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The Truth We Know

Reassessing Suárez's Account of Cognitive Truth and Objective Being

Abstract

This article aims at reassessing a widespread view, according to which Francisco Suárez left behind the scholastic model of truth as *adaequatio*, founding a new concept of truth based on his metaphysics of objective being. In the first part, I reconstruct the debate on the complex and incomplex truth, focusing especially on the sources of Suárez's *Disputation 8*, and presenting the views of Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Hervaeus, Durandus, Capreolus and Fonseca. Especially the latter proposes an eclectic synthesis, blending elements from the Dominican tradition and Henry of Ghent. In the second part, I analyze Suárez's *Disputation 8*, showing that his doctrine of truth reprises and mitigates Fonseca's, thus following most of the Dominican commentators of Aquinas. Here I explain especially the role played by objective being in the constitution of the truth *in cognoscendo*, also showing that the latter cannot be given without a previous adequation on the level of the truth *in significando* (the species). In the third part, I discuss three textual passages used by contemporary historiography to legitimate Suárez's alleged abandon of *adaequatio*, pointing out, in the light of the previous reconstruction, some misreadings in these interpretations.

Keywords: Truth; judgment; simple apprehension; objective being.

Authors: Aristotle, Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Hervaeus Natalis, Durandus of Saint Porçain, John Capreolus, Francisco Suárez.

Una rilettura della relazione tra verità cognitiva e esse obiectivum in Suárez

Abstract

Scopo del presente articolo è porre in questione una diffusa tesi, per la quale Francisco Suárez su-

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pererebbe il modello scolastico di verità come *adaequatio*, fondando un nuovo concetto di verità basato su una metafisica dell'*esse obiectivum*. Nella prima parte si ricostruisce il dibattito sulla verità complessa e incompleta, guardando specialmente alle fonti della *Disputatio VIII* di Suárez: Tommaso d'Aquino, Enrico di Gand, Erveo di Nedéllec, Durando di San Porziano, Giovanni Capreolo e Pedro da Fonseca. Specialmente quest'ultimo appare come il fautore di una sintesi eclettica, che lega elementi provenienti dalla tradizione domenicana e enrichiana. Nella seconda parte il saggio analizza la *Disputatio VIII*, mostrando che la dottrina della verità di Suárez riprende e mitiga l'impostazione di Fonseca e si conforma ai principali commentatori di Tommaso. L'articolo si sofferma specialmente sul ruolo dell'*esse obiectivum* nella costituzione della verità cognitiva, mostrando che quest'ultima non può esser data senza una previa adeguazione a livello della verità *in significando*. Infine, si discutono tre passaggi testuali utilizzati dalla storiografia contemporanea per legittimare il presunto abbandono suáreziano dell'*adaequatio*, mostrando, alla luce della ricostruzione fornita, alcuni malintesi alla base di questa lettura.

Keywords: Verità; giudizio; apprensione semplice; *Esse obiectivum*.

Authors: Aristotele, Tommaso d'Aquino, Enrico di Gand, Erveo di Nedéllec, Durando di San Porziano, Giovanni Capreolo, Francisco Suárez.

1. Introduction: Aristotle and the Truth of Incomposites

This article aims to reassess a widespread reading of Suárez's account of truth, and especially an "essentialist" interpretation of his use of the concept of *esse obiectivum*. In order to do that, I reconstruct the main passages which constitute the background of Suárez's overall theory of truth, which he sets out in the *DM* 8¹. Besides that, I also argue that this important text cannot be rightly understood if it is not considered in light of a group of problems which arises in the texts of Aristotle and which, throughout the centuries, the scholastics gathered and interlaced².

Broadly speaking, the Schools subscribe to Aristotle's account of truth³,

¹ F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, in *Opera Omnia*, Vivès, Paris 1856-1878, 26 vols, vols. 25-26 (1866). Hereafter: *DM*.

² In such a reconstruction, I will take advantage of some passages written for two previous essays that I published, S. Guidi, «Complex and Simple Truth: The Conimbricenses' Reading of On Interpretation in the Jesuit Context», in C. Casalini (ed.), *Jesuit Logic and Late Ming China. Lectures on the Cursus Conimbricensis*, Institute of Jesuit Sources Boston College, Boston 2019, pp. 41-67 and S. Guidi, «La *quaestio veritatis* in Pedro da Fonseca: il problema della *simplex apprehensio* e la fondazione delle identità logiche», *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 1 (2020) 77-106. In paragraph 1, I reworked especially some parts from Guidi «Complex and Simple Truth...», cit. pp. 42-44; in paragraph 2, I used parts from the same article, pp. 44-46; in paragraph 4, I used parts from pp. 46-47 and 50. In paragraphs 5-6 I used some parts from pp. 53-57.

³ On Aristotle's account of truth, see especially M. R., Wheeler: *Being Measured: Truth and Falsehood in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, SUNY Press, New York 2019; Ch. Long, *Aristotle on the*

which relies on a correspondence theory⁴, so defined in *Metaphysics* Θ , 10 and to a famous passage of *Metaphysics* *E*, 4⁵. In these respective passages, Aristotle maintains that: «he who thinks the separated to be separated and the combined to be combined has the truth, while he whose thought is in a state contrary to that of the objects is in error»⁶, and that «truth bears the affirmation in the case of what is compounded and the negation in the case of what is divided, while falsity has the contradictory of this apportionment»⁷. Truth and falsity only belong to *judgments* which are produced by the discursive *διάνοια*, namely verbal combinations which link terms in complex propositions (affirmations or negations). Such combinations express an alleged state of affairs (what, in being, is actually compounded or divided).

Nature of Truth, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2010; P. Crivelli, *Aristotle on Truth*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004. See also, by Crivelli, «Truth in *Metaphysics E 4*», in B. Inwood (ed.), *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 48 (2016), 167-225; «Aristotle on Signification and Truth», in G. Anagnostopoulos (ed.), *A Companion to Aristotle*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford 2009, pp. 81-100 and «Notes on Aristotle's Conception of Truth», in M. S. Funghi, *Odoi Dizesios. Le vie della ricerca: studi in onore di Francesco Adorno*, Leo Olschki, Firenze 1996, pp. 147-159. See also M. Cosci, *Verità e comparazione in Aristotele*, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Padova 2014; G. B. Pearson, «Aristotle on Being-as-Truth», in B. Inwood, *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, 28 (2005), 201-231; D. Modrak, *Aristotle's Theory of Language and Meaning*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, pp. 52-83; K. Pritzl, «Being True in Aristotle's Thinking», in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 1998, pp. 177-201 and «Ways of Truth and Ways of Opinion in Aristotle», *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (1993), 241-252; A. Graeser, «Aristotle and Aquinas on Being as Being True», in C. Gagnebin, (ed.), *Métaphysique, histoire de la philosophie. Recueil d'études offert à F. Brunner*, La Baconnière, Neuchâtel 1981, pp. 85-97. A critical discussion is that of W. Künnle, *Conceptions of Truth*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, pp. 93-174.

- ⁴ Most scholars agree in applying this definition to Aristotle's theory, at least with respect to the definition of *E*, 4. Regarding Θ , 10, it can be defined as (full) correspondence theory depending on the interpretation of the case of the in-composites. For a history of the correspondence theory, see D. Marian, «The Correspondence Theory of Truth», in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2016), § 1, and especially Long, *Aristotle on the Nature of Truth*, cit., pp. 21-48. According to Crivelli, *Aristotle on Truth*, cit., p. 135, «Aristotle's theory of truth can be regarded as a correspondence theory of truth based on an isomorphism between the assertion and an object which corresponds to the whole assertion».
- ⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Complete Works*, tr. by Jonathan Barnes, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1991, 2 vols., vol. 2, *Metaph. E*, 4, 1027b17-1028a8 and Θ , 10, 1051a34-1052a14.
- ⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., Θ , 10, 1051a34-1051b17.
- ⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., *E*, 4, 1027b17-1028a8.

As is well-known, this doctrine is complicated by the fact that still in *Metaphysics* Θ , 10, Aristotle considers the case of «incomposites» (ἀσύνθετα)⁸, i.e. non-composed substances which are neither true nor false in the sense of standard correspondence theory⁹, valid for the διάνοια. In this case, the extra-mental reference of our assertion is not the unity or division of variable components, but rather simple beings, which are only actual and never potential, and cannot qualify the correspondent mental terms as false (since there is no composition that can be invalidated). The truth of incomposites is nevertheless a different one, since incomposites have a different kind of being and, accordingly, a different kind of truth, i.e. that of simple terms¹⁰, which are grasped at the level of

⁸ On the problem of Aristotle's ασύνθετα, see especially E. Berti, «The Intellection of “Indivisibles” according to Aristotle, *De Anima* III, 6’», in G. E. R. Lloyd and G. E. L. Owen, *Aristotle on Mind and the Senses*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1978, pp. 141-63 (updated version published as «Encore sur l’intellection des ‘indivisibles’ selon Aristote, *De Anima* III 6», in A. Alberti (ed.), *Realtà e ragione. Studi di filosofia antica*, Leo Olschki, Firenze, 1994, pp. 123-136). See also G. E. L. Owen, «The Platonism of Aristotle», in *Proceedings of the British Academy. The Platonism of Aristotle. Dawes Hicks Lecture in Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1965, pp. 125-150; A. C. Lloyd, «Non-discursive thought. An enigma of Greek philosophy», *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 70 (1969-70), 261-274; P. J. Harvey, «Aristotle on Truth and Falsity in *De Anima* 3.6», *Journal of History of Philosophy*, 16 (1978), 219-220 and *Aristotle on Truth with Respect to Incomposites*, Ph.D. diss. University of Michigan, 1975; R. Sorabji, «Myths about Non-Propositional Thought», in M. Schofield e M. C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Language and Logos*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1982, pp. 295-314; M. Fattal, «L’intellection des indivisibles dans le *De anima* (III, 6) d’Aristote. Lectures arabes et modernes», in G. Romeyer Dherbey and C. Viano (eds.), *Corps et âme. Sur le De anima d’Aristote*, Vrin, Paris 1996, pp. 423-440; K. Pritzl, «The Cognition of Indivisibles and the Argument of *De Anima* 3. 4-8», *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 58 (1984), 140-50, and again Pritzl, «Being True in Aristotle’s Thinking», cit.; N. Denyer, *Language, Thought and Falsehood in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, Routledge, London-New York 1991, pp. 204-205; Ch. P. Long and R. A. Lee, «Nous and Logos in Aristotle», *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 54 (2007), 348-367.

⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., Θ , 10, 1051b18-1052a3.

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., Θ , 10, 1051b18-23: «With regard to incomposites, what is being or not being, and truth or falsity? A thing of this sort is not composite, so as to be when it is compounded, and not to be if it is separated [...] In fact, as truth is not the same in these cases, so also being is not the same». Regarding what such ἀσύνθετα are, one can distinguish three groups of interpretations: 1) those (the most of the scholastic commentators of Aquinas) who hold that they are non-propositional enunciations, such as the ones in *On Interpretation* (see below); those (Berti and Sorabji, appealing to Owen) who think that they are essences or definitions, or rather statements whose subject is identical with its essence; 3) others (Crivelli), who identify them with God and the incorporeal substances, which are non-composite being forms deprived of matter.

the νοῦς. The truth of simple beings lies just in «contact [θιγεῖν] and assertion [φάναι]»¹¹, whereas falsity lies at most in ignoring them and in not grasping them (mentally, of course). However, simple terms just assert (φάναι) and never affirm (κατάφασις); so, there is no mental or verbal composition that can be falsified by extra-mental beings¹². For Aristotle, this establishes an analogy (ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ) between incomposites and essential natures (τα τί ἐστίν) to which we appeal when explaining «what a thing is» (e.g. ‘a horse’). Assertions concerning both do not entail any reference to physical beings and, accordingly, are not affected by changes in concrete reality (e.g. “a horse” remains a nature and a definite meaning even if all horses disappear). Therefore, as Aristotle claims with respect to simple elements, «it is not possible to be in error, but only to think them or not to think them»¹³.

This problem famously recurs in other works by Aristotle. A passage from *On the Soul*, *I*, 6, speaks of such simple terms as «simple objects of thought», which can be found «in those cases where falsehood is impossible»¹⁴. This impossibility derives from the fact that these objects are neither combined nor divided, and from the idea that «falsehood always involves a synthesis»¹⁵. Moreover, in *On Interpretation*, Aristotle sketches his notion of the connection between truth and signs, explaining that: (1) written symbols are signs of the voice's sounds; (2) the voice's sounds are signs of mental affections; and (3) mental affections are «the same for the whole of man-kind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies»¹⁶. Regarding the simple elements that make up complex judgment, Aristotle here reaffirms the possibility of a simple truth or falsity, by adding that

Just as some thoughts in the soul are neither true nor false while some are necessarily one or the other, so also with spoken sounds. For falsity and truth have to do with combination and

¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., *Θ*, 10, 1051b24.

¹² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., *Θ*, 10, 1051b24-25.

¹³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, cit., *Θ*, 10, 1051b25-26.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, in *Complete Works*, cit., vol. 1, *I* § 6, 430a27.

¹⁵ Aristotle, *On the Soul*, cit., *I* § 6, 430b27-430b33: «Assertion is the saying of something concerning something, e.g. affirmation, and is in every case either true or false: this is not always the case with intellect: the thinking of the definition in the sense of the constitutive essence is never in error nor is it the assertion of something concerning something, but, just as while the seeing of the special object of sight can never be in error, the belief that the white object seen is a man may be mistaken, so too in the case of objects which are without matter».

¹⁶ Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, in *Complete Works*, vol. 1, cit., § 1, 16a4-16a9.

separation. Thus nouns and verbs by themselves – for instance ‘man’ or ‘white’ when nothing further is added – are like the thoughts that are without combination and separation; for so far they are neither true nor false. A sign of this is that even ‘goat-stag’ [τραγέλαφος] signifies something but not, as yet, anything true or false – unless ‘is’ or ‘is not’ is added (either simply or with reference to time)¹⁷.

Therefore, Aristotle subscribes to the notion of the existence of *two* kinds of simple significant: the conceptual and the verbal, which are associated by virtue of their possible, simple conformity with the same extra-mental thing. Being nothing more than a purely verbal object, the word τραγέλαφος *means* a concept without predicating anything about it; likewise, the corresponding concept τραγέλαφος *means* something but does not assert anything. It is hard to say (and it is not the purpose of the present work) whether or not Aristotle attributed truth or falsity to incomplex terms. At the same time, they are considered true because they are not false (according to *On the Soul*), but they cannot be considered true for correspondence theory (according to *On Interpretation*), since simple terms describe single things and do not predicate complex relations between multiple terms. This issue especially involves simple *thoughts*, given Aristotle’s peculiar account of understanding as the presence of a species in the soul. Does the simple presence of an incomplex representation in the soul constitute a simple intellectual truth, even without any judgment? Is the intellect true, whenever it contains a correspondent simple species representing a being taken solely by virtue of its essence?

2. Aquinas and the Simple-Complex Truth

Among the Medieval accounts of the aforementioned questions, one of the most influential on Suárez was, of course, that of Aquinas¹⁸. As stressed espe-

¹⁷ Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, cit., § 1, 16a10-16a18. On the τραγέλαφος see especially G. Sillitti, *Tragelaphos: Storia di una metafora e di un problema*, Bibliopolis, Napoli 1980.

¹⁸ See especially J. Vande Wiele, «Le problème de la vérité ontologique dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas», *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 52/36, (1954), 521-571, and J. F. Wippel, «Truth in Thomas Aquinas», Part I: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 43, 1989, 295-326 and Part II: *The Review of Metaphysics*, 43, 1990, 543-567. See also Graeser, «Aristotle and Aquinas on Being as Being True», cit.; P. Porro, *Tommaso d’Aquino. Un profilo storico-filosofico*, Carocci, Roma 2012, eng. tr. by J. G. Trabbic and R. W. Nutt, *Thomas Aquinas. A Historical and Philosophical Profile*, The Catholic University of America, Washington DC 2015, pp. 59-68; G. Galluzzo, «Il tema della verità nell’*Expositio Libri Peryermenias* di Tommaso d’Aquino», *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 11 (2000), 217-257; G. Schulz, *Veritas est Aadaequatio Intellectus et Rei: Untersuchungen zur Wahrheitslehre des Thomas von Aquin und zur Kritik Kants an einem überlieferten Wahrheitsbegriff*, Brill, Leiden, New York, and Cologne 1993; A. Llano,

cially by Joseph Vande Wiele¹⁹, two authorities are crucial for the progressive shaping of the scholastic account on these topics, both of which were influential on Aquinas' conception of truth. On the one hand, there is Augustine, whose theory of illumination would have considerable influence on Anselm and on the rise of a theological account of truth²⁰; on the other hand, there is Boethius, whose translation and commentary on *On Interpretation* comprehended Aristotle's "triad" in light of a possible isomorphism between *res*, *vox* and *intellectus*²¹.

«"Being as True" according to Aquinas», *Acta Philosophica*, 4 (1995), 73-82; Y. Floucat, «La vérité comme conformité selon saint Thomas d'Aquin», *Revue Thomiste* 104 (2004), 49-102; L. S. Gordon, «Some Thoughts about Aquinas' Conception of Truth as Adequation», *The Heythrop Journal*, 57 (2016), 325-336; J. A. Aertsen, «Truth as Transcendental in Thomas Aquinas», *Topoi*, 11 (1992), 159-171; W. Wood, «Thomas Aquinas and the Claim that God is Truth», *Journal of History of Philosophy*, 51 (2013), 21-47.

- ¹⁹ Vande Wiele, «Le problème de la vérité ontologique dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas», cit.. On the medieval conceptions of truth see also C. Duthil, «Truth, Theories of», in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, Springer Verlag, Switzerland; for an overview on logical truth see E. A. Moody, *Truth and Consequence in Medieval Logic*, North-Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam 1953.
- ²⁰ On Augustine's conception of true knowledge, language and illumination see especially J. M. Rist, *Augustine. Ancient Thought Baptized*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 23-91; G. B. Matthews, «Knowledge and Illumination», in E. Stump and N. Kretzmann, *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, pp. 171-185; C. Kirkwan, «Augustine's Philosophy of Language», *ibidem*, pp. 186-204. See also the two chapters by P. King, «Augustine on Knowledge» and «Augustine on Language», in D. V. Meconi, E. Stump, *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine. 2nd Edition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2014, pp. 142-165 and 292-310. See also É. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, tr. by L. E. M. Lynch, Vintage Books, New York 1967, pp. 27-111 and G. Galluzzo, *Il concetto di verità nei primi scritti di S. Agostino*, Diss. at the University of Pisa, Pisa 1997-1998. Augustine's view would be developed both by Anselm's understanding of truth as *rectitude* – intrinsically connecting the truth of judgments with their intrinsic, moral function of representing a state of affairs wanted by God – and by the Franciscan tradition – which would think of truth starting from the conformity of things to the transcendental exemplars related to God's mind and known by God before the creation (see S. Visser and T. Williams, «Anselm on truth», in B. Davies and B. Leftow [eds], *The Cambridge companion to Anselm*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, pp. 204-221, and T. Noone, «Truth Creation and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure», in K. Pritzl, *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC 2010, pp. 102-126; B. Ippolito, *Dio, il niente e la verità in Anselmo d'Aosta*, Aracne, Roma 2015). On Franciscan exemplarism see especially the entire volume by J. Falà and I. Zattero (eds), *Divine Ideas in Franciscan Thought (XIIIth-XIVth Century)*, Aracne, Roma 2018. But see already A. Conti, «Divine Ideas and Exemplar Causality in Auriole», *Vivarium* 38 (2000), 99-116.
- ²¹ *Anicii Manlii Severini Boetii Commentarii in Librum Aristotelis Περί Ἐρμηνείας*, recessit Carolus Meiser, pars posterior secundam editionem et indices continens, in aedibus B. G. Teub-

It is also worth recalling that the definitive medieval formulation of the doctrine of transcendentals includes the *verum* as one of the three fundamental properties of the *ens*, such that the truth dwells simultaneously (although with different values) in extra-mental things (transcendental truth), in mind (cognitive and semiotic truth) and in God's mind. These three elements can be adequate to each other in several different combinations, by which conformity is understood as a three-sided relationship²². Nevertheless, the Schools sketch a more precise topography of the mind's operations, contributing to the elaboration of the intra-mental relationship between semiotic mental objects and cognitive mental objects. Starting from the thirteenth century, the scholastics would indeed talk of three mental elements: the *conceptus* or *simplex apprehensio*, the *iudicium*, and the *ratiocinium*, meaning by them, respectively, the simple "first" operation of "grasping" concepts or sensations (corresponding to Aristotle's $\theta\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\tau\upsilon\nu$); the "second" operation of relating them in complex judgments referring to extra-mental realities; and the "third" operation of getting new information by comparison and reasoning. In this picture, the question about Aristotle's «thoughts that are without combination and separation» especially involves the *simplex apprehensio*, as the operation through which our intellect grasps its representations before relating them to each other.

John Wippel has shown very well that Aquinas overlapped all three aforementioned levels of truth – the intellectual one, the truth of things and the adequation to God's mind – attempting to conciliate the Aristotelian tradition with elements from Augustine and Anselm. Regarding intellectual truth, in the *Questions on the Truth* he defines it as the *aequalitas diversorum* («uniformity of different things») between two different things falling into a relation of conformity²³.

neri, Lipsiae 1880, I, ch. I, p. 20: «tribus his totus orandi ordo perficitur: rebus, intellectibus, vocibus. Res enim ab intellectu concipitur, vox vero conceptiones animi intellectusque significat, ipsi vero intellectus et concipiunt subiectas res et significantur a vocibus».

²² See A. de Libera, *La querelle des Universaux*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1996, pp. 455-459.

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *Questions on the Truth*, tr. by R. W. Mulligan, S. J., Henry Regnery Company, Chicago 1952 q. 1, a. 3, *resp.*: «Just as the true is found primarily in the intellect rather than in things, so also is it found primarily in an act of the intellect joining and separating, rather than in an act by which it forms the quiddities of things. For the nature of the true consists in a conformity of thing and intellect. Nothing becomes confirmed by will itself, but conformity requires distinct terms. Consequently, the nature of truth is first found in the intellect when the intellect begins to possess something proper to itself, not possessed by the thing outside the soul, yet corresponding to it, so that between the two – intellect and thing – a conformity may be found».

This definition explains why truth lies *especially* and *primarily* in composition and division. Here, indeed, the intellect contributes by something which properly belongs to it, the judgment, whereas in simple apprehensions the intellect adds nothing but a mental likeness of the extra-mental reality (the species)²⁴. In his commentary on *On Interpretation*, Aquinas remarks that in simple apprehensions our intellect does not know the relationship of conformity between the thought and the thing, «but only apprehends the thing». Yet, truth consists of *knowledge* of the relationship of conformity, which requires us to «judge that a thing is such or is not, which is to compose and divide»; hence, «the intellect does not know truth except by composing and dividing through its judgment»²⁵, and the composition and division of the judgment is the only case in which the intellect knows the conformity between its representation and the thing.

Another interesting text by Aquinas is, of course, his reading of the *Metaphysics*. Here, Aquinas states that «truth is not present in the same way in simple things and in composite ones»²⁶, and he again accepts that there are two different kinds of truth, in light of the principle that «truth follows being, because [...] the structure of things in being and in truth is the same»²⁷. In the case of incomposites, the truth arises simply «because their quiddity [*quod quid est*] is known or not known». This is because to acquire knowledge of that quiddity corresponds to the truth, whereas «when we fail to acquire knowledge of its quiddity, but attribute something else to it, the intellect is then false». Accordingly,

to come in contact with simple things through the intellect and to express them constitutes truth; but not to come in contact with them is not to know them at all. For whoever does not grasp the quiddity of a simple thing is completely ignorant of it; because one cannot both know and not know something about it, since it is not composite²⁸.

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Questions on the Truth*, cit., q. 1, a. 3, *resp.*: «In forming the quiddities of things, the intellect merely has a likeness of a thing existing outside the soul, as a sense has a likeness when it receives the species of a sensible thing. But when the intellect begins to judge about the thing it has apprehended, then its judgment is something proper to itself – not something found outside in the thing».

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's On Interpretation*, tr. by J. T. Oesterle, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1962, lect. 3, § 9.

²⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, tr. by J. P. Rowan H. Regnery Company, Chicago 1961, bk. 9, lect. 11, § 1901. The text continues: «it is evident that truth and falsity are not present in simple things in the same way as in composite things».

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, cit., bk. 9, lect. 11, § 1903.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, cit., bk. 9, lect. 11, § 1905.

Therefore, because every quiddity automatically causes an apprehension in the intellect,²⁹ a simple term can be known or not known. However, Aquinas maintains that «with regard to such a thing the intellect is neither true nor false»; that is, there is no truth or falsity in a concept in the way there is a truth or falsity in judgments. It is no accident that this is the way by which Aquinas connects *Metaphysics* Θ with *On the Soul*, 3. He stresses that “simple” truth is such «just as a sense is always true with regard to its proper object»³⁰. Finally, Aquinas claims that one may be accidentally deceived about quiddities «only as a result of combining or separating», and, «about the quiddity of simple substances», only «by combining a definition with something defined or by separating them»³¹. Hence, simple apprehensions can be mistaken just when we think of an assertion containing a subject and an impossible predication (*i.e.* ‘irrational angel’)³².

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, cit., bk. 9, lect. 11, § 1907: «Since a simple substance is its own quiddity, the judgment about the knowledge of a simple substance and the judgment about the knowledge of its quiddity are one and the same. But the intellect is deceived about a quiddity only accidentally; for either a person comes in contact with a thing’s quiddity through his intellect, and then he truly knows what that thing is; or he does not come in contact with it, and then he does not know what it is. Hence, with regard to such a thing the intellect is neither true nor false».

³⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, cit., bk. 9, lect. 11, § 1907: «This is why Aristotle says in Book III of *The Soul* that, just as a sense is always true with regard to its proper object, in a similar fashion the intellect is always true with regard to its proper object-quiddity. And the fact that the intellect is not deceived about a thing’s quiddity applies not only in the case of simple substances but also in that of composite ones».

³¹ For instance, «if someone were to say that an ass is a mortal rational animal, or that a man is not a mortal rational animal, both would be false».

³² Aquinas seems to hold that such simple elements actually are virtual proto-judgments. See Thomas Aquinas, *Questions on the Truth*, cit., q. 1, a. 3, *resp.*: «truth is found primarily in the joining and separating by the intellect, and only secondarily in its formation of the quiddities of things or definitions, for a definition is called true or false because of a true or false combination. For it may happen that a definition will be applied to something to which it does not belong, as when the definition of a circle is assigned to a triangle. Sometimes, too, the parts of a definition cannot be reconciled, as happens when one defines a thing as “an animal entirely without the power of sensing”. The judgment implied in such a definition – “some animal is incapable of sensing” is false. Consequently, a definition is said to be true or false only because of its relation to a judgment, as a thing is said to be true because of its relation to the intellect», and Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*. *Summa Contra Gentiles, Book One*, tr. by A. Pegis, Image Books, New York 1955, I, ch. 59, § 3: «The incomplex intellect in understanding what a thing is apprehends the quiddity of a thing in a certain relation to the thing, because it apprehends it as the quiddity of that thing. Hence, although the incomplex itself, or even a definition, is not in itself true or false, nevertheless the intellect that apprehends what a thing is, is always said to

However, Aquinas' Aristotelian approach seems to be mitigated if we consider the metaphysical background involving the possible transcendental conformity to the exemplars in God's mind. According to Aquinas, truth properly belongs to the human intellect, but only *secondarily*, since «properly and primarily» it can only be found in the divine intellect³³. Effectively, Nevertheless, all natural things are artifacts whose reason lies in the art contained in the divine intellect; so, «a thing is said to be true insofar as it has its own form, according to which it represents divine art» (i.e. false gold is, nevertheless, true copper). And, Aquinas adds, «it is in terms of this that being and true are converted, since any natural thing conforms to divine art through its form». Besides that, where he speaks in the *Contra Gentiles* of God's simple apprehension, Aquinas even concedes that an incomplex apprehension, although it is not true or false in itself, causes the intellect to be true:

the incomplex intellect, in understanding what a thing is, apprehends the quiddity of a thing in a certain relation to the thing, because it apprehends it as the quiddity of that thing. Hence although the incomplex itself, or even a definition, is not in itself true or false, the intellect that apprehends what a thing is, nevertheless, is always said to be through itself true, as appears in *On the Soul III*, although it can be by accident false, in so far as a definition includes some composition either of the parts of a definition with one another or of the whole definition with the thing defined³⁴.

3. Henry of Ghent, the True and the Truth

After Aquinas, Henry of Ghent is certainly one of the most influential figures in the debate, and, as I will show, a hidden reference for both the Late Dominicans and Suárez. On the other hand,, as is shown by Steven Marrone³⁵, Henry's view is also a genuine synthesis of Augustine and Aristotle. He shows, against the most radical interpretation of Augustine, that the human soul is able to acquire the truth

be through itself true, as appears in *De anima III* although it can be false by accident, insofar as a definition includes some composition either of the parts of a definition with one another or of the whole definition with the thing defined».

³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Questions on the Truth*, cit., q. 1, a. 4, resp.

³⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*. Summa Contra Gentiles, cit., I, ch. 59, § 3.

³⁵ See S. P. Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent*, The Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge Mass. 1985, *The Light of The Countenance. Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, Brill, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001 and «Henry of Ghent's Epistemology», in G. A. Wilson, ed., *A Companion to Henry of Ghent*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2010, pp. 214-239. See also P. Porro, «Henry of Ghent», in E. N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), § 2.

independently of divine illumination. For Henry, such restrictions should be understood just as referring to «those who claim that judgment is co-extensive with sensation»³⁶, and «one must therefore concede, in an absolute sense, that through his soul man can know something without any special divine illumination, on the basis of what is purely natural»³⁷. The definition of truth accepted by Henry is, however, that «the truth of a thing is that by which it is known and understood, that is, that by which it is a proper object of intellect»³⁸, and such a definition also applies to the knowledge we acquire through natural power.

What Henry retrieves from Augustine is, indeed, the distinction introduced in the *Soliloquies* between what is true (*id quod verum est*) and truth itself (*veritas*)³⁹. As is well-known, Augustine used this to establish a hierarchy of knowing between “the true” and “the truth”⁴⁰. One can know that something is true, i.e. an adequate, truthful representation, perfectly resembling a thing; or one can know the truth which is expressed by what is true, namely the essence of the object represented by it. As Marrone remarks, Henry blends Augustine’s distinction with «Aristotle’s dichotomy between nominal knowledge of a thing and knowledge of its essences – or what the scholastics liked to call its “quiddity”»⁴¹. Accordingly, two levels of truth are given: 1) the knowledge of *id quod res est*, namely the ‘true’, which is especially attached to a *simple* presentation of the object in the mind and which is sufficient *simplex intelligentia*; and 2) the knowledge of the *quid sit*, which allows one to know the object distinctly, but depends upon the efforts of the mental process of composition and division in the judgment⁴².

As regards the *quid sit*, namely the knowledge of the truth, Henry talks of a *duplex veritas* and establishes that «the intention of truth in a thing cannot be

³⁶ Porro, «Henry of Ghent», cit., §2.

³⁷ Henrici de Gandavo, *Summa (Quaestiones ordinariae)* I-V, edidit G. A. Wilson, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2005, a. 1, q. 2, p. 35 (trans. from Porro, «Henry of Ghent»).

³⁸ Henrici de Gandavo, *Summa...*, cit., a. 2, q. 6: 235 (trans. from Porro, «Henry of Ghent»).

³⁹ Augustinus, *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, in *Patrologia Latina*, edidit J. P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris 1844-1855), vol. 32 (1845) I, 15, §§ 27-28: «aliud tamen est scire de creatura id quod verum est in ea; et aliud est scire veritatem: ut alia sit cognitio qua cognoscitur res; alia qua conosciuto veritas eius».

⁴⁰ Henricus, *Summa...* cit., a. 1, q. 2: 36: «it is one thing to know that which is true about a creature, and quite another to know its truth. By the first kind of knowledge the thing is perceived, but only by the second is its truth laid hold of» (trans. from Porro, «Henry of Ghent»).

⁴¹ Marrone «Henry of Ghent’s Epistemology», cit., p. 217.

⁴² Marrone «Henry of Ghent’s Epistemology», cit., p. 218.

apprehended without apprehending its conformity to its exemplar»⁴³. Yet, going beyond Aristotle, he establishes *two* correspondent kinds of exemplar, with which the *res* must be adequate to have the truth: one is the intelligible species caused in mind by the extra-mental object; another is the ideal reason of the thing in God's mind⁴⁴. For the first type of knowledge of the truth – the adequation of the intelligible species and the truth – Henry entirely accepts the Aristotelian model, without getting back to Augustine's illumination. For Henry, this conformity can be grasped by the dividing and composing intellect, and not by the simple apprehension, limited to the true. This – following again Marrone's reading – because the true, which only “embodies” the truth, never knows it, and a second-level knowledge is required to pass from the *id quod verum est* to this first, natural, grasping of the *veritas*. The intellect forms, what he calls, a “concept” or a “mental word”, in conformity with the intelligible exemplar; a process in which the species actually acts as means of knowledge, an *esse formalis* activating the intellectual power, and never as a mental operation comprising the content for which the species is the vehicle⁴⁵.

The second kind of knowledge, which Henry calls “pure truth” (*sincera veritas*), lies instead in the adequation of the *res* with the divine idea⁴⁶, which is also the formal cause of the creatural essence, making the *res* metaphysically adequate to the divine exemplar⁴⁷. However, the cognition of this kind of truth is supernatural and it entails the direct illumination of the mind by God, according to the scholastic traditional model. Henry describes the mechanism lying behind it, as the generation of a second-level mental word, which works as the sign of the knowledge of the pure truth⁴⁸.

⁴³ Henricus, *Summa...* cit., a. 1 q. 2, p. 39 (trans. from Porro, «Henry of Ghent»).

⁴⁴ Marrone «Henry of Ghent's Epistemology», cit., p. 219-220.

⁴⁵ Marrone «Henry of Ghent's Epistemology», cit., p. 220-222. See Henricus, *Summa...* cit., a. 1, q. 5, ad 2 and a. 35, q. 5. On Henry's theory of intelligible species see especially M. Pickavé, «Causality and Cognition. An Interpretation of Henry of Ghent's Quodlibet V, q. 14», in G. Klima (ed.), *Intentionality, Cognition, and Mental Representation in Medieval Philosophy*, Fordham University Press, London 2015, pp. 46-80.

⁴⁶ On Henry's exemplarism see F. Marrone, «Res e Realitas. Enrico di Gand e il vocabolario della cosa», *Quaestio*, 18 (2018), 99-122.

⁴⁷ Marrone «Henry of Ghent's Epistemology», cit., p. 223-224.

⁴⁸ Henricus, *Summa...* cit., a. 1 q. 3, p. 84. It is worth noting that Henry further developed his doctrine after 1279 (see Marrone «Henry of Ghent's Epistemology», cit., pp. 229-234). For the purposes of the present discussion, it will suffice to point out two relevant novelties he introduces at this stage. On the one hand, Henry maintains that simple intellect seizes the object in its quiddity,

4. Formal Truth and Objective Being: Medieval and Renaissance Dominican Accounts

As I will argue, Suárez's view stems especially from an internal debate among the Dominicans, who received Henry's Augustinian influences and integrated them with Aquinas' account. They especially shape an important distinction between material and formal cognitive truth, which retrace and complete that distinction (which they could find in Aquinas) between simple and complex truth. These overlapping notions would allow them to understand cognitive truth as a formal and deliberately formulated true judgment (Henry's "truth") which is, ultimately, internal to the mind and directed toward the objective being in the intellect. At the same time, such a complex truth is possible only thanks to previous material, semiotic correspondence (Henry's "true") between our mental representation (the species) and the extra-mental thing.

In this sense, one important position is that of Hervaeus. Starting from his famous conception of second intention⁴⁹, he holds that truth is a relation of reason, generated by the thing which is understood, «inasmuch as it indwells objectively in the intellect»⁵⁰. By this formulation, Hervaeus means that truth is not the conformity of our concept with the extra-mental thing, but rather the conformity of the known thing with itself, considered as it exists objectively in our intellect⁵¹. Accordingly, Hervaeus argues that the truth and the falsity which lie in our intellects «not subjectively, but rather objectively», are the reason why the conception

a prerogative previously reserved for the composing and diving intellect. On the other hand, Henry gives up the idea of intelligible species and explains the passage from the true to knowledge of the truth in a different manner. Indeed, the true is already a mental word or concept – an idea that Henry would further give up in his last works. This mental work is stored by the mind in memory and can be called up to be compared with extra-mental being. Establishing the conformity of the true mental word with the thing, the mind creates a second mental word, representing, as in the previous model, the truth.

⁴⁹ See Hervaeus Natalis, *A Treatise on Second Intentions* ed. and tr. by J. Doyle, 2 vols., Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 2008.

⁵⁰ Hervaeus Natalis, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, which I read and cite from the edition Moreau, Paris 1647, I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1 (my translation).

⁵¹ For example, if a man is judged to be a horse, falsity lies in the fact that the man is not adequate to himself, inasmuch as he is conceived objectively to be a horse. In the words of Hervaeus, «truth is not some relation established between the understood thing and the intellectual act» (*In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1), since «truth does not consist in the fact that the cognitive act is produced such as the thing itself is» (this, for him, is impossible). Rather it «consists in the fact that the thing, according to what it is, is adequate to what is attributed to it; that is to what of it is understood» (*In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1).

of our intellect, as well as the very proposition, are true in the same way signs are true⁵². Materially, the extra-mental thing is hence the foundation of cognitive truth, whereas the formal truth of signs (i.e. to be a true representation) is founded in the intellect:

almost materially and fundamentally the truth lies in things: but the conformity of those very things with what is understood or meant about them, is, formally, the truth itself, which [truth] is nothing but a being of reason, or of the second intention conveying to the thing just as it is objectively in the intellect. Still, the truth of the sign lies in the rectitude of the concept or proposition which signifies such truth⁵³

Starting from this view, Hervaeus rereads Aquinas' idea that the truth indwells especially «in the composing and dividing intellect, or in the intellect which understands the enunciabile [propositions]». According to the given definition, truth can indeed be twofold: 1) a truth which is merely factual, i.e. a cognition falling in conformity with the thing without deliberate intention (corresponding to Henry's *id quod verum est*); and 2) a truly formal truth, i.e. conformity which follows from an aware cognition of the intellect, concerning the fact that the intellect knows, says or signifies the truth (according to Henry's concept of *veritas*). These two options reflect the aforementioned opposition between material and formal truth. For Hervaeus, indeed, the first one is the truth considered as materially and effectively, whereas only the second is the truth in its formal reality⁵⁴.

Hervaeus's account seems to be the matrix of the solution proposed by Durandus, which is a crucial reference for understanding Suárez's *DM* 8. The latter agrees with Aquinas and Hervaeus that only the composition and division of judgment or enunciation founds formal truth. Also for Durandus, incomposities are

⁵² «Because [...] they are signs of the said truth, so that the entity of the thing is the foundation of the truth, being the foundation of the conformity which the truth is said to be». Hervaeus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1.

⁵³ Hervaeus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 1 (my translation).

⁵⁴ On the one hand, it is the truth caused by «the conformity [which] stems from the cognition itself». And this is the truth which flows out of the immediate conformity of the thing with the presence of a second intention that represents it in the intellect. In this fashion, truth or falsity are in every cognition, since every cognition either is or is not adequate to the known thing; this case also includes the senses and simple intellection. On the other hand, truth «can stem from the known thing, not because the conformity itself stems [from the thing's existence], but rather because the conformity is understood [*intelligitur*] or said, or signified; and so it happens in the intellect that knows the enunciabiles» (Hervaeus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., I, d. 19, q. 3, a. 2, my translation).

set aside⁵⁵ and treated by the intellect as terms or words, whose truth ultimately depends upon those of their complex concepts or definitions⁵⁶. Like Hervaeus, Durandus also links truth with objective being⁵⁷, even though he understands the conformity between intellect and thing in a slightly different way. For Durandus, truth is a being of reason, which is not generated either by the conformity of the mental representation with the thing or by the conformity of the thing with the mental representation⁵⁸. According to Durandus, the truth is rather the conformity between two sides of a ‘thing’ (broadly understood as the thing insofar as it is cognized and the thing in-itself): on the one hand, the thing taken in itself (the extra-mental thing), and on the other hand, the thing as it is objectively present in the intellect (the intra-mental thing)⁵⁹. This allows Durandus to argue that cognitive truth lies not in the intellect, but rather in the conformity between two sides of the thing, «the conformity of the [thing] with itself, according to one being and to another one, i.e. [according to] being understood [*intellectum*] and being real».

Like Aquinas, Durandus maintains that the “first operation” of the intellect is material and unrelated in itself to truth and falsehood. Rather, truth and falsity are strictly connected to the formal enunciation of the judgment or to the conformity between the thing, «understood by the enunciating intellect, composing or dividing», and the real thing⁶⁰. Hence, for Durandus, a proposition is *not* true by itself, but rather *signifies* the truth of the thing itself, understanding the latter in its twofold conformity, one with itself and one with the “objective” concept which the intellect expresses and apprehends by enunciating it⁶¹. Whereas the simple

⁵⁵ Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, Paris 1508, bk. I, d. 19, q. 5, § 14.

⁵⁶ Durandus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., bk. I, d. 19, q. 5, § 13.

⁵⁷ Durandus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., bk. I, d. 19, q. 5, § 12.

⁵⁸ Durandus especially rejects the idea that the mental representations – in their material, semiotic reality – play a role in the rising of truth, and he rather understands the objective being of the thing as a second aspect of the thing, which is taken inasmuch as it is conceived objectively by the intellect.

⁵⁹ Durandus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., bk. I, d. 19, q. 6, § 10-11.

⁶⁰ Durandus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., bk. I, d. 19, q. 5, § 13: «What is formally true is that which is signified by a true proposition; but the intellect’s object taken enunciatively is signified by the true proposition, therefore the truth is formally the condition of the object of the intellect, and not of something existing subjectively in the intellect, and the major [proposition] is understandable, since a sign is not said to be such, if not because it signifies what is such formally, like urine is not said to be health since it signifies the health of that animal, that is formally health» (my translation).

⁶¹ Durandus, *In quatuor libros Sententiarum*, cit., bk. I, d. 19, q. 5, § 13: «And the same is said of a

“voice” refers to this truth “materially”, only its enunciation is “formally” true, such as when we claim to be true “that man is an animal” (*dicimus [...] hominem esse animal est verum*) or “that man is not a donkey” (*et [dicimus] hominem non esse animal est verum*). Hence, the formal dimension of truth follows only if the intellect, by enunciating a thing taken in its objective reality, composes or divides it with the external thing, or actually enunciates its supposed truthfulness.

The distinction between these two levels, the material and the formal, can also be found at work in Aquinas' most influential Renaissance commentators, Tommaso de Vio, Cajetan, who was very influential on early Jesuit scholasticism. Commenting on Aquinas' *Summa*, Cajetan defends the doctrine that truth lies *mainly* in composition and division, denying that truth does not at all indwell in simple apprehension. To prove that, however, Cajetan's strategy lies in demonstrating that there is truth at both levels of our intellect. Therefore, Cajetan retraces Henry's opposition between *id quod verum est* and *veritas*, arguing that one should distinguish between: 1) the act of being true of what knows (*cognoscentem esse verum*), which regards the sense or the incomplex «voices» and which is enough to explain the truth as it indwells in the intellect *in actu secundo*; and 2) the case in which the knower understands something as a truth (*cognoscentem cognoscere verum*); which is the truth that we find in the composing and dividing intellect, and in the intellect *ut cognoscens*⁶².

By appealing to another distinction, Cajetan opens to identifying these two levels with Aquinas' simple and complex truth. He argues that the conformity that establishes the truth can be understood in a twofold sense: *in actu signato* or *in actu exercito*⁶³. To know a conformity *in actu signato* means to simply have «a cognition concluding in a relation of conformity»; that is, to produce the confor-

proposition, of which it is not said it is true, if not because it signifies that which is formally true; and the minor [proposition] is understandable by itself, since a true proposition does not signify [anything] but what is enunciatively apprehended by intellect as its object, and so it is clear that the truth is the conformity of the intellect with the understood [*intellectam*] thing, inasmuch as what of the thing is enunciatively apprehended is consistent [*conformis*], or rather [it is] the same as the entity of the thing» (my translation).

⁶² Caietanus, *Summa Theologiae, cum commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietanis*, Ex Typographia Polyglotta, Rome 1888-1906, I, q. 16, art. 2, § 2: 208.

⁶³ Caietanus, *Summa Theologiae...*, cit., I, q. 16, art. 2, § 6: 209. For a good historical reconstruction about these terms see G. Nuchelmans, «The Distinction Actus Exercitus/Actus Significatus in Medieval Semantics», in N. Kretzmann (ed.), *Meaning and Inference in Medieval Philosophy*, Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht 1988, pp. 57-90.

mity without a deliberate expression of the truth. To know the conformity *in actu exercito* is, by contrast, «to know something in itself insofar as it is known in the conformity»; that is, to know something by expressly meaning that our knowledge has some conformity with the real being. The truth of simple apprehensions takes place only *in actu signato*, whereas the “real” truth, the one resulting from the composition and division of the intellect *ut cognoscens* (insofar as a knower), is the one which stems from the *actu exercito*. Thus, the latter represent the principal kind of truth, it being the only context in which our intellect really knows the truth⁶⁴.

5. Suárez and the Cognitive Truth

In light of the Dominican solutions, Suárez’s account⁶⁵ can now be address-

⁶⁴ A few years later, Silvestri defended a similar view, arguing for a distinction *ex parte rei* between: 1) the incomplex in itself, which is nothing but the represented thing «formally and absolutely taken, which is apprehended by the first operation of the intellect», and 2) the incomplex concept, which represents the object for the intellect and that the intellect uses to conceive it (Francesco Silvestri, *Summa Contra Gentiles cum commentarii Francisci de Sylvestris Ferrariensis*, Ex Typis Riccardi Garroni, Rome 1918, I, ch. 59, § 5, p. 169). According to Silvestri, the incomplex, in itself, can be further considered, *ex parte rei*, as: 1.1) «absolutely and in itself», when, for instance, one considers the concept of “rational animal” in itself, without any comparison to extra-mental realities; and 1.2) the incomplex in itself, according to «what is apprehended by the intellect», when, for instance, one makes up the concept of “rational animal” with the intentional aim to mentally represent the quiddity of a man (Silvestri, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, cit., I, ch. 59, § 5, p. 169). It is not hard to see that this distinction partially retraces that between *in actu signato* and *in actu exercito*. In the first case, no comparison is entailed, and so the contemplation of the incomposite does not generate any truth; by contrast, in second perspective, the incomplex «includes a comparison to the concomitant thing» and, «it is understood with a comparison, and understood truly» (Silvestri, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, cit., I, ch. 59, § 5, p. 169), when the apprehension of the quiddity is adequate to the real essence of the object. Like Cajetan, Silvestri does not mean, by this argument, to say that the truth of the incompositities has the same importance as the complex truth. Even in the case of incomposites, which are deliberately aimed at representing a quiddity, the intellect does not *know* the truth, but it just falls in a true apprehension. To use Silvestri’s own words, the intellect is true «just as it has in itself the conformity to the understood thing», and not «as it actually knows the truth» (Silvestri, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, cit., I, ch. 59, § 5, p. 169).

⁶⁵ On Suárez account of truth, see the initial remarks in J. Doyle, «Suárez on Being of Reason and Truth», Part I and II, *Vivarium*, 25-26 (1987-1988), 47-75 and 51-72 (see especially Part I, pp. 49-52) and G. Burlando, «Suárez on Translatio Vocis ‘Veritas’», in L. Novák (ed.), *Suárez’s Metaphysics in its Historical and Systematic Context*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014, pp. 63-86. In the first part of *DM*, 8, Suárez partially follows the way paved by Fonseca. I reconstructed Fonseca’s account for cognitive and transcendental truth in Guidi, «Complex and Simple Truth...», cit., and Guidi, «La *quaestio veritatis* in Pedro da Fonseca...», cit.

sed more clearly. Opening section 1 of the *DM* 8, Suárez stresses a basic scholastic distinction, which retraces a threefold meaning of the truth (and which the Spanish Jesuit attributes to Aquinas). The distinction is that between: 1) the truth *in significando* (the truth of meaning or material truth), concerning the verbal level, and therefore pertaining to dialectics; 2) the truth *in cognoscendo* (cognitive or formal truth), concerning the intellect, and therefore pertaining to physics; 3) the truth *in essendo* (transcendental truth) concerning the being and therefore, pertaining to metaphysics⁶⁶. Throughout the first half of the *DM* 8, Suárez focuses especially on the truth of meaning and cognitive truth, leaving the discussion on the metaphysical level of truth *in essendo* to the end⁶⁷.

Let us start from the truth of meaning. Suárez deals with it together taking advantage of a harsh refutation of Durandus' conception of the truth⁶⁸. In section 1, Suárez presents the Dominican's view as grounded on the need of conformity *in repraesentando* (in representing), at the level of objective being⁶⁹, and rejects reestablishing the canonical definition of truth as a judgment which adequately joins two terms. For Suárez, the conformity at issue is not that between the real being and the objective being, but more traditionally, that between the real being and a judgment which is produced or enunciated by the intellect⁷⁰. To further elaborate upon his criticism, Suárez appeals to the issue of the meaning of the truth of the vocal proposition (or «of the image»), which he defines in light of Gregory of Rimini's topography of mental contents⁷¹. Very clearly, Suárez again sides en-

⁶⁶ *DM*, 8, Prologus.

⁶⁷ Suárez deals with transcendental truth especially in *DM*, 8, ss. 7-8, reducing it to an analogical denomination grounded on an intrinsic property of the thing. I indwell specifically on this topic in the essay «Is Truth a Property of Things? Suárez's Razor on Transcendental Truth», in S. Guidi, *Baroque Metaphysics. Studies on Francisco Suárez*, Palimage, Coimbra 2020 (forthcoming).

⁶⁸ For Suárez, Durandus supports the conception of truth as the conformity of the *res* «understood as *obiecta* to the intellect»; i.e., as the conformity between the «objective concept of the enunciating intellect» and the *res* in its real being (*DM*, 8, s. 1, § 2).

⁶⁹ *DM*, 8, s. 1, § 2.

⁷⁰ *DM*, 8, s. 1, § 3.

⁷¹ See especially G. Nuchelmans, *Theories of the proposition: Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of the Bearers of Truth and Falsity*, North Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam 1973, pp. 272-242, and G. Nuchelmans, *Late Scholastic and Humanist Theories of the Proposition*, North Holland Publishing Company, Amsterdam 1980, pp. 52-73. On the sources of Gregory's theory (Wodeham), see G. Gál, «Adam of Wodeham's Question on the "Complexus significabile" as the Immediate Object of Scientific Knowledge», *Franciscan Studies*, 37 (1977), 66-102. On its reception in the following debate, see especially J. E. Ashworth, *Language and Logic in the Post-medieval Period*, Reidel, Dordrecht and Boston 1974, pp. 55-62, and Jack Zupko, «How It

tirely against Durandus, and uses the case of the truth of meaning against him. The truth *in significando*, indeed, «does not consist in the conformity of the things, taken as signified, with [the things] themselves taken as existing», as would stem from Durandus' premises, but «it rather indwells in the immediate conformity of the signified voice to the signified thing»⁷². This means that in order to have the truth of meaning, the objective content of the *esse repraesentatum* need not be adequate to the real being; what is needed is rather (and simply) that the mental representation (i.e. the species) is 'materially', adequate to the real being of the extra-mental being.

The problem of cognitive truth is specifically at issue in section 2. Suárez first deals with the thesis according to which the truth *in cognoscendo* is something real and absolute, which indwells in the act of knowledge but also depends directly on the actual existence of the known thing⁷³. According to Suárez, such

Played in the 'Rue de Fouarre': The Reception of Adam Wodeham's Theory of the 'Complex Significabile' in the Arts Faculty at Paris in the Mid-fourteenth Century», *Franciscan Studies*, 54 (1994-1997), 211-225. See also J. E. Ashworth, «Mental Language and the Unity of Propositions: A Semantic Problem Discussed by Early Sixteenth-Century Logicians», *Franciscan Studies*, 41 (1981), 61-96, and R. Gaskin, «Complex significabilia and the Formal Distinction», in A. Maièrù and L. Valente (eds), *Medieval Theories on Assertive and Nonassertive Language*, Leo Olschki, Firenze 2002, pp. 495-516. I refer notably to the doctrine introduced by Gregory of Rimini's *Prologus*, q. 1, a. 3 (see Nuchelmans, *Theories of the Proposition*, cit., pp. 227-229).

⁷² *DM*, 8, s. 1, § 3.

⁷³ A view which it is not hard to identify with Capréolus' account. Unlike Hervaeus and Durandus, Capréolus holds that the truth indwells «mainly in the intellect» and it is only secondarily in things, inasmuch «as they are compared to the intellect» (Johannes Capreolus, *Defensiones theologiae divi Thomae Aquinatis*, ediderunt C. Paban et Th. Pègues, Alfred Cattier, Turbonibus, 1900-1908, vol. 2, d. 19, q. 3, *prima conclusio*). Capréolus thus adds to Aquinas' account a distinction. Indeed, the truth can be understood in two ways: 1) as it is *in re*, where it is a *relation* of the thing with the species, and so truth is relative to (and, we should add with Aquinas, it is accidentally of) the thing, namely it is the thing, taken as it is adequately known by the intellect; 2) as it lies in the intellect, where the truth is instead something *absolute*, namely it is nothing but the adequate mental representation of the thing. The truth, from the side of the thing, is «the essence of the thing», and «a certain relation founded *in re* and terminated to the cognition or likeness which indwells in the intellect» (Capreolus, *Defensiones*, cit., d. 19, q. 3, *secunda conclusio*). From the side of intellectual truth, truth is by contrast «not a relation of conformity [*relatio adaequationis*], but rather the understanding, or the species, or the adequate concept of the thing, or of the thing conforming itself [to the concept]»; though, in this case, truth «presupposes such an absolute which is in the intellect; but beyond that absolute, it expresses a regard [*respectus*] of conformity or of adequation to the known thing» (Capreolus, *Defensiones*, cit., d. 19, q. 3, *tertia conclusio*). Intellectual truth is so defined as 'absolute' because the truth of the thing is totally relative to the existence of an intellectual representation, whereas the intellectual representation

an account cannot be accepted, being that propositions like «a chimera is a false being» are true claims, even though they do not relate to any real being⁷⁴. Suárez's own solution for cognitive truth, rather, is more complex and is as follows. On the one hand, cognitive truth does not add to our cognition of anything which is distinct *in re* nor to a relation of predication (that is, truth is a mere relation of reason)⁷⁵; on the other hand, truth is not, strictly speaking, a relation of reason. In fact, truth simply adds a cognitive connotation to the extra-mental thing; that is, it adds a mental "label" which signals that the object, which is known, is known adequately by the composing and dividing judgment⁷⁶. For Suárez, formal or cognitive truth is simply a cognitive qualification which consists in the act by which our intellect *knows* the very conformity (i.e. the truth of meaning) between our mental representation (the species) and the extra-mental thing. Once the intellect knows such conformity, it "labels" the extra-mental thing as known truly by a mental representation⁷⁷. This is why Suárez stresses that two elements are needed to have cognitive truth: 1) an intentional representation of the very act of cognition (the truth of meaning), represented as adequate to the extra-mental being; 2) the concomitance of the object, which really exists, and in the way it is represented by our act of cognition⁷⁸.

It seems clear that Suárez can take Henry's account together with Cajetan's view herein, and he opposes all of them to Durandus' model. The cognitive truth is not merely an adequate representation (that is, the 'material' truth of meaning, or Henry's "true"), but rather consists in the "formal" knowledge that such a representation is true (that is, Henry's "truth"). Indeed, in the formal act which founds the cognitive truth, the intellect presents the representation *in significando* to itself, considering it as adequate to the concomitant object. The cognitive truth thus

is what should be adequate to the thing to be true. Even though Capréolus does not claim that the intellective truth exists already at the level of the simple apprehensions, Late Scholastics would attribute to him such a position (see for instance, *DM*, 8, s. 3, § 5).

⁷⁴ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 2.

⁷⁵ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 6.

⁷⁶ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 9.

⁷⁷ For Suárez, this is, nonetheless, one of the fundamental prerequisites for the «transposition» of the cognitive truth to the things themselves (transcendental truth). See Guidi, «Is Truth a Property of Things?...», cit.

⁷⁸ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 12. See *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 14 for a further distinction between *formal* and *radical* truth, which we cannot deal with in this article. Formal truth is that described above, whereas radical truth lies in the «perfection of the act from which it derives suchlike conformity with the object», such as it happens in scientific evidence and in faith's certainty.

indwells in a cognitive act, adequate to the real being (that is, a true representation *in significando*), accompanied by an intentional representation of such an act and by its actual conformity with the real being. Such an intentional representation is really close to Henry's second-level mental word, representing the concept itself as known as true. Before the cognitive truth there is a truth of meaning which is nothing but the simple, adequate, mental representation of a being, and which can be involved in a second-level affirmation, stating that our representation is known as adequate to the extra-mental thing.

6. Cognitive Truth and Simple Apprehension

But what about the case of simple apprehension: is its truth limited to the truth of meaning or does it extend as far as cognitive or transcendental truth? Differently from his contemporary colleagues⁷⁹, Suárez is actually quite cautious in anchoring the simple truth to God's ideas⁸⁰. He maintains that truth should be restricted to composition and division, as Aquinas argued, only if speaking the truth is meant *speciali modo* (in special way). Indeed, Aquinas' restriction should only be read as referring to the 'formal truth' *in actu exercito*, when the intellect deliberately expresses the correspondence of a mental judgment with extra-mental reality⁸¹. Nevertheless, the truth *in actu exercito* is nothing but cognitive truth, where the intellect compares its representation with the external being. This does not happen in the case of a composition taken *in actu signato* or in simple apprehension, where, once more, the representation is true but the intellect does not really know this truth. According to Suárez, simple apprehension contains only a *veritas signi* (sign's truth), but the latter should only be understood in the sense that simple truth is true *in essendo* (in being)⁸².

In addition to this thesis, Suárez addresses⁸³ another important question, regarding whether the truth of cognition already lies in the *notitia apprehensiva*,

⁷⁹ I am especially referring to Fonseca, see Guidi, «La *quaestio veritatis* in Pedro da Fonseca. Il problema della *simplex apprehensio* e la fondazione delle identità logiche», cit.

⁸⁰ In *DM*, 8, s. 7, § 7, Suárez will conclude that transcendental truth is a denomination transposed on things from cognitive truth, and whatever intellect (included, but not necessarily the divine) is able to found it. See Guidi, «Is Truth a Property of Things?...», cit.

⁸¹ *DM*, 8, s. 3, § 18.

⁸² *DM*, 8, s. 4, § 19. For Suárez, the simples are true in the way in which things are true, that is by assuming simple concepts or perceptions or compositions and divisions as beings, which are adequate to their concepts or ideas in a mind. See *DM*, 8, s. 8, § 13 and Guidi, «Is Truth a Property of Things?...», cit.

⁸³ *DM*, 8, s. 4.

or it always needs a judgment. Authentic truth is only that in the «composing cognition», which, according to what we said above, joins and divides the terms affirming a connection that was not pre-contained in simple apprehension. In order to have a truth, such a composition must also be known conceptually and cognitively, and it is not sufficient to merely associate two simple terms⁸⁴. Suárez employs a famous Stoic paradox⁸⁵, the sentence *astra sunt paria*. In this proposition, the mind connects two simple elements; that is, “stars” and “even number”, of which it has two different notions independently. Though, at the same time, our intellect must also suspend judgment about the reality of such a composition, since it does not know the real connection between them. This, even if the mental assertion *astra sunt paria* has juxtaposed them in some way⁸⁶.

However, it is worth stressing that for Suárez, even simple apprehension is capable of discerning some cognitive truth⁸⁷. Although it is simple, simple apprehension is indeed any kind of knowledge and contains *implicit* judgments⁸⁸. For instance, the simple apprehension of horse contains implicit judgments about its nature or about its accidents. In these implicit judgments, conformity is that between our intra-mental representations (the species) and the extra-mental things. According to Suárez, there are especially two cases of this kind: 1) the representations of the senses (for instance, when the lamb immediately recognizes the wolf and runs away, it actually knows the wolf, even without understanding it

⁸⁴ *DM*, 8, s. 4, § 4-5.

⁸⁵ Implied by Fonseca too (Pedro da Fonseca, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*, tomus primus, apud Franciscum Zanettum et Bartholomeum Tosium socios, Romae 1577; tomus secundus, ex officina Iacobi Tornerij, Romae, 1589; tomus tertius, apud Emanuelem de Lyra, Eborae 1604, I, bk. 4, ch. 2, q. 6, s. 5, p. 620). See *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, II, 25, § 65 (Chrysippus). See also Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hip.*, I, 97; II, 90 and *Adv. Log.*, I, 243. See also Nicolas de Oresme, ed. by S. Caroti, J. Celeyrette, S. Kirschner, E. Mazet, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013, bk. II, q. 13, p. 262r58ff.

⁸⁶ Suárez's solution is inspired by Buridan, who solved a similar paradox by explaining that a chimera is composed by simple parts, each one provided with its own independent meaning, whose composition is, yet, impossible or uncertain. See J. Buridan, *Sophisms on Meaning and Truth*, tr. by T. K. Scott, Appleton Century Crofts, New York 1966, pp. 72ff. See L. N. Roberts, «A Chimera is a Chimera: A Medieval Tautology», *Journal of History of Ideas* 21 (1969), 273-278, and J. E. Ashworth, «Chimeras and Imaginary Objects: A Study in the Post-Medieval Theory of Signification», *Vivarium* 15 (1977), 57-79.

⁸⁷ *DM*, 8, s. 4, § 6.

⁸⁸ This refers to a doctrine which was already in Aquinas and which would appear in Couto's commentary on the *Dialectics* (*The Conimbricenses: Some Questions on Signs*, tr. and ed. John Doyle, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 2001, q. 5, a. 4, p. 167). See above, n. 32.

in actu exercito or without affirming a truth of the wolf); 2) the mental representation of *ficta* (fictitious beings); when one imagines a gold mountain or a chimera, he does not apprehend them as true, but as possible, at least according to the figure by which we apprehend it or as possible meanings in vocal-verbal signs⁸⁹. In both cases, such a truth of simple apprehensions is not the transcendental truth, but just the cognitive one.

As for the second case, it is worth recalling that for Suárez, beings of reason⁹⁰ have only an efficient cause (our intellect), by which they are made along with the aid of the imagination. The *esse* of the chimera is thus just the objective one in our mind and it only possesses the lower degree of transcendental truth⁹¹ (that is, it is true solely on the level of signification and cognition, as a mere fiction

⁸⁹ *DM*, 8, s. 4, § 7. See especially Doyle, «Suárez on beings of reason and truth», Part II, which concludes that Suárez's account of the truth of beings which depends only on the human mind «turns upon the significative cast of the words involved in the expression of beings of reason, especially so-called impossible beings. Because such words, unlike mere nonsense syllables, have signification, there is in their regard, and in regard to the beings of reason they express, the possibility of some statements being true even as others are false» (p. 71).

⁹⁰ Suárez's treatise on the beings of reason is the *DM*, 54. See again Doyle, «Suárez on beings of reason and truth», cit., and D. D. Novotny, «Suárez on Beings of Reason», in V. Salas and R. Fastiggi, *A Companion to Francisco Suárez*, Brill Leiden-Boston, pp. 248-273. See also J. J. E. Gracia, «Suárez's Conception of Metaphysics: A Step in the Direction of Mentalism?», *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 65 (1991), 287-309; B. Canteñs, «Suárez on Beings of Reason: What Kind of Being (*entia*) are Beings of Reason, and What Kind of Being (*esse*) Do they Have?», *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 77 (2003), 171-187.

⁹¹ For Suárez, beings have as much truth as they have entity. Accordingly, real beings are the only ones which are really transcendently true, whereas beings of reason have only a minimal degree of truth. See *DM*, 8, s. 7, § 34, and Guidi, «Is Truth a Property of Things?...», cit.. This is however why one can mark as true «the fact that a chimera is an imaginary being and that man is not a horse». In s. 8, Suárez points out that the truth grasped in composition and division as the *primaeva significatio* of truth, and establishes that this type of truth is also the foundation for the extension of the qualification 'true' to real, actual beings and to beings of reason. However, for this kind of truth, beings of reason are not true by the truth which is a real *passio entis*. The extension of the qualification "true" to them is due merely to the fact that they are things, even if they are mental ones. Hence, Suárez is open to the truth of beings afforded merely with objective being because they are mental objects, i.e. names supposing meanings and so able to found any proposition. Moreover, what is true is not, strictly speaking, the simple apprehension of the being of reason, but rather the entire complex proposition which composes or divides these terms, considering "chimera", "man", "horse", etc. without any reference to the real being. This is a purely logical truth, close to identity or non-contradiction, given the definition of a "chimera" is "an imaginary being" and the definition of "man" is not "a horse". Such a theory aims at explaining why propositions like "I am imagining a winged-horse", or "I believe that chimeras do not exist" could be true even if their objects have only objective being (see above).

of the mind). Yet as Suárez himself remarks, the apprehensive compositions by which one considers two simple terms as related or divided can also be constituted without an actual judgment, if they are joined by a mere vocal or verbal enunciation (what Suárez calls «non ultimate» concepts⁹²) which materially links them in a unique proposition, i.e. the proposition *astra sunt paria* (“stars are even in number”) considered as a mere verbal proposition. In this case as well, two possibilities are given: 1) in a first sense, we understand the sentence *astra sunt paria* as the object “stars even in number”, of which we know only that it is possible. In this case, the mental object is just the *possibility* of “even-numbered stars”, which we do not know if it is true or false. This means that *astra sunt paria* is actually a double simple apprehension, in which we say, on the one hand, that “stars even in number are possible”, and, on the other hand, we apprehend such a possibility by doubting, and not judging, its truthfulness; 2) in a second sense, we consider the two extremes of *astra sunt paria* – the stars and the even number – solely according to what is meant by the ‘non ultimate’ concept that “the stars are even in number”. In this case, for Suárez, the intellect does not apprehend something by affirming or denying, but it apprehends the voice as a simple voice, asserting that “stars are even in number”⁹³.

7. Suárez, Truth, and Objective Being: Remarks on a Widespread Interpretation

As I mentioned, the aim of this paper was also to question a widespread reading on Suárez, legitimated in particular by Jean-François Courtine’s valuable work *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*⁹⁴ (however, one of the most relevant works on the Uncommon Doctor). According to this reading, Suárez, inspired by Durandus, pushed his use of the objective concept to the point of abandoning the Aristotelian model of truth as adequation; namely, Suárez would have replaced the traditional reference to the *esse realis* with that to the *esse obiectivum*, to the

⁹² *DM*, 8, *Prologus*.

⁹³ *DM*, 8, s. 4, § 8.

⁹⁴ J.-F. Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, PUF, Paris 1990. My remarks ideally follow José Pereira’s criticism to the «alleged essentialism of Suárez», and to the «anamorphosis» of suarezian thought, depicted as a representationalist essentialism. See J. Pereira, «The Existential Integralism of Suárez: Reevaluation of Gilson’s Allegation of Suarezian Essentialism», in *Gregorianum*, 85, (2004, 4), 660-688 and J. Pereira, *Suárez Between Tradition and Modernity*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 2006, pp. 97-139. All the English translations from Courtine 1990 are mine.

extent that the latter is understood as a mere “objectivity”⁹⁵ that is able to found an ontology of the possible.

According to Courtine, Suárez understands the *res* just as an objective reference – in the form of an Avicennian common nature marked with a pre-phenomenological intentionality – and it might do that thanks to the way paved by Durandus, an alleged supporter of a doctrine which asserts that truth is adequate «to the eternal reasons in the divine intellect»⁹⁶; such an adequation would introduce indeed «a kind of intermediary between the *res extra* and its idea in the divine intellect»⁹⁷, establishing an objective reality which is simultaneously an intentional reality and an *esse objective in anima*. The rehabilitation of Durandus would thus be the starting point of a modern overturning of the conception of truth, so that truth would be understood as «adequation to the unknown thing = x», namely to a *res ad extra* which cannot be understood in itself, and which can be approached just in its «objectivity for a human intellect»⁹⁸. Accordingly, Suárez, as a continuer of Durandus, would establish even that «there is no *res*, if not insofar as it conforms itself to its *realitas*, which always lies on the level of objectivity, of the ‘real’ essence, or of the possible»⁹⁹. The *res* would completely lose its real connotation to become a mere extrinsic reference. In light of this reading, Courtine even argues that the reference to the *concomitantia objecti*, to which Suárez refers while defining the truth *in cognoscendo*, is «fully deceptive» if one sees in it the traditional model of adequation: «we must pay attention, indeed, to not think that, by it, Suárez would try to go back to a classic determination of truth as *adaequatio intellectus ad rem*, where it is the *res*, and just that, that bears the entire reality [...]. For Suárez, instead, it is the intellect in itself which is eminently “real”»¹⁰⁰.

The debate reconstructed in this article and the presentation of Suárez’s claims in *DM* 8 should be sufficient to prove that such an interpretation is quite hard to defend. Yet, the following, final paragraphs of the present paper aim to further specify this remark by showing that this reading of Suárez – while it succeeds very well in showing how the *res* was already mainly a cognitive concept in Medieval Scholasticism – cannot be based on a reading of *DM* 8. Suárez never

⁹⁵ “Objectité” in French.

⁹⁶ Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, cit., p. 177.

⁹⁷ Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, cit., p. 177.

⁹⁸ Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, cit., p. 177.

⁹⁹ Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, cit., p. 178.

¹⁰⁰ Courtine, *Suárez et le système de la métaphysique*, cit., p. 181.

seems to claim the interchangeability of *esse obiectivum* and *esse realis* as it concerns the truth anywhere in this *Disputation*. Indeed, like Fonseca¹⁰¹, he rejects such a possibility while discussing simple concepts and he denies, with his Jesuit colleague, that simple apprehensions of beings of reason (so, a purely intentional ones), even if provided with their *esse obiectivum*, have some degree of transcendental truth (if not a minimal one).

Let us just address three specific textual examples which, according to Courtine, would justify the picture of an “intentionalist” Suárez, meant to leave aside real being. Our aim in discussing these texts is just to contribute to their best reading, and to contribute to the advancement of the knowledge on these topics. The first passage is that of *DM* 8, s. 1, § 4, where Suárez claims that

The thing, as known or as represented, when it is truly known and represented, does not have other objective being than that which it has in itself; and this is the reason why the object of such a cognition is said to be actualized by the cognition which terminates to it, just as an extrinsic denomination¹⁰².

¹⁰¹ See Guidi, «La *quaestio veritatis* in Pedro da Fonseca...», cit., pp. 65-66. For Fonseca, the conformity of simple apprehension is that «between the thing and the intelligible species, or formal concept». Yet this definition does not assume the thing in its *esse obiectivum* (as held by Durandus) but rather in its *esse realis*, «if not actual, at least potential, [...] because for the conformity in which the simple truth consists, it is not needed that things actually exist; but it would be enough if they could exist» (Fonseca, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis...*, cit., vol. I, bk. 4, ch. 2, q. 6, s. 8, pp. 625-626). Indeed, Fonseca establishes simple truth as a kind of truth, and he cannot include in its content objective being, which would include everything, including non-existing apprehended beings. In the *Institutionum dialecticarum libri octo*, Antonius Alvarez, Lisbon 1564 (Portuguese trans. *Instituições dialécticas*, intr. est. do texto, tr. e notas por J. Ferreira Gomes, Universidade de Coimbra, Instituto de Estudos Filosóficos, Coimbra 1964, Fonseca deals with the chimera-issue also while discussing the extension and the modes of the *supposita* (ch. 37-38, pp. 726-731). There Fonseca refuses to recognize the *imaginabilia* as a specific category of names, arguing that, in predicating them, monsters or winged horses are understood as real beings, or are imagined as false-real-beings (ch. 37, p. 728). However, the Jesuit opens up to an attribution to fictional beings, which are just objectively in the intellect. Indeed, they can be inflected in temporal dimensions like the past, the present and the future (ch. 37, p. 731). Thus, according to Fonseca that of a chimera is a name provided with full sense, since, as a name, it is nothing but a mental possibility. This makes us able to talk about a chimera, even if its concept is not adequate to any extra-mental reality (and so not true), the adequation being limited to the *potestas existendi*. As a being of reason provided just with objective being, the chimera is not a true being, because it cannot exist.

¹⁰² *DM*, 8, s. 1, § 4: «res ut cognita vel ut repraesentata, quando vere cognoscitur et repraesentatur non habet aliud esse obiectivum praeter illud quod in se habet; quod solum dicitur actu esse obiectum tali cognitioni per denominationem extrinsecam a cognitione quae terminatur ad ipsum» (my translation).

Here Suárez seems to open up to the notion of a direct adequation to the concept and the *esse obiectivum*, making the external thing into nothing more than an external denomination added to knowledge which, internally, is already complete. Still, such a claim comes in *DM* 8 just to enhance the view, opposed to that of Durandus, according to which the complex truth of cognition lies only in the conformity between judgment and the extra-mental thing. This claim is on the other hand an *ad hoc* argument against Durandus, placed in a sequence that had already defined the truth *in significando* as the semiotic conformity of the mental or vocal representation to the object.

Suárez's argument is rather the following: if we take the *res* inasmuch as it is known or represented, and assuming such a knowledge or representation is true – that is, adequate to the extra-mental object – the objective being known through that representation does not differ at all from the objective being of the object in itself. Hence, Suárez argues, Durandus' doctrine is fully useless, since he cannot really claim that the adequation which grants the truth is that between the objective being of the *res* and the *res* in itself. Indeed, the objective being known by the intellect, and the objective being of the thing, are rather identical and no adequation can be established between identical terms.

For Suárez, the *res* is actually the object of a cognition only according to an extrinsic denomination, insofar as the latter is the extrinsic *terminus* of an entirely mental cognitive operation, which corresponds to it *thanks to the adequate representation in significando on which it is grounded*. For instance, Suárez argues, let us consider a seen thing taken strictly in its objective being and with respect to the faculty of sight. In this case, the extra-mental thing does not add anything to the sensation describing it as bright and colored. To the faculty of sight (but just to this faculty), the object is nothing but what the faculty perceives. So, Suárez explains:

the object, taken as such or insofar as it is known or represented, cannot be said to be adequate [*conforme*] to itself in real being, if not because the same form through which it is known or represented, has an immediate conformity with the thing known or represented *secundum se*¹⁰³.

This passage states that the objective being of the *res*, also on the level of the truth *in cognoscendo*, is equivalent to the thing itself; but it also states that such an

¹⁰³ *DM*, 8, s. 1, § 4: «obiectum sic sumptum ut cognitum vel repraesentatum, non potest alia ratione dici conforme sibi in esse reali, nisi quia ipsa forma qua cognoscitur vel repraesentatur, habet immediatam conformitatem cum re cognita vel repraesentata secundum se» (my translation).

objective being cannot be grasped if not through a previous representation, which is intrinsically and immediately adequate to the extra-mental being. Only once the intellect has grasped this representation does it have an adequate intentional representation of the extra-mental reality, such that the known representation is exactly the same as the thing itself on the cognitive level.

Nevertheless, this happens on the cognitive level because in no way does Suarez deal here with metaphysical truth or truth *in essendo*, with the substitution of real being with objective being, or with the deposition of the Aristotelian model of truth as *adaequatio*. The required condition of Suárez's statement is indeed that the thing «is truly known and represented»; that is, the truth *in cognoscendo* is a mental operation which already takes place under the premise of a semiotic adequation between the intellect and the thing on the level of the mental representation, as the adequation of the truth *in significando*. Only if the latter is true, can the cognitive act grasp the objective being as equivalent to the extra-mental thing from it. Hence, it seems to be right to say that according to Suárez, cognitive truth has no need of the extra-mental object, if not as an extrinsic term. Such independence is granted by the fact that the intra-mental representation is already adequate to the extra-mental thing, which remains a fundamental, basic reference for the entire mental construction of truth.

A second excerpt which Courtine calls into question is *DM* 8 (s. 2, § 12), the direct continuation of the text in which Suárez explains that the truth *in cognoscendo* lies in an intentional representation of the representation *in significando* as adequate to the concomitant object:

for truth, representation is not sufficient by itself, if the object does not exist such as it is represented: nor can the concomitance of the object be sufficient to the denomination of the truth, unless the said representation is presupposed, or rather included; because the truth is not just that extrinsic denomination, but it includes an intrinsic condition [*habitudinem*] of the act, directed [*terminatam*] at the object, which exists in this way¹⁰⁴.

According to Courtine, Suárez here reveals a double insufficiency, namely, that of the representation, which cannot be an independent foundation for the

¹⁰⁴ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 12: «ad veritatem nec sola repraesentatio sufficit, si obiectum non ita se habeat sicut repraesentatur: neque concomitantia obiecti potest sufficere ad denominationem veritatis, nisi praesupposita praedicta repraesentatione vel potius includendo illam; quia veritas non est sola illa denominatio extrinseca, sed includit intrinsecam habitudinem actus terminatam ad obiectum taliter se habens» (my translation)..

truth, and that of the external thing, converted into a mere *obiectum*, that is, reduced to its objective being. This might be true even if, in this passage, the Jesuit's view seems much less draconian where he is discussing the truth *in cognoscendo*. On the one hand, he does stress that representation is insufficient, by itself, to found the truth *in cognoscendo*; and yet he remarks that such insufficiency is such only if the representation is not fully adequate. On the other hand, the reference to the object (*terminatam ad obiectum*) is not a reference to the objective being. Here, Suárez is simply claiming that not even the mere concomitance of extra-mental things, which on the level of cognition is an extrinsic denomination, can grant the truth, if the representation is not already adequate to the correspondent object. So, one more time, the *Eximius* is subscribing to the thesis that for the truth of cognition, the intellect must judge its representation *in significando* as adequate to the extra-mental truth; and, without such a judgment which “knows” the mental representation as adequate (that is, *in actu exercito*), neither the mere conformity *in essendo* of the species, nor the mere concomitance of the object, can found the truth *in cognoscendo*.

A third and final passage under discussion is that of *DM* 8, s. 2, § 16, where Suárez remarks, against Durandus, that the truth is always accompanied by the concomitance of the object, but – Courtine especially stresses this aspect – such an object may also not exist *actualiter*:

I grant that the truth as such never is, formally, in the real relation; still, I deny that what follows from this is the non-inclusion of the concomitance of the object to which the knowledge is conformed. Nor is it important that in this way the truth of cognition does not always require the object as actually [*actu*] existing, because we do not claim that the real existence of the object is included in the concept of truth, but only that it exists such as it is represented and judged by cognition, or that it has the being such as it is known¹⁰⁵.

In light of the previous considerations, the matter in this passage can be resolved easily. Indeed, «we do not claim that the real existence of the object is included in the concept of truth» because it suffices that the *terminus* of the judgment is

¹⁰⁵ *DM*, 8, s. 2, § 16: «concedo veritatem ut sic nunquam consistere formaliter in relatione reali, nego tamen inde sequi non includere concomitantiam obiecti cui cognitio conformetur. Nec refert quod huiusmodi veritas cognitionis non semper requirat obiectum actu existens, quia non dicimus realem existentiam obiecti includi in conceptu veritatis, sed solum quod ita se habeat sicut per cognitionem repraesentatur seu iudicatur; seu quod habeat tale esse quale cognoscitur» (my translation).

«such as it is represented and judged by cognition, or that it has the being such as it is known». Still, such being, as Suárez adds in the following, «is not always the being of existence», but it is also what «is sufficient for the truth of enunciation»; that is, the truth of the previous mental representation, which is true *in significando*. Hence, for a true cognition, all that is required is the concomitance of the object and a conformity of the signifying representation, not necessarily with its real, actual existence but at least with its formal reality, or its full meaning. That is, the representation on which we ground cognitive truth must be in some way adequate to a possible meaning, according to the scheme presented above.

8. Conclusions

Suárez denies all *direct*, metaphysical and transcendental reference of the intellect to objective being. Such a possibility is granted only by the previous presence of a mental representation, which must be semiotically adequate to the external reality, or, as in the case of beings of reason, to intentional being. Fictional beings, however, are mere verbal beings or images, provided with a full meaning on the level of the truth *in significando*, which makes it possible to consider them as abstract possibilities and to use them in the context of the truth *in cognoscendo*.

However, Suárez never dismantles the Aristotelian model of the *adaequatio*. Of course, this does not necessarily imply that the entire reconstruction of Suárez's metaphysics as grounded on the concept of the objective being would entirely collapse. To discuss such a complicated topic was not the purpose of the present article and I will just limit myself to one final remark. Even in the remote case that Suárez (as it has been often represented) was a forerunner of Leibniz or Wolff's essentialism, in saying that existence is only that which does not imply contradiction, this does not allow one to claim that, for the Uncommon Doctor, all which is possible is transcendently true. Objective being is the primary tool for the foundation of ontology, but this does not imply that Suárez thinks of objective reality and truth as mutually convertible. He never dismantled the idea of extra-mental reality, to which our concepts must be adequate, as the foundation of the truth *in representando* and *in cognoscendo*. Cognitive truth especially is strictly dependent upon previous and adequate representations, and its objective intra-mental content is not directly convertible with divine exemplars or with abstract, essential possibilities.

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