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PROLEGOMENA TO A STUDY OF BEINGS OF REASON IN POST-SUAREZIAN SCHOLASTICISM, 1600–1650

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One of the standard medieval philosophical distinctions concerned two "types" or domains of being: real being (*esse reale; esse naturae*[1]), possessed by entities which exist or can exist independently of the mind, and being of reason (*esse rationis*[2]), possessed by entities which exist in a mind-dependent way[3]. During the Middle Ages *entia rationis* were discussed in various contexts: logical (e.g. second intentions[4]), epistemological and metaphysical (e.g. universals),

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[1] This means, literally "being of nature". The expressions '*ens reale*' or '*ens in re*' (being in reality) were also used. Of course, it is a sweeping generalization to talk about beings of reason in "the Middle Ages". There were a great number of different debates and thinkers during this time period, and as yet we know very little about them. For instance, Lambertini (1989) has edited the manuscript of a Bolognese Averroist, Mattheus de Augubio (fl. 13/14th century), who argues against the proposition that beings of reason are non-real (*utrum ens rationis sit nihil et non ens*; p. 37). Augubio even ascribes to Aquinas the view that *ens rationis* is opposed to *ens naturae*, which – both as *ens reale* (!) – are opposed to *nihil* (p. 48). Neither Suárez nor any other post-Suárezian mentioned in this paper considers such an interpretation of Aquinas. For another example of an important move away from what might be thought of as the "standard medieval view", see Klima (1993).

[2] '*Ens rationis*' is commonly rendered as 'being of reason'. For the sake of stylistic fluency it would be useful to adopt Schmid's 'rationate being'. Unfortunately, this expression is so unusual that it is likely to create more confusion than it alleviates. See Schmidt (1966: 52–53 n. 15) for further discussion.

[3] "[E]ns est duplex: ens scilicet rationis et ens naturae." Aquinas, *Sententia Metaphysicae*, lib. 4, l. 4, n. 5. "*Ens est duplex, scilicet: naturae, et rationis.*" Scotus, *Elench* q. 1, n. 2.

[4] Second intentions have been extensively discussed at least since Hervaeus Natalis (1250/60-1323). Second intentions are relations which a real entity comes to have due to its being known, for instance, *universality* (between particulars and a universal) or *logical consequence* (between two propositions). In Thomism, second intentions play an important role because logic is held to be the science of second intentions (Schmidt 1966). This view was rejected by Suárez and many other Jesuits; in their view logic is the art of directing acts of reason. (See DM 54.Intr.1).

natural (e.g., privation as a principle of change), ethical (e.g., evil), and theological (e.g. God's relation to the creatures). These discussions were normally affected by their contexts and prompted by concern with a particular philosophical problem or issue. For instamce, by the question of how there can be evil in a universe created by God (cf. Aquinas, *Super Sent.* II, d. 34). There seems to be no attempt in medieval philosophy to treat *entia rationis* systematically until the *Disputatio* 54 of Francisco Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597). Suárez's work was tremendously successful[5] and its publication was followed by an explosion of research on metaphysics in general and on beings of reason in particular.

The aim of this paper is to identify some of the main issues concerning beings of reason that were discussed in post-Suarezian scholasticism, roughly during the period 1600–1650. The fact that I have chosen thinkers active before 1650 does not imply any value judgment about what came later.

In the period under discussion Aristotelians could be classified along confessional lines into Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic and secular (Stone 2002). It seems, however, that the most significant contribution to metaphysics comes from Catholic scholasticism.[6] The Catholic scholastics may be divided further into three philosophical schools linked with three religious orders of the Catholic Church: the Scotist school favored by the Franciscans, the Thomist school favored by the Dominicans, and a heterogeneous nominalistically oriented school favored by the Jesuits. Finally, there are the Catholic thinkers who did not ally themselves with any of the three established schools.

Given the number of active philosophers in this period, and their extensive writings, I have consulted for this preliminary investigation only a very limited sample of what was produced at the time.[7] *Disputatio* 54 of Francisco

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[5] There were seventeen editions in almost forty years between 1597 and 1636. See Doyle (1995: 7n. 47)

[6] For instance Zabarella (1578, 1966), a secular thinker, does not mention *entia ratinonis*, even though he deals with *secundae notiones* ("second notions" seem to be for Zabarella something like second intentions; see n. 4). Goclenius (1613, 1964), a reformed thinker, deals with *entia ratinonis* in two pages (155-6) and then refers to Suárez.

[7] The Scholasticon lists round seventeen hundred scholastic authors working in 1500-1780. Not all of them, of course, addressed the topic of beings of reason. However, many of them did – especially the Catholic post-Suárezians. Mastri's treatise (DOA 3) is probably the most extensive survey of these discussions. Mastri refers to more than eighty thinkers, of whom approximately forty are from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In comparison, Suárez refers to only eighteen thinkers altogether. But not even Mastri managed to take account of everything going on at the time; for instance, there is no reference in his work to either Smiglecki or Araújo. Here are some of the thinkers discussed by Mastri: Bartolomeo Amico († 1649), José Anglés [Anglicus] († 1588), Raffaele Aversa († 1657), Giacomino M. da Barge [Bargius] (fl. 1553), Josephus Blanch

Suárez SJ (1548–1617) is, of course, the starting point. Then I have consulted the relevant treatises of the following thinkers: Antonio Rubio SJ [Ruvius] (1548–1615) and Juan de Alvarado SJ (1578–1648); the "nominalistic trio" Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza SJ (1578–1641), Francisco de Oviedo SJ (1602–1651) and Roderigo de Arriaga SJ (1592–1667); the original but not very influential Marcin Śmiglecki SJ [Smiglecius] (1562/64–1618); Thomas Compton Carleton SJ (1591–1666); *princeps scotistarum* Bartholomeo Mastri OFMConv [Mastrius] (1602–1673) and his opponent John Punch OFMObs [Poncius] († 1672/3); the major representative of Thomism João Poinsot OP [Joannes a S. Thoma] (1589–1644); and an author of a small popular textbook Eustache a Sancto Paulo OCist (1573–1640).[8]

A major difficulty for any study of post-Suarezian theories of *entia rationis* is the scarcity of sophisticated secondary literature. To my knowledge, there are only three books which do not neglect this problem area: Risse's *Logik der Neuzeit* (1970), a general survey of post-medieval logic, Kobush's *Sein und Sprache* (1987), a survey of the history of cognitive ontology, and Hickman's *Modern Theories of Higher Level Predicates* (1980), an in-depth study of second intentions. Thankfully, there are also some articles, especially those of Doyle, who might be said to have rediscovered and reintroduced the topic of *entia rationis* for the contemporary audience. All these, however, cover only a fraction of what was going on during the time, both historically and systematically.

What is to be gained by a study of beings of reason in the seventeen century? First, there has been relatively little work done in the area of post-medieval but pre-modern scholastic philosophy. An investigation of this period fills an important historiographical gap. Second, the thought of philo-

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[Blanca] († 1616), Antonius M. Brasauola († 1555), Tommaso de Vio [Cajetan] († 1592), William Chalmers [Camerarius] († 1678), Hugh McCaughwell [Cavellus] († 1626), Franciscus Carreiro [Carrarius] († 1620), Collegium Complutense OCD (fl. 1650), Collegium Conimbricense (fl. 1600), Didachus a Iesu († 1621), Filippo Fabri († 1630), Pedro da Fonseca († 1599), Petrus Ludovicus († 1602), Gaspar de la Fuente (fl. 1630), Cristovão Gil [Gillius] († 1608), Alexander Gottifredi († 1652), Francesco Lichetto († 1520), Petrus Ludovicus († 1602), Bartolomé de Medina († 1580), Martin Meurisse († 1664), Antonio Berdardo della Mirandula [Bernardinus Mirandulanus] († 1565), Luis de Molina († 1600), Pedro de Oña († 1626), Petrus de Poznan († 1658), Juan de Rada († 1608), Constantino Sarnani (fl. 1600), Theodor Smissing († 1626), Francisco Suárez († 1617), Antonio Trombeta († 1517), Luis Torres [Turrianus] († 1655), Francesco Valles [Vallesius] († 1592), Gabriel Vázquez († 1604), Angelo Volpi [Vulpes] († 1647), Jacoppo Zabarella († 1589).

[8] Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to directly consult Francisco de Araújo, OP (1580–1664), who has recently attracted the attention of philosophers in the Spanish-speaking countries. See Fernández-Rodriguez (1972), (1994), (1996–7), (1997) and Millán-Puelles (1996). From these secondary sources I gather that Araújo holds a version of what I call the "classical theory" (i.e. the theory first systematized by Suárez).

sophers such as Descartes, Locke, Hobbes, Leibniz and Kant did not arise out of nothing, but rather developed within the philosophical context existing at the time. Without knowledge of this context we cannot properly evaluate the originality of what is considered today the mainstream thought and contributions of early modern philosophy. Third, in contemporary philosophy several topics related to *entia rationis* have been discussed, such as negative truthmakers, holes, fictions, and the nature of logical and social reality. A comparison with well-developed historical views is likely to prove inspiring for or challenging to this contemporary work.[9]

This paper is divided into seven sections: (I) an overview of the issues; (II) intension of '*ens rationis*'; (III) extension of '*ens rationis*'; (IV) division of *ens rationis*: negations and privations; (V) division of *ens rationis*: relations of reason; (VI) causes of *ens rationis*; (VII) Envoi.

I. INTRODUCTION – THE ISSUES CONCERNING *ENTIA RATIONIS*

I will begin by presenting a schematic overview of the issues addressed by seventeenth century scholastics, some of which will be explored in subsequent sections of this paper. (For a similar overview, see Roncaglia 1985.)

1. Logical and Ontological Problems:

Intension:

What is an *ens rationis*?

Extension:

Do *entia rationis* exist?

Which "things" are *entia rationis*? Are they to be identified with extrinsic denominations?

What is the division of *entia rationis*? (negation, privation, relation, ...)

What is a negation? What is a privation? What is a relation of reason?

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[9] Evidence for contemporary interest in beings of reason can be seen from the length of the annotated bibliography compiled by Raul Corazzon:
⟨http://www.formalontology.it/meontology.htm⟩. For evidence of interest in the subject since the very beginning of philosophy in Ancient Greece, see Bakaoukas (2003). For a brief general introduction to the topic, see Heanue (1991) and Theron (1991). Yela Utrila (1948) provides a basic overview of Suárez's account; Doyle's and Canteñs's papers, however, make Yela Utrila's paper obsolete.

Ontological status:

> In what sense do *entia rationis* 'exist'? Is there a sense of 'being' which is common to real beings and *entia rationis*?
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> What is the unity of *entia rationis*? (Universal, individual)

2. Epistemological Problems:

> Why do we construct *entia rationis*?
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> What mental powers are involved in conceiving *entia rationis*? Intellect, will, sense, imagination?
>
> Is there a science that studies *entia rationis*?

3. Semantical Problems:

Reference:

> What is the reference [*suppositio*] of terms that refer to *entia rationis*, if any?
>
> Should reference be extended [*ampliatio*] beyond present, past, future, and possible beings to merely imaginable ones?

Meaning:

> Are the terms used to talk about *entia rationis* meaningful?

Truth-conditions:

> What is the truth-value of statements containing terms such as 'chimaera'?

4. Ethical and Theological Problems:

> Is a moral being a type of *ens rationis*?
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> Is evil an *ens rationis*?
>
> Do God and angels construct *entia rationis*?
>
> Is God's relation to the creatures a relation of reason?

This classification is to some degree arbitrary because many discussions of *entia rationis* lie at the intersection of ontology and epistemology. Thus, some of the issues do not fall into one single class. For instance, if we understand ontology as the science which investigates being as being and its causes, then the question about the causes of *entia rationis* may be considered ontological. However, since the causes are in our mind and the investigation of such causes involves an investigation of the processes whereby beings of reason are constituted by the mind, an epistemological dimension is brought up.

In this paper I will touch only upon logical, ontological, and epistemo-logical problems, because scholastic treatises on *entia rationis*, to a large extent,

deal systematically with this subject only in these contexts. The majority of semantic, ethical and theological discussions of beings of reason are scattered throughout the many different works that were produced at the time, and their treatment here would pose insurmountable difficulties for a limited project like this one.

II. INTENSION OF '*ENS RATIONIS*'

Entia rationis are mind-dependent entities, but in which sense are they "dependent"? According to scholastics there are three types of dependency: effective, subjective, and objective.[10] An entity is *effectively* dependent when it is (as an effect) caused by reason (*per rationem fit*), e.g. as in the case of an artifact. It is *subjectively* dependent when it inheres in the intellect as an accident, e.g. in the case of a *habitus*. It is *objectively* dependent when it is known (conceived) by the intellect, which can happen in two ways. First, when the entity is present in the intellect as representing a real entity that is being known. For example, *I know human being*.[11] Second, when the entity is present in the intellect but without having an extra-mental correlate (although it may be *based* on one). For example, *I know (the relation of) logical implication.*

It is only in this last sense of 'mind-dependent entity' that the word *ens rationis* is appropriately used to describe it, since effectively and subjectively dependent entities are nevertheless also real. Thus the standard definitions of *entia rationis* given by Suárez and Poinsot are two: (a) "that which has a merely objective existence in the intellect" or (b) "that which the reason considers to be a being although it does not have being."[12] These definitions are equivalent, for the entity which has *only* objective being is the one *merely* conceived by intellect, which means that it does not have any (extra-mental) being, although the intellect believes that it does.

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[10] Suárez (DM 54.1.5–6), Poinsot (1631/1955: 60–61); among the recent scholastics, e.g. Urráburru (1908: 93–4) or Gredt (1899/1961[13]: §§ 105–113).

[11] Contemporary epistemologists commonly recognize three forms of knowing: (1) by acquaintance; *I know John*; (2) knowing how; *I know how to play the ukulele*; (3) knowing that; *I know that the sun is at the center of our solar system*. The scholastics, however, also recognized "acquaintance with a universal," i.e. the referent/content of a universal concept: *I know dog*, not just *a dog or the dog*.

[12] This characterization is given by Suárez: "*Et ideo recte definiri solet, ens rationis esse illud, quod habet esse objective tantum in intellectu, seu esse id, quod a ratione cogitatur ut ens, cum tamen in se entitatem non habeat.*" (DM 54.1.16). Poinsot has a similar view: "*... elici potest definitio seu explicatio entis rationis in communi scilicet, Quod sit ens habens esse obiective in ratione, cui nullum esse correspondet in re*" CPT-L II.2.1.

This standard view was challenged in at least two ways. The first challenge is a result of the fact that both Suárez and Poinsot define *ens rationis* as something which exists only in so far as we *actually* think about it; thus we might call their view 'actualism'. The competing view – which we may call 'potentialism' – modalizes the definition. Thus, Mastri writes that beings of reason are (a') "that which has or *can have* objective existence in the intellect" or (b') "that which does not have an extra-mental being *nor can have* [emphasis mine]".[13] Prima facie it follows from potentialism that *entia rationis* exist before the operation of the intellect. Mastri struggles to avoid this consequence (and thus his view might be considered to be half-way between actualism and potentialism), while Punch not only happily accepts it but even positively argues in favor of it.[14]

One of Punch's intriguing arguments in favor of potentialism is as follows: Suppose two people are thinking of (different) chimeras.[15] The two chimeras are similar, which means that there is a relation of similarity between the two chimeras. Since no relation between two beings of reason can be real, this relation of similarity is a relation of reason. This relation, however, might be such that nobody *actually* thinks about it. Thus, there are beings of reason which nobody actually thinks about.[16] This means, however, that, in a sense, some mind-dependent entities exist mind-independently! Mastri was, of course, quick to criticize Punch's bold revisionism, to which Punch responded in

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[13] "[...] *ens rationis esse illud, quod obicitur vel potest obici intellectu ac si esset cum tamen nec existat in rerum natura nec existere possit.*" (DOA 3.2.30); "*Primo supponendum est ... contra nonnullos in omni schola ens rationis admitti debere, capiendo ens rationis pro eo quod solum habet esse obiective in intellectu non aliter nec alio modo; ita quod quoad omne suum esse sive essentiae sive existentiae, sive actuale sive possibile pendeat ex consideratione intellectus, quatenus si existit, non nisi per opus intellectus existit, et si potest existere, hoc ideo dicitur, quia intellectu potest illud efformare*" DLM 2.9.233.

[14] "[...] *omnino falsum videtur quod ens rationis non sit prius cognoscibile quam cognoscatur [...] optime colligi potest chymaeram esse prius intelligibilem quam intelligatur, ex eo quod verum sit dicere illam esse intelligibilem iam, licet non intelligeretur actu iam.*" PCI 1.2.12.1.

[15] In mythology, chimeras appear as lions in front, goats in the middle and dragons at the back. It is important to keep in mind that for the scholastics chimeras not only *look* like these three animals but actually *are* these three animals. Thus the essences of chimeras involves (multiple) contradictions: by being lions chimeras are non-goats and non-dragons, by being goats they are non-lions and non-dragons, by being dragons they are non-lions and non-goats. See Ashworth (1977) and Ebbesen (1986).

[16] "[...] *dentur etiam actu, suo modo existentia quaedam entia rationis, quae non cogitantur ullo modo,* [...] *quia quando aliquis cogitat unum ens rationis et alius simul cogitat aliud ens rationis, illa duo entia rationis habent inter se similitudinem rationis non minus, quam quaecunque alia entia realia habent inte se similitudinem realem, etiam si nullus consideret aut cogitet de illa similitudine; ergo dantur entia rationis actu existentia suo modo, etiam cum non cogitantur.*" PCI 1.1.3.3.

Additio of his *Cursus*. However, here we leave investigation of their extended debate for another occasion (though for a related aspect of the issue, see the next section).

The second challenge to the standard view came as a result of the fact that for Suárez and the Scotists, real entities are entities which are *capable* of mind-independent existence. They include not only actually existing but also past, future and merely possible (unactualized) entities.[17] Thus, *possibilia* are *not* beings of reason. For different reasons, the Thomists do not count *possibilia* among beings of reason either.[18] Against this common view, Arriaga argues for a division of *entia rationis* into the possible (such as Peter's running when he is not) and the impossible (such as Peter's flying).[19] As far as I know this division is Arriaga's original suggestion, and has no precedent in Hurtado (DUP-M 19), on whom Arriaga draws extensively. Oviedo (I-MC 12.5) does not seem to accept it either.

III. EXTENSION OF '*ENS RATIONIS*'

Two questions seem to be of particular interest regarding the question of the extension of '*ens rationis*'. First, whether any such things as *entia rationis* exist? Second, if such things exist, what precisely is their "nature", or as the scholastics would say, their "formality"? The latter issue is intertwined with the question of extrinsic denominations[20], which were thought to explain the nature of beings of reason by some pre-Suarezians.

1. The Existence of Beings of Reason

The answer to the question whether there are *entia rationis* depends on what we mean by '*ens rationis*'. For instance, those who construe *entia rationis* as

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[17] "*ratio* [entis] *consistit in hoc, quod sit habens essentiam realem, id est non fictam nec chymaericam, sed veram et aptam ad realiter existendum.*" (DM 2.4.5). Another witness of this widespread view, Alvarado, writes: "*... intellectum ... cum concipit Antichristum v.g. et rosam in hyeme, quae quidem actu non existant, quia tamen existere possunt, non dicuntur entia rationis, sed entia realia.*" Knebel (2005: 224).

[18] See Wippel (1982: 730–40) for more details. We can speak of a possible-*something* but not possible *entities*. Beyond that, the precise ontological status of *possibilia* within Thomism remains controversial.

[19] "*Melius ergo primo potest dividi in* ens rationis impossibile, *seu chimaericum, ut v.g. equus rationalis, homo hinnibilis, alius Deus ab hoc, etc. et in* ens rationis possibile, *ut cursus Petri non existens, affirmatus tamen existens.*" CP-M 7.5.57.

[20] For an introduction to extrinsic denominations, see Doyle (1984), Gracia (1992) and Knebel (1998). For the related contemporary issue of intrinsic vs. extrinsic properties, see Weatherson (2004).

extrinsic denominations will hardly see their existence as controversial. From among the medieval thinkers who argued against the existence of *entia rationis*, Franciscus de Mayronis, OFM (1288–1328), a student of Duns Scotus, is the most famous, although Suárez suspects his denial to be more for the sake of provoking a controversy than in order to honestly assert their non-existence (*ita conatur defendere, disputandi potius quam asserendi gratia*, DM 54.1.2).[21] At any rate, no mainstream philosopher followed Mayronis on this question.[22] This rare agreement amongst the philosophers was compensated for by a notable disagreement about *how* to deal with objections against their existence. One such objection might be called the "Knowability Argument against *Entia Rationis*". It goes as follows: Everything knowable exists before it is known. Everything which exists before it is known is a real being. Thus, everything knowable is a real being. And since in order for something to exist it needs to be knowable, nothing non-real can exist, therefore *entia rationis* do not exist.

Punch answers the Knowability Argument by denying that everything that is knowable is a real being. In his view, some knowable beings are not real – namely, the *entia rationis*. A chimera (to take an example of a being of reason) is knowable at any moment of time preceding the moment at which it is known, similar to the way in which the Antichrist is "producible" at any moment of time preceding the moment at which he is "produced" (PCI 1.2.12.1). This means that it does not belong to the essence (formality) of *entia rationis* that somebody is *actually* thinking them (otherwise they could not be knowable before actually being known). Thus, we are back at the intensional issue discussed in the previous section: the question of *entia rationis* as "mind-dependent" entities existing before the operation of the intellect. Mastri's answer to the Knowability Argument is less extreme: he too admits that *entia rationis* exist before they are known *but* only in an improper sense – not formally but rather merely fundamentally. By this he means that there is a real basis (fundament) which reason uses to form *entia rationis*. This basis is knowable and it precedes their actual formation. (DLM 2.9.233).

Concerning the positive arguments in favor of the existence of beings of reason, very little effort was spent. Only two such arguments seem noteworthy. One might be called the "Ontological Argument for the Existence of *Entia*

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[21] See the edition of two *quaestiones* from Mayronis' *Quodlibet* in this issue.
[22] Mastri lists only three more advocates of the view besides Mayronis, none of which belonged to the scholastic mainstream: John of Ghent [also John of Jandun] (1286–1328), della Mirandola and Valles. Valles's primary occupation was medicine and the philosophy of nature; della Mirandola was known only for his denial of beings of reason and was mostly referred to as "a *certain* Bernardo della Mirandola" (*Bernardinus quidam Mirandulanus*). See n. 7.

Rationis". This states that *entia rationis* are by definition entities which are merely thought about, but do not exist outside of our thought. In other words, their existence consists in their being thought of. Now, suppose you claim that *entia rationis* do not exist. You either know what you are talking about or you do not. If you do not, then your claim is beside the point. If you do, then you assert that the entities which you think about do not exist, i.e. that you do not think about them. This is a contradiction. Hence, *entia rationis* exist.[23] The second argument is mentioned briefly in Arriaga: If you think about a contradictory object, then this object must be something distinct from the mental act by which you think it, since the act itself (as a real being) cannot be contradictory. Hence, the *entia rationis* must exist apart from the mental acts themselves. This also means that *entia rationis* exist, so to speak, outside the realm of real being.[24]

2. Extrinsic Denominations

Some thinkers, such as Vázquez, identified *entia rationis* with extrinsic denominations.[25] This view came in two versions. According to the first, which might be called the 'Strong Denomination View', *entia rationis* are identical to extrinsic denominations. According to the second, which might be called the 'Weak Denomination View', *entia rationis* are just a subclass of extrinsic denominations: those related to the intellect. (The question here is not whether some extrinsic denominations are beings of reason – everybody would agree that some are – but whether all beings of reason are extrinsic denominations in general or extrinsic denominations from intellect in particular.) Suárez argued extensively against both views in DM 54.2.6–14, which seems to have

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[23] "*...satis lepide probant ad hominem recentes quidam, nam negantes entia rationis, aut illa cognoscunt, dum negant, vel non cognoscunt, non secundum, quia tunc omnino irrationabiliter ea negarent, quia de obiecto ignoto iudicium fieri non potest, si cognoscunt, ergo habent illud esse obiectivum, quod nos praetendimus.*" Mastri (DLM 2.9.233). Suárez has a similar argument in DM 54.1.7.

[24] "*[S]icut enim causa efficiens realis per realem actionem producit verum et reale esse, ita intellectus per actionem intentionalem seu repraesentando producit aliud esse quod ideo dicitur ens rationis: illud autem eo modo quo est, distinguitur ab ipso actu, qui est quid possibile et reale, licet eius obiectum sit impossibile.*" (CP-M 7.5.58). A possible reply to this argument could be to deny the premise that we think about contradictory *objects* – we may be merely *trying* to.

[25] Vázquez simply jumps from talking about relations of reason to talking about extrinsic denominations. Thus, his view might be merely an implicit assumption which he has never called into doubt: "*Superest, ut ostendamus, quo paco fiat relatio rationis et an aliqua relatio, quae postea sit per rationem, ante operationem intellectus initium aliquod habeat in re. Dico ergo primo extrinsecam denominationem non esse relationem inhaerentem rebus, quas denominat.*" CDS I.115.c2.1.

completely convinced post-Suarezians to abandon these positions.[26] The sub-sequent discussions about extrinsic denominations deal with other questions, such as whether they are real (as Suárez held) or not (as Poinsot held),[27] whether they are mind-independent (as Suárez held) or not (as Vázquez held),[28] etc. Although these questions are important and interesting in themselves, after Suárez's critique they ceased being central to the theory of beings of reason.

IV. DIVISION OF *ENS RATIONIS*: NEGATIONS AND PRIVATIONS

Three "species" of *entia rationis* were traditionally acknowledged: negations, privations and relations of reason (DM 54.3.1). *Impossibilia*, under the name 'chimaera', presented a special fourth problem. In this section I shall discuss negations, privations and *impossibilia*, and in the next section relations of reason.

1. Negations and Privations

First a terminological note: 'Negation' is not to be understood in the sense of the contemporary truth-functional operator '¬', expressing the denial of a proposition. What is meant here are negative features or properties, such as *being a non-horse* or *having no-sight*. These properties were also called "absences" (*carentia*). The motivation for the scholastic preoccupation with "absences" can be better understood in light of the scholastic understanding of judgment. According to the scholastic tradition, when it comes to expressing judgments, the copula 'is' has two meanings: an *existential* meaning and a *truth-making* meaning. Let us take, for instance, the judgment "Peter is a good fisherman." 'Is' in the former sense expresses *the existence* of Peter's fishing-skills, in the latter sense it expresses *the truth* of a proposition about his fishing-skills. For many judgments the two meanings coincide. However, when it comes to judgments such as "Peter is incapable of fishing," we express what is true but –

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[26] Mastri (DOA 3.2.11) ascribes the Strong Denomination View to Fonseca and Vázquez and the Weak Denomination View to Durand de Saint Pourçain (1270–1334), Domingo de Soto (1494–1560), Oña and Didachus a Iesu (see n. 7). All these thinkers published before or round the time of the publication of Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae*.

[27] For Poinsot [John of St. Thomas] see, e.g. (1631/1955: 67).

[28] Vázquez writes: "*... quare concedere denominationem aliquam exstrinsecam realem ante quemcunque intellectum, contradictionem implicat in adiecto. Nam si est denominatio, est alicuius intellectus expressio.*" (CDS I.115.c2.2). Alvarado presented a novel resolution of the controversy. In his view, there are various senses of 'extrinsic denomination' and thus the disagreement between Suárez and Vázquez over the reality of extrinsic denominations is merely verbal: "*... controversia quae est inter P. Vazquez et P. Suárez ... solum est in modo loquendi. Nam quod ad rem pertinet, idem videntur sentire.*" Knebel (2005: 226-7).

properly speaking – we indicated what *does not* exist in reality. Peter's fishing-incompetence exists only mind-dependently; it is a being of reason. Thus, when we reflect on the question of *what the given judgment is about* or *what makes it true*, we form beings of reason: we understand the "absence" *as if* it were something positively existing.

Both privations and negations are non-beings *thought of* as beings. This is what they have in common. But they are also different in that privation is an absence of a form in a subject which is capable of having it (*carentia in subiecto apto nato*), whereas negation is an absence of a form in a subject which is *not* capable of having it (*carentia in subiecto inepto*). 'Negation' can also be used in a broader sense of an absence of a form in a subject regardless of the subject's capability of having it (*carentia absolute et simpliciter*). Negation in this sense is a genus, which includes privation and negation in the narrower sense as its species (DM 54.3.8). Suárez spent a lot of effort in working out the details of this account (DM 54.5), which, however, did not satisfy post-Suarezians. The debates over the difference between privations and negations thus remained very much alive.

Another more radical challenge to the standard Suarezian view comes from Punch, who argues that neither negations nor privations are beings of reason.[29] His argument goes as follows: Negations and privations exist in things independently of our cognition – there is a privation of sight in a blind man and the negation of rationality in an animal, even though no intellect is around to consider this. At this point one might protest, "True, but although negations and privations are not beings of reason *when considered in reality*, they are beings of reason *when considered reflectively as something positive.*" To this, however, Punch replies, "Negations and privations cannot *become* beings of reason *due* to our misguided considerations. There is no reason why the question whether negations and privations are *entia rationis* should depend on whether we consider them as they are (*secundum se*) or in a way which contradicts them (*modo ipsis repugnante*). Analogically, an angel does not become a being of reason due to the fact that some people mistakenly consider him to be a teenager with wings (*per modum iuvenis*)." Punch boldly concludes that even if Scotus actually said that negations and privations were beings of reason, we should understand him not "formally" as applying the claim to the *form* of beings of reason but "fundamentally". This means that negations and privations provide a *fundament* on the basis of which we conceive some *other*

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[29] Punch (PCI 1.3.19-21); Mastri discussion in DOA 3.7.99–110 passim, esp. 109–110.

being of reason. Negations and privations as such are not to be counted among the species of *entia rationis*.[30]

2. Impossibilia

The position of impossible entities within the classification of beings of reason represented for Suárez a special problem, since he did not want to flatly contradict the traditional three-member division. Nevertheless, in his "first way of explaining the sufficiency of the division," Suárez interpreted the traditional division "as applicable not to beings of reason taken over its whole expanse, but only to that which has some foundation in reality." Thus, since *impossibilia* lack such a foundation in reality, the traditional division does not list them (DM 54.4.2-9). (At this point, however, it would have been more honest to have said that beings of reason are divided into the *four* species.)

The second way to defend the tradition would be to subsume *impossibilia* under the division for negation. Why? Since every impossible entity contains a "negation" in the sense of one of its ingredients negating the other (DM 54.4.10). This latter defense of the tradition seems to have been eventually transformed into a complete reduction of *all* beings of reason to *impossibilia*, which became the very paradigm of beings of reason. The development of this non-traditional revisionist line of reasoning is due to the Jesuit thinkers, such as Śmiglecki[31], Hurtado, Arriaga[32], Compton Carleton[33], etc. A further investigation of the deeper philosophical reasons behind this process is needed.[34]

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[30] Some authors (Sousedík 2004a) note the disappearance of consideration of negations and privations as the species *ens rationis* from the relevant treatises published after Punch. Further work is needed to confirm this hypothesis and to see whether this disappearance is actually due to Punch's arguments.

[31] For Śmiglecki's account of beings of reason, see Roncaglia (1985; esp. 36-9). Strangely, in his very long treatises on beings of reason (L 1: 23500 words; L 2.1-3: 11000 words), Śmiglecki mentions Suárez only once. Is this omission to be explained by an intention on Śmiglecki's part to avoid references to living colleagues? Another curious fact is the absence of contemporaneous references *to* Śmiglecki. Even Mastri overlooks him in his treatise on beings of reason (DOA 3), where he refers to more than eighty other authors. Thus, Śmiglecki seems to be an orignial but somewhat isolated thinker. His work is said to have been very influential at the University of Oxford, but the English Jesuit Compton Carleton does not mention him in CPU 13–17.

[32] There is, however, an important difference between Śmiglecki's and Hurtado-Arriaga's approaches. Hurtado introduces the impossibility of *representation* as opposed to the impossibility of *objects*. We get a being of reason when we mentally represent a chimera as possible or Peter as impossible or, in general, when we represent something as being other than it is. Hurtado says: "*ad efformandam ens rationis, non requiri ut obiectum actus sit impossibile; sed requiri,* ut obiectum non fit sicut repraesentatur per actum; quia in eo solo casu habet esse obiective tantum in intellectu, *v.g. Petro non currente ego affirmo Petrus currit, existentia exercita Petri non habet esse nisi obiective in meo intellectu: quia licet habeat esse possibile, id tamen non representatur per illum actum, sed solum esse actuale, ut actuale: actualis autem illa solum est in meo intelectu.*

V. DIVISION OF *ENS RATIONIS*: RELATIONS OF REASON

Relations of reason are closely related to relations in general. Both types of relations were extensively treated by Suárez and other thinkers in the seventeenth century. For instance, Suárez's *Disputatio 47 On Relation* has almost 58 000 words (for Doyle's new translation, see Suárez 1597/2006). Here it is impossible for me to provide more than a few selected observations.

For the scholastic Aristotelians, relations are monadic accidents that "turn" the subject, in which they inhere *towards* something else. There are no genuine polyadic relations in the sense of entities existing somehow "in-between" their *relata* (Brower 2005). This fundamental assumption, which might sound unfamiliar to contemporary post-Fregean logical and philo-sophical ears, is aptly expressed by Henninger (1989: 4–5):

> *Today we might talk of one symmetrical relation* R *of color similarity between two pieces of white chalk, a and b. But for the medievals, if there are two really distinct substances, there must be two really distinct accidents. Being an accident, a relation is not an entity that somehow hovers between the two things related or, in Aristotelian terms, inheres in both. … In the chalk example, one relation of color similarity* R *of a to b is based on an accident, the quality of whiteness in a. A numerically distinct relation similarity* R' *of b to a is based on a numerically distinct accident of white-ness inhering in b. There are two relations, one in each of the things related.*

(In medieval and post-medieval philosophy the rejection of polyadic relations is often thought to be universal. However, given the diversity of views among the scholastic authors, it would be astonishing if indeed no one had defended genuine polyadic relations.)[35]

E contra vero si actus conformatur cum obiecto, licet obiectum in se sit chimaera, tamen comparatione illius actus, non est ens rationis, quia habet illud esse, quam esse per illum actum, verbi gracia, cognosco ego." DUP-M 19.1.14.

[33] The title of CPU 13.2 is "*An detur Ens Rationis, seu obiectum aliquod impossibile a possibilibus distinctum*" [emphasis mine].

[34] Doyle ascribes the beginning of this development to Suárez: "*It further seems clear to me that here we are reaching the core of Suárez's teaching on beings of reason. [...] it seems that impossible items more than any other are at the heart of his thinking. More than any other beings of reason, impossible things, inasmuch as they are self-contradictory (repugnantia in se), are pure fabrications which have "being only objectively in the intellect."* (1995b: 38). See also (1987a). In my view, this statement is too strong; the beginning of the reduction to *impossibilia* is rather to be found in Śmiglecki, Hurtado and the Collegio Romano tradition, going from Antonio Pérez (1599–1649) to Jan Morawsky (1633–1700). This tradition is briefly discussed in Doyle (1995a).

[35] Suárez's reference to Henry of Ghent (1217–1293) might indicate such a forerunner of modern ontology of polyadic relations: "*Quaeri vero hic potest an una relatio unum habeat subjectum, et quodnam illud sit. Quod praecipue interrogo propter Henricum, qui Quodlib. 9, q.*

There are three individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for a *real* relation to obtain:

1. Both the first and the second element of the relation really exist (its *subject* and *term*).
2. These two elements are really distinct.
3. There is a (real) fundament *in* one or both of these elements.

If any of these conditions is violated, we get a relation *of reason*, which can happen in several ways (DM 54.6):

a. The first condition is violated. This happens when a real entity is related towards an entity of reason. (*Peter thinks of a chimera*).
b. The second condition is violated. This happens when the two real entities are not really distinct. (*Peter is identical with Peter*).
c. The third condition is violated. This happens, arguably, in case of legal relations (master-servant), economic relations (ownership) or semantic relations (between a sign and its meaning or denotation).
d. None of the conditions is satisfied. This happens e.g. in case of a relation between two chimeras (see above, Punch's chimera argument) or between two privations. (*This room is darker than the other one*).

It is worth pointing out here that the third type of relations of reason (c) might help to provide the metaphysical foundation for an account of social reality:

> *Placed third in this order are those relations of reason which, although they are employed among things distinct and otherwise capable of real categorical relations, are however rational (rationis) from the lack of an intrinsic foundation, either in both or in one extreme [...]. Take, for instance, the relation of a stipulated (ad placitum) sign, which both in the sign and in the significate is a relation of reason [...]. Of the same sort, moreover, are the relations among men of master and slave (domini et servi). For these are founded only upon a certain extrinsic denomination taken from the will. Many others are similar, for example, all those which arise from*

3, sentit relationem secundum proprium esse ad, unam et eamdem esse inter duo extrema quae referuntur. Nam relatio secundum propriam rationem est veluti medium quoddam inter extrema relata, et ideo, sicut Aristoteles dixit eamdem esse viam ab Athenis ad Thebas et a Thebis ad Athenas, ita dicit Henricus unam et eamdem esse habitudinem quorumcunque duorum extremorum ad invicem se habentium, scilicet, patris ad filium, et filii ad patrem, vel duorum fratrum, aut similium inter se." (DM 47.6.3). Another proponent of polyadic relations might be Richard of Mediavilla (1245/9-1302/7), discussed in Henninger (1989: 63ff). For criticism of this ontology of relations, see Sousedík (2004b).

contracts and human will, such as between husband and wife in the character of being spouses, between a seller and a buyer from their will to make a contract, and so on with others. [DM 54.6.6]

It is puzzling why Suárez, who was both a great metaphysician and a great philosopher of law, did not try to develop a systematic metaphysics of law and other social institutions in terms of relations of reason.[36] Indeed, some post-Suarezians, such as Rubio[37] and Eustache[38], even dropped the general concept of relations of reason by reducing all relations of reason to second intentions. Further historical research is needed to discover whether there are some post-Suarezian philosophers who took up the apparatus of relations of reason to work out the details of the ontology of social reality.

VI. Causes of *ENS RATIONIS*

Within the Aristotelian framework, four types of causes are recognized: material, formal, efficient and final. Which of them is applicable to beings of reason? According to Suárez, it is only the efficient cause (DM 54.2.1). Here we touch, however, a sensitive point. For how can a real being produce a non-real effect? Suárez replies that beings of reason have only an "indirect" (*per accidens*) efficient cause (DM 54.2.3–4). Let us grant to Suárez that this answer is sufficient.[39] The next question would be, "Are *entia rationis* caused by the intellect, will, sensitive powers or imagination?"

Suárez argues that *entia rationis* are caused by (a) the intellect alone, for *entia rationis* with a fundament in reality, and (b) the imagination plus the intellect, for *entia rationis* without such a fundament (DM 54.2.15–7). The argument for this view might be summarized as follows: The constitution of a being of reason is a two-phase process. It first requires reflection on a real thing *as* being-cognized and then the attribution of this being-cognized to the given real thing. Among the mental faculties it is only intellect which is capable of

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[36] Doyle points out (personal communication) that the term '*ens rationis*' does not occur in *De legibus*, Suárez's main work in philosophy of law. Kobush (1997: 64ff.) credits Suárez with the *ontological* discovery of institutions, but this seems to be an exaggeration – so far I have found in Suárez only a few scattered remarks on this issue.

[37] "[...] *secunda intentio vel relatio rationis quae idem prorsus sunt*" LM 11/2.11.

[38] "[*ens rationis*] *esse triplicis generis … negationes, aut privationes, aut secundae intentiones*" SPQ-M 1.2.3.

[39] Further reflection would be needed since here is a powerful argument against the existence of beings of reason: Beings of reason are caused either by some real being or by a being of reason. The former is impossible, for real causes have real effects, while the latter is impossible because beings of reason cannot be causally efficacious. Hence, beings of reason do not exist. I am grateful to Sousedík (personal comm.) for drawing my attention to this argument.

accomplishing this process. Thus, it is only intellect that forms beings of reason. Concerning the beings of reason without a fundament in reality, the imagination plays a role too. It is capable of composing two simple preconceptions to form a new impossible entity, such as a chimera or a golden mountain.[40]

Suárez's view was challenged in various ways, of which I mention just one: It would seem that the will and the sensitive appetites should be able to form *entia rationis*.[41] At least sometimes, the will and the sensitive powers relate to objects which are not real and extra-mental but merely apparent and fictitious. (For example, I can wish that I had the power of turning into gold everything that I touch). To this we may reply that the will and the sensitive appetites relate towards some apparent good only because the intellect first proposed it. This would be Suárez's classical answer in tune with the authority of Aquinas (DM 54.2.17). This classical view was held by all Thomists, many Jesuits and some Scotists. It was challenged, for instance by Mastri, who had tentatively argued for the will as the cause of beings of reason.[42] It was also challenged by Arriaga who argued that both external and internal senses are capable of forming beings of reason (CP-M 7.3).

VII. ENVOI

In this paper I have tried to identify some of the central themes of post-Suarezian debates regarding beings of reason. The greatest attention has been paid to logical and ontological problems, with only a brief section on epistemology. Theological and ethical issues have been omitted completely. However, even within logic and ontology, not every issue has been treated. I have omitted, for instance, the important questions of the ontological status of *entia rationis*.[43]

The main contours of the scholastic discussions about *entia rationis* in the first half of the seventeenth century seem to be the following: In 1597, Suárez systematized the previous tradition and formulated what might be called the

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[40] Rubio mentions the golden mountain as an example of an impossible entity, but he does not press this point. *"If there are doubts whether the golden mountain is an ens rationis, one can substitute a chimera for it, which is an ens rationis without any doubt."* LM 34/4.3.

[41] The term 'being of reason' would then obviously be a misnomer, and this would require us to find a better label.

[42] *"Dicendum est certum esse nullam potentiam vitalem praeter intellectum et voluntatem posse ens rationis efficere et ex his duabus certum esse intellectum efficere posse, de voluntate verum non ita certum, satis tamen probabile."* DOA 3.4.49

[43] For Suárez's account of the ontological status of beings of reason (how to reconcile the assumptions that beings of reason are nothing, but still exist in *some* sense), see the excellent work in Canteñs (2003).

classical view.[44] The representatives of the classical view include Suárez, Rubio, Poinsot, Mastri, Eustache, etc. This view draws primarily on Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition, but some non-Thomists (Mastri, Eustache) held it as well. Debates internal to the classical view led gradually to the emergence of various non-classical theories, especially among the Jesuits (Śmiglecki, Hurtado, Arriaga, Compton Carleton), but also among the Scotists (Punch). The non-classical views radically change the previous classical conception of beings of reason. Thus, for example, beings of reason are reduced to *impossibilia* (Śmiglecki and others) or they come to be viewed as mind-independent (Punch). Much work still needs to be done to grasp the deep philosophical dialectics of post-Suarezian debates over beings of reason. In spite of the provisional character of this exploratory paper, I hope that its goal to *contribute* to our understanding of these debates has been accomplished.

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[44] The immediate pre-Suárezians, such as Francisco de Toledo (1534-1596), Pedro da Fonseca (1528-1599) and Gabriel Vázquez (1549-1604) had very little to say about beings of reason.

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SUMMARIUM

Prolegomena ad doctrinam de *ente rationis*, ut post Suarezium a scholasticis tractabatur.

Anno 1597 Franciscus Suárez tractationem comprehensivam de entibus rationis ut partem suarum Disputationum Metaphysicarum in publicum proposuit. Scholastici sequentes de diversis eius doctrinae partibus vero cum vigore disputabant. Huius dissertationis scopus est, aliquas harum quaestionum ad hanc litem pertinentium, circa quas prima parte 17. saeculi maxima evolvit discordia, prae oculis ponere. In particulari auctor in hac dissertatione entis rationis *comprehensionem, extensionem, divisionem (in negationes, privationes, relationes rationis), et causas pertractat, et modum, quo Suarezii sententiae nonnullas controversias intra communem doctrinam incenderunt, explicat. Ex his controversiis ultimatim (praesertim apud Iesuitas) variae novae conceptiones emerserunt, a veterum doctrina communi de entibus rationis radicaliter diversae.*

SUMMARY

Prolegomena to a Study of Beings of Reason in Post-Suarezian Scholasticism, 1600–1650

*In 1597 Francisco Suárez published a comprehensive treatise on beings of reason (*entia rationis*) as part of his* Disputationes metaphysicae. *Subsequent scholastic philosophers vigorously debated various aspects of Suárez's theory. The aim of this paper is to identify some of the most controversial points of these debates, as they developed in the first half of the seventeenth century. In particular, I focus on the intension and the extension of* 'ens rationis'*, its division (into negations, privations and relations of reason) and its causes. Additionally, I will discuss how Suárez's views sparked a number of debates within the classical view, debates which ultimately led to the emergence of various alternative theories, especially among the Jesuits. These non-classical views radically revise the previous classical conception of beings of reason.*