentiae*. Insofar as the essence of a creature is an effect of the divine essence in the order of efficient causality, it possesses *esse existentiae*.

Between the essence of a creature and its *esse essentiae* Henry finds only a logical distinction. However, he refuses to say the same with regard to an essence and its *esse existentiae*. Since one can understand the essence of a creature even if it lacks actual existence, the distinction between essence and existence must be more than logical. Of course, Henry will refuse to allow a real distinction, and so he is led to postulate a new kind of distinction intermediate between a logical and a real distinction.¹⁴

An intentional distinction occurs between two intentions, that is, between two constitutive notes of one and the same essence. In such a distinction the concept of the one intention excludes the concept of the other, without thereby disturbing the real identity of the thing being conceived.¹⁵ To illustrate how this occurs Henry likes to use the example

recipit ab *alio*, quod appellatur esse actualis existentiae. Primum esse habet essentia creaturae essentialiter, sed tamen participative, in quantum habet formale exemplar in Deo. Et per hoc cadit sub ente, quod est commune essentiale ad decem praedicamenta, quod a tali esse in communi accepto imponitur, et est illud esse rei definitivum quod de ipsa ante esse actuale solum habet existere in mentis conceptu. De quo dicitur quod definitio est oratio indicans quid est esse. Secundum esse non habet creatura ex sua essentia sed a Deo, in quantum est effectus voluntatis divinae iuxta exemplar eius in mente divina. Unde quia istud esse non habet ex sua essentia, sed quadam extrinseca participatione, ideo illud esse modum accidentis habet quasi superveniens essentiae, propter quod Commentator super V^o Metaphysicae, exponens differentiam utriusque esse, dicit quod quaestio de esse uno modo pertinet ad praedicatum de genere, alio autem modo ad praedicatum de accidente. Unde et quamquam istud esse secundum reducitur ad praedicatum accidentis quia modum accidentis habet, non tamen rem accidentis dicit, quia non advenit ipsi iam praeexistenti, sed per ipsum, ut dictum est, habet res existere.”

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55. Note in particular: “Si loquamur de primo esse creaturae, illud sola ratione differt ab essentia creaturae, nec potest ei abesse, quia non habet illud ab alio effective sed solum formaliter ... Si vero loquamur de secundo esse creaturae, illud, licet non differt re ab essentia creaturae, non tamen differt ab illa sola ratione, in quantum intellectus diversis conceptionibus capit de ea quod est et quod tale quid est, substantia vel accidens, sed etiam differt ab illa intentione, quia quantum ad tale esse ipsa essentia creaturae potest esse et non esse. Esse enim habet in quantum alterius effectus quidam est, non esse autem habet de se, et in illud non esse cadit quando ille qui fecit quod est, conservare desinit. Et ideo de tali esse non potest concedi quod essentia creaturae est suum esse, quia esse essentiae nunc existens in actu potest esse non ens, sicut prius fuit ens.”

¹⁵ See Henry's discussion in *Quodlibet V*, q. 6 (Paris, 1518; repr. Louvain, 1961), fol. 160v-163v. Note in particular: “Sed appellatur hic intentio aliquid pertinens realiter ad simplicitatem essentiae alicuius, natum praecise concipi absque aliquo alio a quo non

of a genus and specific difference. "Animal" and "rational" differ intentionally; they enter into composition to form the species "man." In conceiving of animality one does not at all conceive of rationality, and one can of course conceive of animals that are irrational. According to Henry, an intentional distinction is not reducible to a mere distinction of reason.¹⁶ As he observes in *Quodlibet X*, q. 7 (Christmas 1285), "animal" and "rational" cannot differ merely logically, for then they could not form a composition, and one would be incompatible with the opposite of the other. Moreover, if genus and difference were only logically distinct, each could be predicated of the other, and it would happen that the specific difference would coincide with the definition of the genus. One would then have to admit that "to be an animal" is the same as "to be rational." Furthermore, one should not say that a genus and difference differ really, for then the species composed from them would be only an accidental unity.¹⁷

differt re absoluta, quod similiter pertinet ad eandem. Unde dicitur intentio quasi intus tentio: eo quod mens conceptu suo in aliquid quod est in re aliqua determinate tendit, et non in aliquid aliud quod est aliquid eiusdem rei, ut sic super idem in re per intellectum, cuius est dividere ea quae sunt idem in re, formentur diversi conceptus, ut de diversis penes conceptum mentis, eisdem autem in re" (fol. 161rL). "Cum enim, ut dictum est, diversitas intentionum non potest esse nisi inter illa quae uniuntur in eodem secundum rem: ita quod conceptus unius penitus excludit conceptum alterius, et e converso ... vel ita quod aliquid quod est in conceptu unius excluditur extra illud quod est in conceptu alterius" (fol. 161vN).

¹⁶ Giles of Rome was among those who maintained that there could be no intermediate distinction between the real and logical distinctions. See his *Quaestiones de esse et essentia* q. 9 (Venice, 1503; repr. Frankfurt/Main, 1968), fol. 19v. Note in particular: "Secunda etiam distinctio non videtur conveniens: quia non videtur quod sit aliquod differre medium inter differre re et ratione ... Sed quod sit dare differre medium inter differre re et ratione non videtur intelligibile." For more on Henry's theory of distinctions, see J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand*, pp. 208-57.

¹⁷ *Henrici de Gandavo Quodlibet X*, ed. R. Macken (Leuven, 1981), p. 165. "Et quaero utrum videat tertio quod rationale et animal non differunt sola ratione sicut definitio et definitum, ut nullam faciant compositionem neque omnino fiat ex eis aliquod compositum, sed plus, non solum quoad differre secundum magis vel minus in eodem modo differendi secundum speciem, quemadmodum in Deo plus differunt sapientia et bonitas quam esse et vivere, sed quoad differre alio et alio modo differendi secundum speciem, quia faciunt aliquam compositionem in specie constituta ex ipsis? Et hoc ideo, quia nullo modo definitio est extra rationem et intellectum definiti nec e converso, sicut genus est extra rationem et intellectum differentiae et e converso. Nec etiam differunt re, et tantum quantum differunt substantia et accidens, quia tunc species constituta ex ipsis non esset unum per se, sed tantum per accidens, aut saltem non esset unum simplex in forma secundum rem. Sed medio modo, scilicet plus quam ratione sola et minus quam re. Re vera, nisi claudat oculum rationis luci veritatis, non potest hoc non videre. Clarum enim est quod differunt plus quam sola ratione. Aliter enim genus posset praedicari de

In sum, Henry regards the distinction between essence and existence as intermediate between the real and logical distinctions. He rejected quite harshly Giles' theory of real distinction, but he also refused to reduce the "intentional distinction" to a mere distinction of reason. If essence and actual existence were only logically distinct, then one could not understand an essence as not existing. According to Henry, the existence (*esse existentiae*) of a creature contains something not found in its essence, namely, a relation to God as to an efficient cause.

Giles' theory of real distinction was also rejected by Godfrey of Fontaines.¹⁸ As Godfrey observes in his *Quodlibet* III, q. 1 (Christmas, 1285), neither *ens* nor *esse* denotes some real addition to that of which it is predicated. Thus whether one construes being (*ens*) existentially, as when one says "this is," or whether one takes it predicationally, for example, "this is a man" or "this is white," by *esse* is not understood something other than that to which it is joined.¹⁹ According to Godfrey there is a real identity between *esse* and essence; any distinction between them is only logical (*secundum rationem*).²⁰

In the short version of *Quodlibet* III, q. 1, Godfrey brings a series of arguments against the real distinction. In one argument, he reasons that the notion of being (*ens*) when predicated of a subject adds less than the notion of "one" (*unum*), since being is included in every notion, while "one" makes an addition to the notion of being. Now "one" does not add something real to the essence of that of which it is predicated; therefore,

differentia et e converso, sicut definitio praedicatur de definito et e converso, nec esset differentia extra rationem generis nec e converso, sicut definitio non est extra rationem definiti nec e converso. Quae plane falsa sunt. Clarum etiam est quod differunt minus quam differentia realiter ex genere et differentia non constitueretur unum in forma simplici, quod est species, sicut non constituitur ex substantia et accidente, quod falsum est."

¹⁸ For an excellent presentation of Godfrey's thinking on essence and existence, see J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines* (Washington, 1981), pp. 39-99.

¹⁹ *Les quatre premiers Quodlibets de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. M. De Wulf and A. Pelzer (Louvain, 1904), p. 163. "Quocumque ergo modo accipiatur ens cum dicitur: hoc est simpliciter, vel hoc est homo, vel hoc est album, per esse non intelligitur aliud quam id ipsum cui adiungitur." For the dating of Godfrey's *Quodlibets*, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, pp. xxi-xxviii.

²⁰ Godfrey concisely states his view in *Quodlibet* IV, q. 2: "Sed mihi videtur quod esse existentiae et essentia omnino sint idem secundum rem et differunt solum secundum rationem et modum intelligendi et significandi, nullam omnino compositionem facientia, sicut nec currere et cursus vel huiusmodi" (p. 235).

neither does "being".²¹ A second argument is grounded on Aristotle's claim that "being" and "one" are one and the same because they add nothing to a third term to which they are joined. Thus man (*homo*), an existent man (*ens homo*), and one man (*unus homo*) all denote the same thing. Yet this would not be the case if being were to add a "thing" (*aliqua res*) to the essence of which it is predicated.²² A third argument is drawn from Averroes. Anything is a being either through its own essence or through something added to it. If the latter, then one may ask if this addition is a being through itself or through something else added to it. Either one will arrive at something which is a being *per se*, or an infinite regress will occur. Therefore, anything is a being through its own essence.²³ A fourth argument reasons that being (*ens*), entity (*entitas*), and essence signify really the same thing; they differ only in their manner of signifying. According to Godfrey, a concrete noun such as *currens* (one who runs), an abstract noun such as *cursus* (running), and a verb such as *currere* (to run) do not denote diverse things. Similarly, *essentia*, *ens*, and *esse*, which are related to each other as abstract noun, concrete noun, and verb, all signify really one and the same thing: the meaning (*res significata*) is the same in each, though the manner of signifying varies.²⁴

In defending a real identity of essence and existence Godfrey also rejects Henry's theory of intentional distinction. In *Quodlibet* III, q. 1 Godfrey advances several objections against Henry. In reply to the latter's

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 303: "Prima talis est. Ens minus habet addere quam unum, cum ratio entis includatur in omni ratione; non sic ratio unius quae se habet saltem ad rationem entis per additionem. Sed unum non addit aliquid reale super essentiam eius de quo dicitur. Ergo nec ens nec per consequens esse a quo ens dicitur."

²² *Ibid.* "Secunda talis est. Secundum Philosophum, quarto Metaphysicae, ens et unum sunt unum inter se quia nihil addunt tertio cui adiunguntur. Unde secundum ipsum, homo, ens homo, et unus homo non dicunt aliud et aliud sed id ipsum. Sed hoc non esset si ens adderet aliquam rem super essentiam eius de quo dicitur ens." For Aristotle, see *Meta.* IV, 2 (1003b25ff).

²³ *Les quatre premiers Quodlibets de Godefroid de Fontaines*, p. 303. "Tertia talis est, et est ratio Commentatoris ibidem. Unumquodque aut est ens per essentiam suam sive per se aut per aliquid additum. Si per aliquid additum, de illo quaeretur per quid est ens; et si est ens per se, eadem ratione standum erat in primo ponendo quod primum erat ens per se. Si autem ad hoc ponatur quod illud sit ens per aliud, ita etiam erit de illo alio, et ibit in infinitum. Relinquitur ergo quod unumquodque sit ens per se et non per aliquam rem additam et sic sequitur idem quod prius." For the Averroistic source of this argument, see *In IV Meta.* (Venice, 1562), Vol. 8, fol. 67v.

²⁴ *Les quatre premiers Quodlibets de Godefroid de Fontaines*, pp. 303-4. "Quarta talis est. Nomen concretum et nomen abstractum et verbum non dicunt diversas res, sicut patet de istis: *currens*, *cursus* et *currere*. Ergo a simili nec ista: *essentia*, *ens* et *esse*, quae se habent sicut nomen abstractum et nomen concretum et verbum."

contention that *esse existentiae* adds to essence a relation to God in the order of efficient causality, Godfrey counters that by means of a relation a thing does not enjoy substantial being (*esse simpliciter*) but only relative being (*ad aliud esse*). He also rejects the claim that the operation of an agent could terminate in a relation or in something relative. Moreover, the existence of a relation naturally presupposes the existence of its foundation. It would follow (on Henry's theory), that an essence would have to be understood to exist before it could be understood to have a relation to existence. Godfrey infers that in addition to the relation by which an existing essence is referred actually to its cause, there must be something in it by which it is formally determined in its substantial being.²⁵

II. JAMES' THEORY OF ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE

Turning now to James' own discussions of the essence-*esse* distinction, one sees that his own view develops out of careful reflection on the views of his contemporaries. In explicating his thinking on this issue I shall consider his texts in their chronological order.

A. Quodlibet I, q. 4 (1293)

James first and most extensive treatment of the relationship between essence and existence is found in *Quodlibet I*, q. 4, where he is asked whether creation can be preserved if *esse* and essence do not really differ.²⁶ The phrasing of this question calls to mind the position of Giles of Rome, and indeed the opening objection, which argues that the real distinction is needed to preserve the doctrine of creation, is based on the analogous character of generation and creation.²⁷ James begins his reply

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175. "... quoniam per respectum non habet res esse simpliciter et absolute, sed tantum ad aliud esse, nec operatio alicuius agentis terminatur per se ad aliquem respectum vel ad aliquid respectivum. Operatio autem creatoris terminatur ad esse creaturae, et omnis relatio in suo esse praesupponit naturaliter esse sui fundamenti, et sic oportet praeintelligi essentiam esse antequam intelligatur aliquis respectus eius ad esse et cetera. Praeter ergo huiusmodi respectum quo essentia existens dicitur actualiter ad suam causam, oportet in ea esse etiam intelligi aliquid quo formaliter determinetur ad esse simpliciter et absolute."

²⁶ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, ed. E. Ypma (Würzburg, 1968), pp. 43-61 ("Utrum salvari posset creatio si non differret realiter esse et essentia in creaturis").

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43:2-6. "Sicut enim se habent materia et forma in generatione, sic se habent esse et essentia in creatione. Sed si materia et forma realiter non differrent, non posset salvari generatio. Ergo similiter si essentia et esse non differrent realiter non posset salvari creatio."

by distancing himself from Giles' position. He observes that if essence and existence in no way really differ in creatures, then the doctrine of creation cannot be preserved; however, if they do not differ really in the manner in which some claim, still creation can be maintained.²⁸ Thus James agrees with Giles' claim that the doctrine of creation requires that there be more than a merely logical or intentional distinction between *esse* and essence. However, one can expect that his theory of real distinction is going to differ quite markedly from the one advanced by Giles.

James's discussion in *Quodlibet* I, q. 4 is divided into four parts: first, he briefly explains the meaning of the terms "essence" and "*esse*"; secondly, he states the various opinions that have been held on the essence-*esse* relation; thirdly, he presents his own view; finally, he explains how creation entails a real distinction between essence and *esse*. With regard to the first point, James tells us that by "essence" he understands any predicamental reality (*res predicamentalis*) taken in itself and as distinct from others, whether belonging to the category of substance or of accident. Like being (*ens*), essence is analogously common to all the categories. As substance is being in an absolute sense (*ens simpliciter*), while accident is being in a qualified sense (*ens secundum quid*), so when essence is predicated simply and absolutely it means a thing (*res*) belonging to the category of substance. An accident, on the other hand, is an essence only in a qualified sense.²⁹ With regard to *esse* James distinguishes three possible meanings. First, *esse* can be understood as a noun (*nominaliter*). In this sense it means the same as essence, just as "to read" (*legere*) viewed as a noun means the same as "reading" (*lectio*). This is the manner in which *esse* is understood by Boethius and Aristotle, and by those who speak of an *esse essentiae*.³⁰ In a second sense, *esse* can be

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43:14-8. "Ad istam quaestionem sine praeiudicio, immo cum debita reverentia cuiuscumque opinionis, videtur mihi esse dicendum quod, si nullo modo different realiter essentia et esse in creaturis, non posset salvati creatio. Si tamen non different realiter illo modo quo doctores quidam ponunt ea differre, posset nihilominus salvati creatio."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44:28-35. "Quantum igitur ad primum, sciendum est quod nomine essentiae intelligi potest quaelibet res praedicamentalis secundum se sumpta et ut est ab alia distincta, sive sit res praedicamenti substantiae sive accidentis. Essentia enim commune est omnibus praedicamentis sicut et ens et eodem modo communitatis. Verum quia substantia est ens simpliciter, accidens vero secundum quid, ideo cum dicitur essentia simpliciter et absolute, intelligitur res praedicamenti substantiae. Accidens enim non est essentia simpliciter, sed essentia quaedam."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 44:48-58. "De esse autem sciendum est quod esse potest tripliciter sumi. Uno enim modo sumitur nominaliter. Infinitivi enim secundum grammaticos possunt nominaliter sumi. Et hoc modo esse idem est quod essentia, sicut legere nominaliter

taken as a verb (*verbaliter*), insofar as it signifies the act of being (*actus essendi*). In this sense *esse* means the same as "to exist" (*existere*): it refers to actual existence, and it signifies the same as the verb "is", as when we say "a man is" or "God is."³¹ Thirdly, *esse* can be taken as a verb (*verbaliter*), though not as signifying the act of existence, but rather the relation of a predicate inhering in a subject. In this sense *esse* functions as the copula.³² In the present text, James tells us, he will understand *esse* in the second sense as the act of being. The question thus becomes one of determining the kind of distinction present between a substantial essence and its act of being.³³

Having clarified the terms, James next sets forth the main positions on the essence-*esse* relationship that were defended by his contemporaries. He suggests that the current dispute among theologians concerning essence and *esse* has its origins in an older philosophical debate concerning the meaning of being (*ens*). He finds this to be reasonable, since *ens* and *esse* seem to mean the same thing. According to James, philosophers have

sumptum idem est quod lectio. Et secundum hunc modum sumitur esse a Boetio, in *Libro De Hebdomadibus*, cum dicit: 'Diversum est esse, et id quod est.' Et similiter in aliis regulis consequentibus, sicut patet per expositionem Commentatoris ibidem, qui dicit quod esse ibi accipitur pro essentia vel subsistentia. Similiter autem et Aristoteles frequenter hoc modo accipit esse pro essentia scilicet et quidditate. Esse autem sic acceptum est illud quod dicitur esse essentiae id est quod est ipsa essentia." Here the "Commentator" refers to Gilbert of Poitiers. For Gilbert's commentary see N. M. Häring, ed., *The Commentaries on Boethius by Gilbert of Poitiers* (Toronto, 1966), pp. 193-5.

³¹ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, pp. 44:59-45:63. "Alio modo sumitur esse verbaliter, secundum quod significat actum essendi. Nam verba significant per modum actionis vel passionis; et hoc modo esse idem significat quod existere. Et hoc est esse quod dicitur actualis existentiae et significat idem quod hoc verbum est quando praedicatur secundo adiacens, ut cum dicitur: homo est vel Deus est."

³² *Ibid.*, p. 45:64-70. "Tertio esse et est sumitur verbaliter, non tamen dicit actum existendi, nec aliquem actum secundum se, licet significet per modum actus, sed dicit habitudinem inhaerentiae praedicamenti ad subiectum; et sic est copula. Et hoc est illud est quod praedicatur tertio adiacens, ut cum dicitur: homo est animal. Dicitur enim praedicari quia magis se tenet ex parte praedicati. Dicitur autem tertium adiacens, eo modo quo medium dicitur tertium respectu extremorum quae copulat."

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 45:75-86. "De esse igitur primo et tertio modo sumpto non procedit quaestio, sed de esse secundo modo accepto. Quod quidem, licet possit accipi communiter in omnibus entibus, speciali tamen modo in substantia, quae sicut habet essentiam simpliciter, sic et existere. Accidentia vero, sicut non habent essentiam simpliciter sed secundum quid, sic etiam nec existere. Unde et quantum ad dubitationem de differentia essentiae et esse, nihil refert accipere ipsum esse communiter vel specialiter. Sed quia in quaestione fit mentio de creatione, quae principaliter ad substantiam terminatur, et etiam quia simpliciter et absolute nominatur esse, ideo videtur quaestio contrahi ad esse substantiale, sicut ad essentiam substantialem, ut supra dictum est. De his enim magis est sermo apud doctores."

understood *ens* in two different ways. Aristotle maintained that *ens* signifies the essence of that of which it is predicated, such that anything exists and is called a "being" through its own essence.³⁴ On the other hand, Avicenna claimed that *ens* signifies an intention or disposition superadded to that of which it is predicated. On this view a thing would be called a being not through its own essence but by something added to it, just as a thing is said to be white or black by means of something added to it. Thus Avicenna maintained that *ens* denotes an accident or accidental disposition in that of which it is predicated.³⁵

Similarly, theologians have spoken about *esse* in various ways. According to one view, *esse* does not denote a thing (*res*) distinct from essence. If there is a distinction between the two, it is only according to reason (*secundum rationem*).³⁶ This position, which would seem Aristotelian in its inspiration, defends a merely logical distinction between essence and *esse*. As we have noted, this was the position of Godfrey of Fontaines.

A second theory maintains that *esse* denotes a thing (*res*) distinct from essence. Although an essence is an actuality, it does not by itself enable a thing to exist actually. Another actuality, namely "actual being" (*esse actuale*), must be added to it. Though added to essence, *esse* is not a predicamental accident; rather, it belongs to the category of substance. It is neither form, nor matter, nor something composed of matter and form. Instead *esse* is a certain superadded act by which the composite itself and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 45:90-46:101. "His itaque praemissis ad intellectum quaestionis, videndum est quod de differentia essentiae et esse diversi doctores opinati sunt. Circa quod sciendum quod, sicut de ente fuit diversus modus loquendi apud philosophos, sic et de esse apud doctores modernos. Fortassis autem diversitas loquendi de ente origo fuit et occasio diversimode loquendi de esse; et rationabiliter. Nam ens et esse idem videntur importare, sicut legere et legens. Fuit autem apud philosophos duplex modus dicendi de ente. Aristoteles enim, in *IV Metaphysicae*, dicit quod ens significat essentiam omnis eius de quo dicitur, ita quod unumquodque est et dicitur ens per suam essentiam. Cui et eius commentator Averroes assentit declarans hoc necessario esse dicendum." For Aristotle see *Meta.* IV, 2 (1003b25ff.). For Averroes see *In IV Meta.*, fol. 65v-66r.

³⁵ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 46:102-7. "Avicenna vero dixit quod ens significat intentionem seu dispositionem superadditam illi de quo dicitur, ita quod unumquodque dicitur ens non per essentiam suam, sed per aliquid superadditum, sicut res aliqua dicitur alba vel nigra per aliquid superadditum, quod est accidens illi rei. Unde posuit quod ens dicit accidens sive accidentalem dispositionem in eo de quo praedicatur." James' source for this reference to Avicenna would seem to be the well-known comment of Averroes: "Avicenna autem peccavit multum in hoc, quod existimavit, quod unum et ens significant dispositiones additas essentiae rei" (*In IV Meta.*, fol. 67r).

³⁶ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 46:108-11.

everything in it exist. Thus it is a thing (*res*) distinct from essence.³⁷ This view, which asserts a real distinction between essence and *esse*, is exactly the position defended by Giles of Rome. There is no indication that James also is thinking of Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, the descriptions of essence as an actuality and *esse* as a thing (*res*) are Aegidian, not Thomistic.³⁸

Finally, a third theory maintains an intermediate position. It denies that *esse* denotes a thing (*res*) distinct from essence; instead, *esse* differs from essence intentionally. On this view *esse* simply denotes the essence with a relation to its cause. This intentional distinction is less than a real distinction but more than a logical one. James cites Robert Grosseteste as a source for this theory, although he notes that later writers have also adopted this position and have added some refinements to it.³⁹ Most likely James has in mind Henry of Ghent, who defended this theory in his

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46:112-20. "Alii vero dicunt quod esse dicit rem aliam ab essentia. Nam, ut dicunt, licet essentia sit actualitas quaedam, ista tamen actualitas non sufficit ad hoc ut res dicatur actu existere, sed oportet quod superaddatur ei quaedam alia actualitas; et hoc vocatur esse actuale. Quod quidem non est accidens tamquam ad genus accidentis pertinens, magis autem pertinet ad praedicamentum substantiae. Non tamen est forma neque materia neque compositum ex his, sed est actus quidam superadditus per quem compositum ipsum et omnia quae sunt in composito dicuntur existere. Et ita est res alia ab essentia."

³⁸ For Giles' claim that essence denotes an actuality see *Theoremata de esse et essentia*, pp. 52-8. Further support for the claim that this theory of real distinction is that of Giles of Rome may be found in James' remarks later in the text, when he has to criticize this theory: "Et licet non videatur esse aliquid cogens ad ponendum huiusmodi esse, negari tamen aut improbari non debet tamquam aliquid falsum aut impossibile, praecipue cum excellentes doctores hoc posuerint, qui nobis multorum bonorum causa fuerunt et ad quorum altissimum intellectum, quem de hoc et de multis aliis pulcris theorematibus habuerunt, ego et mihi similes ascendere ac pervenire non sumus idonei" (p. 54:379-84). The phrase "pulcris theorematibus" seems to be a very clear reference to Giles' *Theoremata de esse et essentia*.

³⁹ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, pp. 46:121-47:134. "Alii vero ponunt quod esse non dicit aliam rem ab essentia, tamen differt ab essentia intentione; quod quidem est differre minus quam re et plus quam ratione. Nam, ut dicunt, esse dicit essentiam cum respectu ad agens; essentia autem cum huiusmodi respectu non videtur dicere aliam rem a se ipsa sine huiusmodi respectu, sed dicit aliam intentionem. Hunc autem modum dicendi videtur aliquantulum tangere Lincolniensis circa principium, *II Posteriorum*, ubi dicit quod 'esse dictum de causa prima indicat ipsam essentiam ipsam omnino simplicem causae primae. Dictum vero de aliis non praedicat nisi ordinationem et dependentiam eorum ab ente primo quod per se est. Et haec ordinatio et dependentia nihil multiplicat in essentia dependente.' Sed alii posteriores hunc modum dicendi magis expresserunt et declaraverunt, et ad ipsum aliqua addiderunt. Narrare autem rationes harum opinionum et mutuas ad se invicem obviationes atque defensiones brevitatis gratia dimittatur ad praesens." For the text of Grosseteste see his *In II Post. Anal.* c. 1 (Venice, 1514; repr. Frankfurt/Main, 1966), fol. 33v.

well-known quarrel with Giles.

Having distinguished the various positions on the *esse*/essence relationship, James next sets forth his own view. He takes as his point of departure the following quote from Anselm: "Just as light (*lux*), to give light (*lucere*), and that which gives light (*lucens*) are related to each other, so are essence (*essentia*), to be (*esse*), and that which is (*ens*), i.e., that which exists (*existens*) or subsists (*subsistens*)."⁴⁰ James notes that "light" (*lux*) and "to give light" (*lucere*) are related to each other as the abstract to the concrete, for "to give light" denotes light itself by way of action, and verbs are said to be concrete in their significations. Consequently, *esse* and essence are related to each other as the concrete to the abstract, and as the concrete differs from the abstract, so *esse* differs from essence.⁴¹

In order to determine the kind of distinction found between essence and *esse* James turns to consider the significations of abstract and concrete terms. He observes that a concrete term always signifies more than an abstract term, since the latter signifies only form, while the former signifies both form and its subject. Sometimes a concrete term signifies really more (*plura secundum rem*) than an abstract term, as in the case of creatures, where form and subject are distinct. At other times, a concrete term signifies only logically more (*plura tantum secundum rationem*), as in the case of God, in whom form and subject are distinct only according to our mode of understanding.⁴² Furthermore, although the concrete signifies

⁴⁰ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 47:136-40. "Diversis igitur opinionibus de differentia essentiae et esse utcumque decursis, quid mihi de hoc probabiliter tenendum videatur, consequenter exponam. Propter quod sciendum quod, sicut dicit Anselmus, *Monologion* 6 capitulo: 'Sicut se habent ad invicem lux, lucere, et lucens, sic sunt ad se invicem essentia, esse et ens, hoc est existens sive subsistens.'" For the text of Anselm see *Monologion* c. 6, ed. Schmitt (Edinburgh, 1946), Vol. I, p. 20.

⁴¹ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 47:141-8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 47:149-48:158. "Ad videndum autem differentiam concreti et abstracti, considerandum est, an significant idem vel diversum. Ad quod videtur esse dicendum quod semper concretum plura significat quam abstractum. Nam abstractum significat solum formam; concretum vero significat formam et subiectum. Sed quandoque concretum significat plura secundum rem quam abstractum, ut in creaturis, ubi non est idem forma et subiectum formae, nec habens et quod habetur. Quandoque vero significat plura tantum secundum rationem, ut in Deo, in quo idem est habens et quod habetur, et in quo non est aliud forma et subiectum formae, nisi secundum modum intelligendi." Cf. James' remarks in *Quodlibet* III, q. 7: "... sciendum quod abstractum dicit formam secundum se, ut iustitia, concretum autem, ut iustus, dicit formam ut in subsistentia. In creaturis autem forma subsistit in subiecto quod est aliud re ab ipsa forma; et ideo in creaturis concretum et abstractum differunt re, propter id quod concretum significat ex consequenti scilicet subiectum. In Deo autem forma non subsistit in alio; et ideo concretum et abstractum differunt in Deo secundum modum" (*Disputatio tertia de*

both subject and form it does not signify them in an equal manner. A concrete term signifies form primarily and a subject secondarily. James supports this by referring to the teaching of Averroes and Anselm on denominative names. The latter were what Aristotle had called paronyms, i.e., terms which derive their name from some other term, but differ from it in their ending. Aristotle gave as an example the term "grammarian" (*grammatikos*), which is derived from "grammar" (*grammatike*).⁴³ Identifying denominative names with concrete names, James observes that both Averroes and Anselm had held that a denominative name signifies a subject and an accident, but the accident primarily and the subject secondarily. By "subject" one means not only substance, but also everything that is joined with the accident.⁴⁴

Consequently, when one considers an abstract term and a concrete term in its primary meaning, both signify the same thing and are identical. However, when one regards a concrete term in its secondary meaning, it differs from an abstract term. This difference is real in the case of creatures and only logical in the case of God. Applying this to essence and *esse*, James reasons that in creatures *esse* signifies primarily essence and secondarily everything which is joined to an essence and without which the latter does not and could not exist actually. Presumably he has in mind all of the individuating accidents that are found in existing things. Therefore, in the case of creatures there is a real distinction between *esse* and essence.⁴⁵

quolibet, ed. E. Ypma [Würzburg, 1973], pp. 100:221-101:228).

⁴³ *Categories* 1, 1a12-16.

⁴⁴ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 48:158-66. "Licet autem concretum significet subiectum et formam, non tamen aeque principaliter; sed primo et principaliter formam, ex consequenti autem subiectum. Unde dicit Commentator, in *V Metaphysicae*, quod nomen denominativum, quod idem est quod concretum, significat subiectum et accidens, sed accidens primo, subiectum autem secundario. Et Anselmus dicit, in libro *De Grammatico*, quod nomen denominativum significat accidens per se et subiectum per aliud. Et licet per subiectum intelligatur substantia specialiter, tamen in nomine subiecti etiam includitur omne id cui accidens est coniunctum." For Averroes see *In V. Meta.*, fol. 117r. For Anselm see *De Grammatico*, ed. Schmitt (Edinburgh, 1946), Vol. I, pp. 156-7, 159-61. For more on Anselm's theory of paronymy, see D. Henry, *The De Grammatico of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy* (South Bend, 1964), esp. cc. 4-5; *The Logic of Saint Anselm* (London, 1967), pp. 31-116.

⁴⁵ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 48:173-9. "Cum igitur, ut ex dictis patet, essentia et esse se habeant sicut abstractum et concretum, quantum ad principale significatum idem sunt, quantum vero ad secundarium, in Deo quidem differunt solum secundum rationem, in creaturis autem differunt etiam secundum rem, ita quod esse significat principaliter ipsam essentiam; ex consequenti autem omne quod essentiae coniunctum est et sine quo essentia non invenitur nec inveniri potest in actu. Et hoc in creaturis est aliud secundum

James goes on to note that the real distinction between essence and *esse* is grounded on the composite character of creaturely being. No created essence in and by itself can exist actually; rather, in its actual existence it is always found joined with another principle that enters into real composition with it.⁴⁶ It is evident that he does not mean a composition of essence and existential act; instead the composition is one that remains wholly in the order of essence. James makes this point explicit by introducing the Boethian distinction between *esse* and *id quod est*:

Hence in the real composition which is found in a creature there differs in it *esse* and *quod est*, that is, essence and that which exists (*existens*) or being (*ens*), because according to Boethius, in his *De Hebdomadibus*, 'In every simple being *esse* and *id quod est* are identical, but in a composite being *esse* and the thing itself are distinct,' for *esse* and *id quod est* are diverse in it. So too, from the same real composition there arises a diversity between essence and *esse*. For *esse* and *ens* denote the same thing. Whence if essence and *ens*, or *id quod est*, differ really (*secundum rem*), it is necessary to say that essence and *esse* differ really (*secundum rem*).⁴⁷

Boethius had argued that in every creature there is found a real composition of *esse* and *id quod est*. James interprets the Boethian *esse* to mean *essentia*, and *id quod est* to mean *ens*. Hence he sees the Boethian distinction to be between essence and *ens*. Since *ens* and *esse* have the same signification, James reasons to a real composition of *essentia* and *esse*.

It is important to note that Boethius plays an important role in the medieval debate on essence and existence and was frequently cited as an authority for the real distinction. In his commentary on the *De hebdomadibus*, Thomas Aquinas understood the distinction between *id quod est* and *esse* in terms of his own teaching on essence and *esse*. Thomas took the Boethian *esse* to mean the act of being; *id quod est* refers

rem ab essentia."

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48:180-2. "Nulla enim creata essentia potest secundum se et solitaria existere in actu, sed semper invenitur secundum existentiam actualem alii coniuncta quod facit cum ipsa compositionem realem."

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 48:182-49:190. "Unde, sicut ex compositione reali quae invenitur in creatura, differt in ipsa *esse* et *quod est*, idest *essentia* et *existens* vel *ens*; quia secundum Boetium, in libro *De Hebdomadibus*: 'Omne simplex *esse* suum et *id quod est* unum habet, omni autem composito aliud est *esse*, aliud ipsum est,' diversum enim est in ipso *esse* et *id quod est*, sic ex eadem compositione reali provenit diversitas inter *essentiam* et *esse*. Nam *esse* et *ens* idem dicunt. Unde si *essentia* et *ens*, vel *id quod est*, differunt secundum rem, oportet dicere quod *essentia* et *esse* secundum rem differunt." For the text of Boethius, see *Boethius: Theological Tractates*, tr. H. F. Steward, E. K. Rand, S. J. Tester (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 40-42.

to the subject of being, which "exists" insofar as it participates the act of being. Thus in the case of creatures there is a real distinction between *quod est* and *esse*.⁴⁸ Similarly, Giles of Rome also interpreted the Boethian axioms as supporting the real distinction.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Henry of Ghent rejected this reading of Boethius. Henry thought that the distinction between *esse* and *id quod est* should be understood as a distinction between God and the creature. According to Henry's reading *esse* refers not to created *esse*, but rather to uncreated *esse*. Thus he finds no support in Boethius for the supposed real distinction between essence and existence.⁵⁰ The general consensus among modern historians is that the Boethian distinction between *id quod est* and *esse* is a distinction between an individual subject and its form. The Thomistic real distinction is usually said not to be found in Boethius' text.⁵¹ As we have seen, James of Viterbo also seems to adopt this reading of Boethius.

When we read further in James' text it becomes clear that the distinction between essence and *esse* simply mirrors the distinction between nature and supposit:

And because '*id quod est*' is called the supposit, it can even be said that as essence and supposit differ, so do essence and *esse*. Now although the term supposit signifies primarily essence, secondarily it signifies all of the other things which are conjoined to an essence. Hence according to John Damascene, the supposit is the substance with its accidents. And so in its secondary meaning supposit differs really from essence. And one should speak similarly about essence and *esse*, as is clear from what has now been said.⁵²

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Boetii De hebdomadibus*, Leonine ed., Vol. 50 (Rome, 1996), pp. 270-4.

⁴⁹ For a thorough analysis of Giles' reading of Boethius, see P. Nash, "Giles of Rome on Boethius' '*Diversum est esse et id quod est*'," *Mediaeval Studies* 12 (1950), pp. 57-91.

⁵⁰ *Henrici de Gandavo Quodlibet I*, pp. 57-62. Note in particular: "Quid ergo mirum si diversum sit esse et quod est, quia diversi sunt Deus et creatura. Unde esse non supponit ibi pro esse creato ... sed pro esse increato" (p. 58). Giles of Rome will charge Henry with having fundamentally misread Boethius' text. See his *De esse et essentia*, q. 9, fol. 18vb-19ra.

⁵¹ For a review of the secondary literature on this problem in Boethius, see R. McNerny, *Boethius and Aquinas* (Washington, DC, 1990), pp. 161-98. McNerny proposed to show in this work that Aquinas' reading of Boethius was correct, i.e., that Boethius did teach what Aquinas said he did. For a critical review of this claim, see A. Côté, "La question de l'*esse* chez Thomas d'Aquin et Boèce," *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 92 (1994), pp. 327-35.

⁵² *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 49:191-8. "Et quia id quod est dicitur ipsum suppositum, ideo etiam dici potest quod, sicut differt essentia et suppositum habens essentiam, sic differt essentia et esse. Suppositum autem, licet significet principaliter ipsam essentiam, ex consequenti tamen significat omnia alia quae sunt essentiae coniuncta. Unde secundum Damascenum, suppositum est substantia cum accidentibus, et ideo,

In the case of creatures, "supposit" primarily signifies essence and secondarily all of the individuating notes which must be added to an essence if it is to possess real existence. In any finite supposit one will find a composition of substance and accidents. Therefore, a finite supposit will contain more than what is expressed by its essence, for no essence whether substantial or accidental can exist unless it enters into composition with something else. Thus in creatures nature and supposit are really distinct.

Just as nature cannot be identified with supposit, so too on James' theory there cannot be a mere identity between essence and *esse*, for in its secondary meaning *esse* differs from essence:

Thus *esse* and *ens* primarily signify essence, and secondarily other things which are conjoined or can be conjoined to an essence, without which an essence is not found nor can be found to be actual, and without which something is not called an *esse* or *ens*. And so with regard to their primary meaning, *lucere* and *lux*, *vivere* and *vita*, and *esse* and *essentia* are the same. But with regard to their secondary meaning they differ, as has been said before. And because of this difference *lux* is not called *lucere* or *lucens*, nor is *essentia* called *esse* or *ens*. Rather, something having essence (*habens essentiam*) is called an *esse* and an *ens*. Now the latter is the supposit. Hence according to this it can be said that *esse* and *ens* denote the essence itself as it exists in the supposit, and as it constitutes the supposit, because they denote the essence as conjoined to other factors which are implied secondarily by the supposit.⁵³

Given these remarks, one might wonder whether it is truly correct to speak of James as having defended a real distinction between essence and *esse*. When *esse* is understood in its primary meaning, it is the same as essence; it is only in its secondary meaning that a real distinction occurs. Later in

quantum ad id quod significat ex consequenti, differt realiter ab essentia. Et similiter dicendum est de essentia et esse, sicut patet ex iam dictis." For the text of John Damascene, see his *Dialectica*, cc. 25-6, ed. O. Colligan (St. Bonaventure, NY, 1953), pp. 23-4.

⁵³ *Disputatio prima de quolibet*, p. 49:203-14. "Sic etiam esse et ens principaliter significant essentiam ipsam; ex consequenti autem alia quae coniunguntur vel coniungi possunt essentiae, sine quibus essentia non invenitur nec potest inveniri in actu, et sine quibus non dicitur aliquid esse vel ens. Et ideo, quantum ad principale significatum, idem est *lucere* et *lux*, et *vivere* et *vita*, et *esse* et *essentia*; quantum vero ad secundarium differunt, sicut praedictum est. Et propter hanc differentiam *lux* non dicitur *lucere* aut *lucens*, nec *essentia* dicitur *esse* aut *ens*; sed *habens essentiam* dicitur *esse* et *ens*. Hoc autem est suppositum. Unde secundum hoc posset dici quod *esse* et *ens* dicunt ipsam essentiam ut est in supposito, et ut constituit suppositum; quia dicunt essentiam ut coniunctam aliis quae per suppositum ex consequenti importantur."

the text James admits that in determining the degree of identity or diversity between essence and *esse* more weight should be given to the primary meaning of *esse*. Thus he concludes that essence and *esse* principally and simply (*principaliter et simpliciter*) are the same, but in a secondary (*ex consequenti*) and qualified sense (*secundum quid*) they are different. Although it is only in a qualified sense that he admits a distinction between essence and *esse*, James notes that such a distinction is necessary, for it arises from the composition necessarily found in any creature.⁵⁴

Be this as it may, James is convinced that his own theory can accommodate the traditional positions on essence and *esse*, and that it can reconcile the teaching of Aristotle and Avicenna on being. According to James, both Aristotle and Avicenna have grasped a part of the truth. Being (*ens*) in its primary meaning signifies the essence of that of which it is predicated. Thus what Aristotle and Averroes have said is true, namely, that anything is a being through its own essence (*per essentiam suam*).⁵⁵ However, being (*ens*) also has a secondary meaning. It signifies something superadded and accidental to a creature. In this sense, only God is a being through his own essence; every created being "is" only because something has been added to it (*per aliquid superadditum*). Thus no created essence can exist actually without entering into a composition with something really distinct from it. James notes that one can speak of this "addition" as an accident, in the sense in which something belonging to one category is "accidental" to something of another category, that is, because the one is outside the essence of the other. Therefore, there is truth in what Avicenna has said, namely, that anything is a being (*ens*) through something superadded to it.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 53:353-54:359. "Et quia identitas et diversitas magis debent considerari secundum principale significatum, ideo potest dici quod essentia et esse principaliter et simpliciter sunt idem, ex consequenti autem et secundum aliquid non idem. Quantumcumque autem haec differentia sit ex consequenti, est tamen necessaria, quia provenit ex compositione quae necessario invenitur in qualibet creatura; et ideo non est abicienda, sed consideratione digna."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 52:322-53:327. "Nam, quantum ad principale significatum, ens non aliud significat quam essentiam uniuscuiusque de quo dicitur, sicut album solam qualitatem dicitur significare de principali significato; et sic veritatem habet quod dicit de ente Aristoteles, et Commentator, scilicet quod unumquodque est ens per essentiam suam."

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53:328-38. "Quantum vero ad significatum secundarium, ens significat aliquid superadditum et accidens in creaturis, ita quod hoc modo omne ens creatum est ens per aliquid superadditum. Solus autem Deus est ens per suam essentiam. Nullius enim creaturae essentia invenitur aut inveniri potest in actu, sine coniunctione ad aliquid aliud, quod habet ad ipsam realem diversitatem. Et illud aliud dici potest accidens, eo modo quo res unius praedicamenti dicitur alii rei alterius praedicamenti accidere, quia non est ei essentialis: secundum quem modum substantia etiam accidit accidenti. Et sic habet

Similarly, each of the three main theories on essence and *esse* possesses some share of the truth. The first position, which defends a merely logical distinction between essence and *esse*, is reasonable if one takes into account the principal meaning of *esse*. However, if this theory means to exclude any difference between *esse* and *essentia*, then it is dubious, since *esse* at least secondarily denotes something diverse from essence.⁵⁷

The second position, which defends a real distinction, is also reasonable. But with respect to the way in which it is expounded it too is doubtful, for it assumes that *esse* is a certain actuality superadded to essence, which is neither matter nor form nor a composite of these nor an accident. According to James, there does not seem to be a compelling reason to posit this, and no authorities (whether philosophical or theological) can be found to support this theory. Avicenna's teaching on being and *esse* can be explained in other ways equally satisfactory without positing an actuality of this kind. Even Boethius' teaching in the *De hebdomadibus* does not require one to assume that *esse* is an actuality distinct from essence.⁵⁸

The third opinion, which posits an intentional distinction between *esse* and essence, maintains that *esse* adds to essence a relation to a cause. While essence denotes a relation to God as to an exemplar cause, *esse* denotes a relation to God as to an efficient cause. James finds this claim to be doubtful, since, although a creature is related to God as to an exemplar and efficient cause, it is not the case that all names signify this relation, but only such names as "created" (*creatum*), "produced" (*factum*), and "modelled" (*exemplatum*). Strictly speaking, neither *esse* nor essence

veritatem quod dicit Avicenna de ente, scilicet quod unumquodque est ens per aliquid superadditum, quia ens significat accedens et aliquid superadditum."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54:363-7. "Prima enim opinio, quae ponit quod essentia et esse non differunt realiter, si intelligatur quantum ad principale significatum rationalis est. Si vero intendat excludere omnimodam differentiam dubitabilis est, quia, ut iam patet ex dictis, saltem secundo diversum aliquid dicit esse ab essentia."

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 54:368-78. "Secunda vero opinio, quantum ad hoc quod ponit essentiam et esse realiter differre, rationalis est. Sed quantum ad modum ponendi, ut in hoc quod ponit quod esse est quaedam actualitas essentiae superaddita, quae neque est materia neque forma neque compositum neque accedens, dubitabilis est, tum quia non videtur esse aliqua ratio necessario cogens ad hoc ponendum, tum quia etiam nulla videtur posse induci auctoritas aut alicuius philosophi aut alicuius doctoris sacri quae hoc exprimat. Nam quod dicit Avicenna de ente et esse potest aliis modis aequè convenientibus exponi quam ponendo huiusmodi actualitatem. Auctoritas etiam Boetii, in libro *De Hebdomadibus*, ut ex superius dictis patet, non inducit ad ponendum tale esse quod sit quaedam actualitas alia ab essentia."

denotes a relation. Essence signifies a thing or nature simply in itself; *esse* in its primary meaning signifies the same as essence. Nevertheless, James does find an element of truth in this opinion. *Esse* in its secondary meaning signifies all of those accidents without which an essence cannot and does not exist actually. Among these is a relation to God as to an exemplar and efficient cause.⁵⁹

Having developed his own theory on the distinction between essence and existence, and having defended some manner of real distinction between them, in the final part of his discussion in Quodlibet I, q. 4 James explains why the doctrine of creation requires a real distinction of essence and *esse*. As we have noted, this was a favorite thesis of Giles of Rome, and as one might expect, James' understanding of it is quite different from that of Giles. According to James, Giles' position was motivated by the following argument. In everything which has been made and in every production there is necessarily a real diversity of factors, which are related to one another as potency to act. Strictly speaking, neither potency nor act alone is made, but rather potency is made under act (*potentia sub actu*) and act is made in the potency (*actus in potentia*). This is said to be what happens in the case of generation, whose principles are matter and form. Therefore, since creation is a kind of production (*factio*), it is necessary that in the creature there be diverse elements, which are related to each other as potency to act. Here the act to which creation refers is *esse*, since creation is said to terminate in *esse*. Thus Giles concluded that neither *esse* nor essence is made by itself, but an essence is made under *esse* (*essentia sub esse*), or *esse* is produced in the essence (*esse in essentia*).⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54:385-55:401. "Tertia vero opinio, quae ponit quod esse dicit supra essentiam respectum ad agens, videtur quidem esse dubitabilis quantum ad aliquid. Nam, licet creatura referatur ad Deum, et sicut ad causam exemplarem et sicut ad causam effectivum, non tamen sub quolibet nomine, sed solum sub aliquo nomine importante respectum; cuiusmodi sunt creatum, factum, exemplatum, et huiusmodi. Unde, cum nec essentia nec esse simpliciter dicta respectum important, non videtur quod esse dicat essentiam cum respectu ad agens. Sed secundum alium modum videtur haec positio esse rationalis. Dictum est enim quod esse significat ex consequenti omnia illa sine quibus essentia non invenitur nec inveniri potest actu, et inter ista est respectus ad agens; immo videtur speciali quodam modo et magis inter alia, quod esse ex consequenti significet respectum huiusmodi. Nullum enim accidens adeo inseparabiliter est annexum creatae essentiae sicut respectus ad Deum. Nam ab aliis accidentibus forte per divinam potentiam posset absolvi essentia creaturae, ut sine illis existeret; ab habitudine autem et respectu ad Deum nullatenus absolvi potest, quia non potest esse quod sit quid creatum et a Deo non dependeat."

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57:468-80.

In James' view this argument is not compelling. For in order to preserve an act-potency composition in creatures, it is not necessary to follow Giles in positing *esse* as a superadded actuality. In every creature there necessarily occurs a composition of substance and accidents, and hence a real diversity of many factors. James reasons that in every composite it is necessary that there be one ingredient which is primary and perfect, while the others are secondary and imperfect. The former has the character of an act; the latter of a potency. Strictly speaking, in a creature it is the substantial essence which has the character of an act, while accidents possess the nature of a potency. An accident is regarded as secondary and imperfect, since it depends upon substance as a cause of its being (*entitas*). In a qualified sense, however, it is substance which may be regarded as potency, and an accident as an act, because an accident gives *esse* to substance in a qualified sense (*secundum quid*).⁶¹

Therefore, in order to preserve the act-potency composition present in all creatures it is sufficient to appeal to the distinction between substance and accident. There is no need to introduce the Aegidian theory of essence and existence. James agrees with Giles that creation terminates in *esse*, but by *esse* he means not an actuality superadded to essence but rather the substantial essence as it is united with its accidents. Similarly, Giles' analogy between creation and generation needs to be qualified. While it is true that generation requires a real distinction between matter and form, it is not the case that matter and form are related in generation as essence and *esse* in creation. Instead, matter is to form as accident is to

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 57:486-58:507. "Quantum ad primum sciendum quod, et si non ponatur tale esse, tamen potest salvari convenienter in eo quod creatur realis diversitas aliquorum, quorum unum se habet ut potentia, reliquum vero ut actus, et quorum unum dicitur fieri in alio vel sub alio. Et potest etiam salvari quod creatio terminatur ad esse. Nam, ut ex supradictis patet et verum est, in omni creato necessario incidit compositio substantiae et accidentis, ac per hoc realis diversitas plurium. In omni autem composito ex pluribus oportet unum esse principale et perfectum, aliud autem vel alia minus principalia et imperfecta. Et illud quod est principale et perfectum habet magis rationem actus; quae autem sunt minus principalia et imperfecta habent rationem potentiae, ex hoc ipso quod a principali dependent. Et sic in composito creato ipsa essentia substantialis habet rationem actus. Accidens vero habet rationem potentiae simpliciter et absolute loquendo, quia essentia substantialis est principalis et perfecta, accidentalis autem est minus principalis et imperfecta et a substantiali dependens, sicut a causa suae entitatis. ... Et quamvis loquendo simpliciter et absolute substantia habeat rationem actus, accidens vero potentiae, tamen secundum quid et aliquo modo est e converso, quia accidens dat esse substantiae secundum quid; constituitur autem in esse per substantiam simpliciter."

substance.⁶² Generation differs from creation, since in the case of generation form which preexists potentially in matter comes to be actually in it. Matter then becomes a part of the thing generated. But this is not the case with creation: substance does not preexist potentially in an accident, since neither exists prior to being created. Instead substance and accident preexist potentially in the active power of God, and through creation they are brought into actual existence by God, who does not thereby become a part of creation.⁶³

B. De divinis praedicamentis, q. 1 (1293-4)

James' *De divinis praedicamentis* contains thirty-two questions, the first twenty-nine of which were disputed by him between his first and second Quodlibet. In the opening question he is concerned with the problem of whether God may truly be called a being, i.e., whether the proper and complete notion of being can be applied to God.⁶⁴ In his analysis of this problem one finds an examination of the term being (*ens*), and an analysis of the relationship between essence and *esse*. His discussion of these topics strongly resembles his earlier treatment in Quodlibet I, q. 4. With regard to the term being, James again notes a disagreement among the philosophers: on the one side, Aristotle and Averroes claim that being (*ens*) signifies the essence of that of which it is predicated; on the other side, Avicenna holds that being (*ens*) signifies an accidental disposition or intention superadded to that of which it is predicated.⁶⁵ From these two ways of speaking about being there arises a diversity of views among modern thinkers on the essence-*esse* relationship. James again accounts for this by noting that that *esse* and *ens* seem to

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 60:575-81. "Quod enim primo assumitur, scilicet quod essentia et esse sic se habent in creatione sicut materia et forma in generatione, non est concedendum, quia esse principaliter idem dicit quod essentia, ut dictum est; ex consequenti autem non idem, quia esse ex consequenti dicit illa quibus essentia est coniuncta. Sed melius secundum hoc diceretur quod sicut se habet materia et forma in generatione, sic se habet accidens et substantia in creatione, ut ostensum est."

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 61:598-605. "Potest autem et alio modo manifestari dissimilitudo creationis et generationis, quantum ad hoc quod tam in creato quam in generato oportet quod sit potentia et actus. Nam id quod generatur praeexistit potentia in materia quae postmodum est pars geniti; et ideo in generato oportet esse diversa realiter actum et potentiam, et generatio terminatur principaliter ad compositum ex diversis realiter. Id autem quod creatur praeexistit potentia in Deo qui non efficitur pars rei creatae."

⁶⁴ *Quaestiones de divinis praedicamentis I-X*, ed. E. Ypma (Rome, 1983), pp. 1-32 ("Utrum Deus dicatur vere ens").

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 5:114-6:134.

signify the same thing, namely the act of existing (*actus existendi*). *Esse* signifies the same as *existere*, while *ens* means the same as *existens*. However, if *esse* is taken as a noun (*nominaliter*), then it means the same as essence, just as *legere* viewed as a noun means the same as *lectio*. In this text, James tells us, he is going to follow common usage and take "essence" to mean the thing (*res*) itself to which the act of being (*actus essendi*) is attributed, and by *ens* he will understand the act of being.⁶⁶

Turning his attention to the modern debate on essence and *esse*, James observes that some thinkers, showing a preference for the teaching of Aristotle and Averroes, say that *esse* and essence differ only logically and in their manner of signifying, as for example, *currere* and *cursus*, *lucere* and *lux*, and *sapere* and *sapientia*. On this view, essence signifies the same reality as the act of being; thus the act of being that belongs to a thing is not other than the thing itself.⁶⁷ Other thinkers, drawing inspiration from Avicenna, claim that there is more than a merely logical distinction between essence and *esse*. Hence they say that *esse* denotes something superadded to essence. But here a disagreement arises. Some maintain that *esse* adds to essence a certain actuality, which is something absolute. Such an actuality could be called an "accident" of existing things, not because it is a predicamental accident, but rather because it is outside of the essence and definition of existing things. This theory, which would

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6:146-7:160. "Ex hac autem diversitate loquendi de ente apud philosophos, videtur provenisse diversitas modorum loquendi de esse et essentia apud modernos doctores. Nam esse et ens idem significare videntur, quia scilicet utrumque dicit actum existendi. Unde sicut esse idem significat quod existere, sic ens idem quod existens. Et sic eundem actum important; nisi forte esse sumatur nominaliter. Tunc enim idem est quod essentia, sicut legere nominaliter sumptum, idem est quod lectio; quamvis diceret aliquis, quod etiam essentia dicit actum essendi, sicut lectio dicit actum legendi. Verumtamen, secundum communem accipiendi modum, essentia dicitur res ipsa cui attribuitur actus essendi. Unde et Avicenna non distinxit essentiam ab esse vel ente, sed distinxit rem vel quidditatem. Verumtamen, accipiamus nunc essentiam pro ipsa re cui convenit esse; ens vero pro ipso actu essendi."

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7:161-73. "Quidam igitur, considerantes magis dicta Aristotelis et Commentatoris, quae multum videntur rationabilia, dixerunt quod essentia et esse non differunt nisi ratione et secundum modum significandi, sicut currere et cursus, lucere et lux, vel, secundum verba Augustini, sicut sapere et sapientia. Nam secundum *Augustinum*: 'Sicut ab eo quod est sapere dicta est sapientia,' 'sic ab eo quod est esse dicta est essentia.' Et si quidem hoc intelligeret quod essentia sub nomine essentiae dicit eundem actum quem dicit esse, tunc sine contradictione verum est. Sed isti intendunt plus dicere, quod non solum essentia sub nomine essentiae, sed etiam essentia ut res vel quidditas, vel quocumque nomine nominetur, eandem rem dicit cum actu essendi, ita quod actus essendi, conveniens cuilibet re, non est aliud ab ipsa re." Here James quotes from Augustine's *De Trinitate* V, c. 2 (CCSL 50.207), and *De Civitate Dei* XII, c. 2 (CCSL 48.357).

seem to be the position of Giles of Rome, posits a real distinction between essence and *esse*.⁶⁸ Other thinkers hold that *esse* adds to essence not something absolute, but simply a relation to God in the order of actual efficient causality. Thus *esse* differs from essence not really but only in intention. This is quite obviously the theory of Henry of Ghent.⁶⁹

Having sketched the three main positions on the essence-*esse* relationship that were common in his day, James next gives his own view, which he regards as another way of maintaining that being (*ens*) denotes something superadded to essence. He begins by laying down two points. First, no created thing exists or could exist simply by itself (*solitaria*), not conjoined to something. For example, an accident does not exist unless it is joined to substance, and a substance does not exist unless it is joined to accidents. All creatures are characterized by mutability, and therefore composition. Such a composition cannot be merely one of essence with something relative (as in the theory of Henry), but also requires a union of essence with something absolute. Therefore, every created being has something absolute united with it, without which it does not and cannot exist.⁷⁰

Secondly, James notes that created things, when they are joined

⁶⁸ *Quaestiones de divinis praedicamentis I-X*, pp. 7:174-8:186. "Alii vero, considerantes dicta Avicennae et Algazelis, sicut patet de *doctoribus* qui primo hoc expresse tetigerunt, ponunt quod *esse* differt ab *essentia* non solum ratione, sed amplius quam ratione, et quod *esse* dicit aliquid superadditum *essentiae*. Sed isti diversificantur. Quidam enim dicuntur quod *esse* supra *essentiam* addit quamdam actualitatem, quae est aliquid absolutum, ita quod *esse* actuale est quaedam actualitas superaddita rebus quae dicuntur *esse*. Haec autem actualitas potest dici accidens rebus quae dicuntur *esse*; non quia in rei veritate sit accidens, quasi ad genus accidentis pertinens; magis autem reducitur ad praedicamentum substantiae; sed dicitur accidens quia est extra *essentiam* et rationem rerum quae *esse* dicuntur." Once again the description of *esse* as a *quaedam actualitas superaddita* seems to indicate that James has in mind the theory of Giles of Rome.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8:193-6. "Alii vero dicunt quod *esse* addit quidem super *essentiam* non aliquid absolutum, sed habitudinem ad Deum in ratione efficientis causae secundum actum. Unde dicunt quod superaddit *esse* supra *essentiam* aliquid differens non re sed intentione. ..."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9:222-34. "Est enim primo considerandum quod nulla res creata existere invenitur solitaria et alii non coniuncta, immo nec existere potest; quia accidens non existit nisi coniunctum substantiae, et substantia non existit nisi coniuncta accidenti. Eo enim ipso quod creatum est, non est solitarium. Nam omne creatum mutabile est et defectibile et est compositum. Non potest intelligi mutatio, nisi per separationem alicuius ab aliquo et coniunctionem alicuius cum aliquo. Similiter et compositio plura requirit. Et non solum requirit mutatio et compositio coniunctionem ad aliquid relatum et ad habitudinem, immo etiam ad aliquid absolutum; quia secundum relationem non attenditur per se mutatio, nec relatio facit compositionem cum suo fundamento. Nullum igitur creatum, sive sit substantia sive accidens, existit solitarium et alii non coniunctum."

together, remain essentially distinct. Categories (*praedicamenta*) and predicable things (*res praedicabiles*) do not cross over or mingle with one another. From this it follows that one thing is called an "accident" of another insofar as it is extraneous to it and outside its essential nature. And so when it is said that no thing exists unless joined to another, in this way not only does an accident exist only as joined to substance, but even substance possesses existence only as joined to accidents. It follows that no thing exists unless because it is joined to something added to it, which is accidental to it.⁷¹ James is thus able to find some degree of truth in Avicenna's teaching that being (*ens*) denotes an accidental disposition and something superadded in creatures, since no thing is called a being unless because it is conjoined to something else. In this sense it is correct to say that a creature exists through something added to it, which is an accident of it. Nevertheless, one must be careful to distinguish the ways in which this may occur. This notion of "through" sometimes denotes conjunction and causality, as when an accident exists through substance, since it is caused by substance; at other times "through" denotes only conjunction. It is in the latter sense that a substance exists through its accidents, because it does not exist without them.⁷²

From the composite character of created being James reasons to a distinction between essence and *esse*:

According to this manner of speaking, if it were asked what *ens* or *esse* signifies, we would say that first and foremost it signifies the thing (*res*) which is called being (*ens*), and to which the act of being (*actus essendi*) belongs. But consequently and secondarily it signifies that addition by which a thing is called a being inasmuch as it is joined to it. Now this addition is not a determinate this or that, but universally a thing is called a being as it is

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9:237-10:246. "Secundo considerandum est quod res creatae, cum ad invicem coniunguntur, secundum suas essentias remanent distinctae. Non enim invicem transeunt aut permiscuntur. Praedicamenta enim et res praedicabiles immixtae sunt. Ex hoc sequitur quod una dicitur accidens alii in quantum est extranea ab ea et praeter essentialem rationem ipsius. Et ideo, cum dictum sit quod nulla res existat nisi alii coniuncta, et una res dicatur accidere alii, hoc modo non solum accidens substantiae, immo et substantia accidenti, sequitur quod nulla res existit, nisi per hoc quod est coniuncta alicui sibi addito, quod est sibi accidens."

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 10:247-56. "Ex his autem verificari potest dictum *Avicennae* quod ens dicit aliquid superadditum absolutum et dispositionem accidentalem, quia nulla res dicitur ens, nisi per hoc quod alii coniungitur. Et sic quaelibet res hoc modo est ens per aliquid superadditum sibi, quod est accidens ei. Tamen sciendum quod, cum dicitur quaelibet res esse ens per aliquid superadditum, hoc quod dico 'per' quandoque dicit coniunctionem et causalitatem; hoc modo accidens existit per substantiam. Aliquando dicit solam coniunctionem et non causalitatem; et hoc modo substantia existit per accidens, quia non existit sine eo."

conjoined to everything without which it cannot be found. Therefore, when it is said that a thing is a being through some superaddition, by this superaddition is understood everything without which that thing, which is called a being, could not be found in act.⁷³

One recognizes this to be fundamentally the same position that James had defended in his first Quodlibet. Once again a primary and a secondary meaning of *esse* are distinguished, and again *esse* is ultimately identified with the subsisting individual. Once again it is the real composition of substance and accidents necessarily found in the creature that requires one to recognize a distinction between essence and *esse*.

In advancing this theory James agrees with Giles and Henry that a thing is a being because of something superadded to it. But he parts company with Giles by denying that what is added is a determinate actuality. A substance may be said to have real existence not because it has received "*esse*", but rather because it has received some predicamental accidents. Nevertheless, if one concedes to Giles that there is such an actuality, then James will agree that first and foremost it is by conjunction with it that a thing is a being. He sees his own theory, then, as including Giles' view, and as saving a real distinction between essence and *esse*.⁷⁴

Similarly, James believes that he is able to salvage what is true in Henry's theory. Everything which exists only as conjoined to another must have an efficient cause. Thus *esse* does imply a relation to a cause; however, it does so secondarily (*per posterius*). Although the conjunction and the relation to a cause exist simultaneously, the former is logically prior to the latter, for any relation is naturally posterior to its foundation. According to James, Henry's theory is true but it is not sufficient, for *esse*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 10:257-11:265. "Secundum ergo hunc modum dicendi, si quaeratur quid significet ens vel esse, dicemus quod principaliter et primo significat rem quae dicitur ens, et cui convenit actus essendi. Consequenter autem et secundario significat illud additum per quod res dicitur ens in quantum est illi coniuncta; hoc autem additum non est determinatum hoc vel illud; sed universaliter res dicitur ens prout est coniuncta omni illi sine quo res inveniri non potest. Unde, cum dicitur res est ens per aliquid superadditum, per hoc superadditum intelligitur omne illud sine quo illa res, quae dicitur ens, inveniri non potest in actu."

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11:268-75. "Unde, secundum hunc modum, hoc superadditum non est aliqua actualitas determinata, sicut dicit opinio secunda supra dicta, quamvis, si sit dare illam actualitatem, potest dici quod principaliter et praecipue per coniunctionem ad illam res dicitur ens, et pro tanto illa vocatur esse. Tamen, simpliciter loquendo, per coniunctionem ad omne illud sine quo non invenitur existere, res dicitur ens vel esse. Unde hic modus dicendi includit secundam opinionem, et salvat realem differentiam inter esse et essentiam."

predicates more than merely a relation to an efficient cause.⁷⁵

It is evident from this text that James wishes to defend more than a merely logical distinction between essence and *esse*. No thing is a being simply in virtue of its own essence; it is a being because of something added to it. Although he rejects Giles' theory of *esse* as a determinate actuality superadded to essence, he is able to admit at least nominally a real distinction between essence and *esse*. It is the real composition of substance and accidents present in any creature that supports such a distinction.

One sees too that it is the presence of essential composition that grounds the distinction between created being and God. James himself makes this clear later in the text, when he notes four differences between created and uncreated being. First, a creature possesses being because of something absolute added to it. This is not the case with God, who lacks internal composition. Thus *esse* in creatures is an accident, while in God it is the thing (*res*) which is God.⁷⁶ Second, a creature is a being because of the relation it has to a cause. This follows from the fact that it is composed of parts. Since God lacks all internal composition, he exists without any such relation.⁷⁷ Third, God is total and unlimited being (*ens totale et illimitatum*), since he is a being absolutely, not through a union with something else. A creature is a partial and limited being (*ens parziale*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11:276-91. "Salvat etiam tertiam opinionem quae dicit, quod esse dicit essentiam cum habitudine ad principium primum ut est actu efficiens. Haec enim positio sequitur ad praedictum modum dicendi. Omne enim quod non existit nisi alii coniunctum, oportet quod habeat causam agentem per quam coniungatur illi sine quo esse non potest. Et sic omne tale dicit habitudinem ad agens, licet haec habitudo ad agens per posterius importetur in nomine entis vel esse, ita quod ens primo dicit essentiam ut coniunctam alii rei absolute. Et quia haec coniunctio non potest esse nisi per agens, consequenter dicit essentiam sub habitudine. Et licet sit simul tempore coniunctio illa et respectus ad agens, prius tamen naturali intellectu est coniunctio quam respectus; nam respectus quilibet natura posterior est suo fundamento. Sic igitur opinio quae dicit quod esse dicit essentiam cum habitudine ad agens, vera quidem est, sed non sufficiens, quia plus dicit esse ut dictum est."

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16:409-15. "Prima igitur differentia potest accipi ex his quae dicta sunt. Nam ens creatum est ens per aliquid superadditum absolutum sibi coniunctum; Deus autem non, quia in eo non est hoc et hoc. Unde esse in creaturis est accidens; in Deo non, sed est ipsa res quae Deus est. Et sicut non dicitur Deus in ordine ad aliquid aliud sibi coniunctum, sic nec ens. Unde est ens essentialiter et per essentiam; ens creatum est ens accidentaliter et per aliquid superadditum."

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16:415-19. "Ex hac autem prima differentia sequitur secunda, videlicet quod ens creatum est ens ex habitudine ad agens; ens autem divinum est sine habitudine. Nam illud quod est ens per coniunctionem plurium, indiget causa coniungente, quae est agens."

et limitatum), since it exists only as joined to something.⁷⁸ Fourth, divine being is immutable, because it lacks a composition of parts. Creatures are mutable, since they possess accidents in virtue of which they are said to be changed.⁷⁹

C. De divinis praedicamentis, q. 6 (1293-4)

In this question James asks whether God is a member of a genus or predicament.⁸⁰ In his discussion of this he makes a passing reference to the distinction between essence and existence, when he distinguishes a twofold potentiality in creatures. One is found only in material things (due obviously to the presence in them of matter), while the other is common to all created beings, and is derived by comparison to the first cause on which they depend. James then notes:

But from this potentiality, which is in all things by comparison to their cause, there follows in all things the potentiality that is by comparison to something else, without which [a creature] cannot exist actually. For every creature is composite and joined to another. Therefore, every creature is a this and this (*hoc et hoc*), and there is in all [creatures] potency and act. And this is the root of the difference between *esse* and *essence*.⁸¹

From the fact that a being is caused there follows in it a composition of parts, and hence a distinction of essence and *esse*. The metaphysical composition that characterizes every creature is not one of essence and existential act, but one of thing and thing. Such a composition remains

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17:450-5. "Tertia differentia est, quia ens divinum est ens totale et illimitatum. Et hoc quia non dicitur ens per coniunctionem ad aliquid, sed dicitur ens absolute, sicut si aliquid diceretur calidum non ex additione, esset calor infinitus. Ens autem creatum est ens partiale et limitatum. Et hoc quia non est ens absolute, sed ex coniunctione ad aliquid."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17:458-63. "Quarta differentia est, quia ens divinum est ens immutabile. Nam illud in quo non est hoc et hoc immutabile est. Omnis enim mutatio est per separationem alicuius ab aliquo. Ens autem mutabile est. Unde dicit Augustinus, *V De Trinitate*, capitulo secundo, quod omnis creatura mutabilis est, quia habet accidentia secundum quae mutari dicitur. Essentia autem divina immutabilis est." For this in Augustine, see *De Trinitate* Bk. V, ch. 4 (CCSL 50.209).

⁸⁰ *Quaestiones de divinis praedicamentis I-X*, pp. 143-85 ("Utrum Deus sit res alicuius generis vel praedicamenti").

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159:438-43. "Ex hac autem potentialitate, quae inest omnibus per comparisonem ad causam consequitur in omnibus potentialitas; quae est per comparisonem ad aliquid aliud, sine quo non potest esse actu. Nam omne creatum est compositum et alii coniunctum. Ideo omne creatum est hoc et hoc, et est in omni potentia et actus. Et hoc est radix differentiae inter esse et essentiam."

wholly in the order of essence.

D. Quodlibet III, q. 7 (1295)

In this text James has an opportunity to make some interesting remarks on essence and *esse*. He is asked whether a plurality or distinction of real absolute modes in God is repugnant to his simplicity.⁸² The text begins with two arguments given to show that a plurality of real modes is repugnant to the divine simplicity. According to the first argument, the plurality by means of which the creature primarily recedes from God is repugnant to the divine simplicity. But such is the plurality of real modes; therefore, such plurality is repugnant to the divine simplicity. To support the minor premise, it is argued that the plurality by which the creature falls short of divine simplicity cannot be one of reason (*pluralitas rationis*), since such a plurality is indeed present in God, nor is it one of things (*pluralitas rerum*), since God could create a substance devoid of any accidents. In the case of the latter, such a substance would not be composed of things, but would still fall short of divine simplicity. This could only be accounted for by positing within it a plurality of real modes.⁸³

According to the second argument, a plurality that impedes a predication *per identitatem* is repugnant to the divine simplicity. But such is the plurality of real modes. This is evident, because *esse* and essence differ *secundum modum realem*, which (as some say) is to differ intentionally. Thus one is not predicated of the other by a predication *per*

⁸² *Disputatio tertia de quolibet*, pp. 93-127 ("Utrum pluralitas vel distinctio modorum realium absolutorum in Deo repugnet eius simplicitati").

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 93:3-17. "Illa enim pluralitas repugnat divinae simplicitati per quam creatura primo recedit a divina simplicitate. Sed per pluralitatem modorum realium creatura primo recedit a divina simplicitate. Igitur talis pluralitas repugnat divinae simplicitati. Maior patet. Minor sic ostenditur. Per pluralitatem enim rationis creatura non recedit a divina simplicitate, quia huiusmodi pluralitas in Deo est absque detrimento suae simplicitatis, nec etiam per pluralitatem rerum recedit creatura primo a divina simplicitate. Posset enim Deus facere aliquam substantiam simplicem absque omni accidente. In tali autem substantia non esset diversitas vel pluralitas rerum, et tamen constat quod recederet et deficeret a divina simplicitate. Quare oporteret in huiusmodi substantia esse aliam diversitatem sive pluralitatem per quam recederet a simplicitate divina, nec posset esse alia pluralitas nisi modorum realium. Quare per huiusmodi pluralitatem recedit creatura primo a divina simplicitate."

identitatem.⁸⁴

To the first of these arguments James replies that the creature primarily recedes from divine simplicity by a plurality of things, and secondarily by a diversity of real modes. Although a plurality of things entails composition, a plurality of modes, simply and absolutely, does not. Nevertheless, because a distinction of modes in a creature always follows upon a diversity of things, it is true that a plurality of modes in a creature entails composition (though clearly in an accidental manner).⁸⁵ In response to the claim that God could create a substance that lacked accidents, James points out that God cannot create a substance that lacks relative accidents, since all creatures depend upon him and are related to him as a cause. Nevertheless, one might object that relative accidents are not things but modes of a thing, and as such they do not enter into composition with substance. To this James replies that, although God could make a substance that lacked all actual absolute accidents, he could not make a substance that lacked the aptitude to receive such accidents. Consequently, in all creatures there is at least a composition of things in aptitude, and therefore any creature necessarily falls short of the divine simplicity.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93:18-26. "Praeterea illa pluralitas quae impedit praedicationem per identitatem illorum quae plura dicuntur, repugnat divinae simplicitati. Cuius ratio est, quia ex divina simplicitate provenit quod omnia quae sunt in Deo et quae dicuntur de ipso, praedicantur de se invicem praedicatione per identitatem. Sed pluralitas modorum realium impedit praedicationem per identitatem. Quod patet, quia esse et essentia differunt secundum modum realem; quod est differre intentione, ut quidam dicunt. Et ideo unum de alio non praedicatur praedicatione per identitatem. Igitur pluralitas modorum realium repugnat divinae simplicitati."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 125:967-126:983. "Ad illud ergo quod obicitur primo, quod per pluralitatem modorum realium creatura primo recedit a divina simplicitate, dicendum est quod creatura primo recedit a divina simplicitate per pluralitatem rerum, secundario autem et ex consequenti per diversitatem modorum realium. Quod sic patet. Pluralitas enim rerum inducit compositionem. Pluralitas autem diversorum modorum, simpliciter et absolute sumpta, non inducit compositionem. Tamen, quia in creaturis distinctio modorum semper sequitur diversitatem rerum et compositionem, ideo pluralitas modorum, prout in creaturis, compositionem inducit. Unde accidit huic pluralitati quod compositionem inducat in quantum scilicet est in tali re, quae est creatura, in qua diversitas modorum provenit ex diversitate rerum vel ex compositione sive ex his sive huic. Et ita per utramque distinctionem recedit creatura a divina simplicitate; sed primo et principaliter per illam quae est rerum, ex consequenti autem per eam quae est modorum, non in quantum est modorum absolute, sed in quantum est modorum talium et in tali re, scilicet creatura."

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126:986-1004. "Sciendum est enim quod Deus non potest facere substantiam aliquam sine accidente, saltem respectivo. Non enim potest facere creaturam aliquam quae non dependeat ab ipso et quae non habeat relationem ad ipsum sicut ad causam. Sed quia statim aliquis obiceret quod relatio non est res quae compositionem inducat, sed est

To the second argument, which affirmed that a plurality of modes impedes a predication *per identitatem*, James replies that a distinction *secundum modum* is a distinction only in a qualified sense (*secundum quid*). Therefore, it impedes a predication *per identitatem* only in a qualified sense. As for the claim that essence and *esse* differ modally, James replies that they differ in creatures not only *secundum modum* but also *secundum rem*.⁸⁷

III. CONCLUSION

Having carefully read James' texts, we can now formulate some conclusions about his own view of the relationship between essence and existence. His thinking on this issue develops out of careful reflection on and criticism of the views of his contemporaries. Finding that each of the three main theories in his day contains some truth, James attempts to develop a compromise position. Essence is related to *esse* as the abstract to the concrete. Distinguishing a primary and a secondary meaning of *esse*, he maintains that, when *esse* is taken in its primary meaning, it is identical with essence; however, when it is taken in its secondary meaning, it is really distinct from essence, since it includes everything without which an essence does not and cannot exist.

It is not surprising, then, that scholars have disagreed about James' position. Nevertheless, it seems evident that he does not wish to defend a merely logical distinction between essence and *esse*. Such a distinction

modus quidam, ideo ulterius est dicendum quod Deus potest facere substantiam sine accidente absoluto in actu, non autem in aptitudine. Non enim posset Deus facere substantiam aliquam quae non esset susceptiva accidentis absoluti, vel in qua non posset esse accidens absolutum, licet posset facere aliquam substantiam non habentem actu accidens aliquod absolutum, sicut etiam de accidente dici solet quod potest fieri a Deo actu sine subiecto, non tamen aptitudine. Sicut ergo accidens, quantumcumque actu existat sine subiecto, vere est accidens et est compositum compositione huic propter solam aptitudinem inhaerendi, quae ad eo tolli non potest ipso manente, sic et substantia, quantumcumque actu existat sine accidente absoluto, quia tamen potest illud suscipere, dicitur in ea esse compositio rerum in aptitudine. Unde patet quod creatura primo recedit a divina simplicitate per diversitatem quae est rerum, vel in actu vel in aptitudine."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127:1025-38. "Ad secundum quod obicitur, quod pluralitas modorum impedit praedicationem per identitatem, dicendum est quod distinctio secundum modum non est distinctio simpliciter sed secundum quid; et ideo non impedit praedicationem per identitatem simpliciter sed secundum quid. ... Ad illud autem quod inducitur de *esse* et *essentia*, dicendum est quod in creaturis differunt non solum secundum modum sed etiam secundum rem, ut alias declaratum est; et ideo non praedicatur unum de alio praedicatione per identitatem."

would not suffice to preserve the doctrine of creation, nor would it account for the real composition present in finite being. Furthermore, there is no evidence for the claim that James defends an intentional distinction; indeed, it is unlikely that he thought that such a distinction is possible.

Should one, therefore, regard James as a partisan of the real distinction? In *Quodlibet* I, q. 4, he does admit that there is a real distinction between essence and *esse*, and that it is required by the Christian doctrine of creation. In *Quodlibet* III, q. 7, he says that essence and *esse* differ *secundum rem*. However, some caution is required. In its primary meaning, *esse* is the same as essence; it is only in its secondary meaning that one can speak of it as really distinct from essence. Thus James appears to recognize the distinction as real only in a qualified sense.

Moreover, if one construes the theory of the real distinction in an Aegidian or Thomistic sense, James would have to be regarded as an opponent of real distinction. For both Thomas and Giles the real distinction is one of essence and existential act. For James the real distinction is simply a restatement of the Boethian distinction between a concrete individual and its nature. *Esse* does not enter into composition with essence; rather, the metaphysical composition found in the creature is located wholly in the order of essence. James equates *esse* and *ens*. This is clearly a departure from Thomas, for whom *ens* is something having *esse*, while *esse* is that by which an *ens* is.⁸⁸ By contrast, James thinks that *ens* and *esse* both signify something having essence (*habens essentiam*). It is evident too that James rejects Giles' theory of *esse* as a determinate actuality, a *res* that when added to an essence makes it exist. For James *esse* in its secondary meaning signifies essence as it is joined to all of the accidents necessary for its actual existence. While Giles uses the relation between matter and form as a model for understanding the essence-*esse* distinction, James prefers to conceive the latter using the model of substance and accidents.

In sum, it seems best to regard James's theory not as an "intermediate position," but as a compromise position. He does not wish to find a middle ground between a logical and real distinction (as did Henry of Ghent), but rather to create a synthesis out of the partial truth in the three main positions. His thinking on essence and existence is grounded on the metaphysical composition that characterizes the creature. Like all orthodox thinkers, James recognizes the absolute simplicity of the divine nature. In all created beings, on the other hand, he finds a composition of

⁸⁸ Cf. *In XII Meta.*, lect. 1 (M.-R. Cathala--R.M. Spiazzi, ed. [Turin-Rome, 1950]), n. 2419: "Nam ens dicitur quasi esse habens."

substance and accidents. No created essence (whether substantial or accidental) is sufficient for its own existence: always another essence must be added to it. An individual thing (*esse*) cannot be reduced to its substantial essence. In this sense the distinction between essence and *esse* is a real one, since it is prior to any rational analysis by the mind.⁸⁹

Rumson (NJ)

Mark D. GOSSIAUX

⁸⁹ I would like to thank Kevin White for his comments on this paper.