

Annuario di storia della metafisica
Annuaire d'histoire de la métaphysique
Jahrbuch für die Geschichte der Metaphysik
Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics

Quaestio

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).
A Renaissance Jesuit
at the Crossroads of Modernity**

**Benet Perera (Pererius, 1535-1610).
Un gesuita rinascimentale
al crocevia della modernità**

a cura di
Marco Lamanna e Marco Forlivesi

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Claus A. Andersen

Ens rationis ratiocinatae and *ens rationis ratiocinantis*: Reflections on a New Book on Beings of Reason in Baroque-Age Scholasticism

📖 D.D. NOVOTNÝ, *Ens Rationis from Suárez to Caramuel. A Study in Scholasticism of the Baroque Era*, Fordham University Press, New York 2013 (Medieval Philosophy, Texts and Studies), xvii-296 pp.

I. In Enlightenment authors, one quite frequently finds application of the concept of a “being of reason” (*ens rationis*). To mention but a few examples, Julien Offray de la Mettrie, in his *L’homme machine*, declares it absurd to claim that an immortal machine (to de la Mettrie this is the way the question of the immortality of the soul should be addressed) must be a being of reason, although one cannot say either that a machine (or soul) is bound to completely pass away since this is beyond our possible knowledge¹. Dealing with a question affiliated with that of the soul’s immortality, Immanuel Kant, in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, explains that the idea of an immaterial thinking spirit in a world of matter amounts to an *ens rationis ratiocinantis*, but not to an *ens rationis ratiocinatae*, the difference being that practical reason may very well postulate an “objective reality” for the latter, but not for the former kind of beings of reason². This differentiation between two kinds of beings of reason is also found in Friedrich Christian Baumeister’s *Institutiones metaphysicae*, for a short period of time used by Kant in his lecture on metaphysics; on Baumeister’s explanation, an *ens rationis ratiocinantis* is what is thought up “sine ratione”, whereas an *ens rationis ratiocinatae* is a concept which has been abstracted from singular things³. Whereas Kant’s understanding of the

¹ J.O. DE LA METTRIE, *L’homme machine*, in *Œuvres philosophiques*, ed. Berlin 1775, III, p. 94. In the same work we find the view expressed (in an inaccurate quote from Diderot, in which it is ascribed to other people not mentioned by name) that “un Dieu [...] n’est pas même un être de Raison”, cit., p. 65.

² I. KANT, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, § 91, Akademie-Ausgabe, V, p. 468; famously, Kant, in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B347-348, Akademie-Ausgabe, III, p. 233, also employs the concept of a being of reason in his differentiated explanation of the concept “Nichts”.

³ F.C. BAUMEISTER, *Institutiones metaphysicae*, ed. Wittenberg-Zerbst 1749, § 58, pp. 58-59. The metaphysics textbook most frequently used by Kant, i.e. the one written by Baumgarten, does not contain a discussion of the two kinds of being of reason, though Baumgarten evidently is familiar with the terminology used by Baumeister and Kant in this context; cf. A.G. BAUMGARTEN, *Metaphysica*, § 62, ed. G. Gawlick

two kinds of beings of reason displays elements peculiar to his own philosophy (such as his notion of practical reason), Baumeister's explanation is much more in line with pre-Enlightenment usage, to which he in fact refers, though only vaguely reporting what the "veteres" and "scholastici" said on the matter. However, there is nothing in Baumeister's explanation (or in those of the other authors mentioned) that reveals any real knowledge of just how complicated and diversified the debates over beings of reason among these "scholastics" actually were.

II. In his new book, *Ens rationis from Suárez to Caramuel*, Daniel Novotný (University of South Bohemia, České Budejovice) has accomplished groundbreaking work by focusing on such late-scholastic debates which without any doubt form the historical, yet not immediate and hence to a large extent forgotten, background to later authors' understanding of the concept *ens rationis* and its various modes. Novotný's exposition pays particular attention to the long discussion of *ens rationis* found in the very end of Francisco Suárez's (SJ) vast *Disputationes metaphysicae* from 1597⁴. No less than three chapters (chapters 3-5) are devoted to Suárez's discussion, whereas a short row of other authors (in one case a pair of authors), namely Pedro Hurtado (SJ), Bartolomeo Mastri and Bonaventura Belluto (both of them OFM Conv.), as well as Juan Caramuel y Lobkowitz (O. Cist.), all of them members of Catholic religious orders, are treated each in one chapter (chapters 6-8). The general historiographical challenge posed by Baroque-Age scholasticism is dealt with in a chapter of its own (chapter 1), while another introductory chapter offers a systematical sketch of the problematic surrounding beings of reason (chapter 2). Both of these perspectives, the historiographical and the systematical ones, are neatly counterbalanced throughout the book. Accordingly, Novotný even offers a two-fold justification of his special focus on Suárez. From a systematical point of view, Suárez's theory of beings of reason is, according to Novotný, "beset by various philosophical problems" (p. 34). Yet, from a historiographical perspective, this is interesting because Suárez's failure to formulate a coherent theory of beings of reason prompted later scholastic authors to either undertake improvements of certain elements of Suárez's doctrine or to try out new approaches to the theme of *ens rationis*, even such approaches which would rather seem to eliminate the theory of beings of reason as a genuine philosophical doctrine. This development of the discourse on *ens rationis* within 17th-century scholasticism illustrates Novotný's general claim

and L. Kreimendahl, Frommann-Holzboog, Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt 2011 (Forschungen und Materialien zur deutschen Aufklärung I, 2), p. 74: "[H]oc impossibile [...] est ENS FICTUM (rationis ratiocinantis)".

⁴ This important text is available in an English translation; cf. F. SUÁREZ, *Beings of Reason (De entibus rationis)*, *Metaphysical Disputation LIV*, translated with an introduction and notes by J.P. DOYLE, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1995. Novotný, though, always provides his own translations or paraphrases of the passages quoted.

that “Suárez stands at the beginning and not at the end of a series of first-rate scholastic philosophers of the Baroque era” (p. 34, cf. similarly pp. 110 and 180). This important point is not merely a historical observation. It is, moreover, embedded in an overall strategy to draw attention to an often neglected element of early modern philosophy.

Now, the fact that post-medieval scholasticism does not attract too much attention from historians of philosophy is old news; however, Novotný observes that this lack of interest has something to do with the way research in history of philosophy traditionally has been organized: “Scholars of the Renaissance and late Middle Ages do not treat the seventeenth century, and scholars of the seventeenth century focus primarily on non-scholastic authors” (p. 14). Persistent neglect of the long continuity of the scholastic tradition beyond the Renaissance and the Reformation and well into the Early Modern age is the result of such division of labor. Thus, it would hardly be an exaggeration to maintain that any serious work on the scholastic traditions in post-medieval philosophy at the same time, at least indirectly, contributes to a much-needed critique of the predominant historiographical scheme with its over-emphasis on the divide between Medieval and Early Modern philosophy. Novotný argues that the tradition which followed upon Suárez should be regarded a branch of scholasticism in its own right. It has its own distinctive traits, one of them being a tendency toward system-building, which often resulted in all-comprehensive and extremely lengthy philosophical textbooks (p. 13). Hence, since “labels have power” (p. 6), this tradition deserves a proper name, rather than being called by names drawn from comparisons with competing trends in intellectual or religious culture (as in “Counter-Reformation philosophy”) or with the, supposedly superior, medieval scholastic tradition (as in “second scholasticism”). In this, I completely agree with Novotný. So let us follow his example, anticipated by Karl Eschweiler and others, and call this late scholasticism by the name of the cultural epoch it belongs to: “Baroque”⁵.

In his analysis of the scholastic discussions of beings of reason, Novotný’s

⁵ Novotný himself refers to Eschweiler (p. 198). Cf. K. ESCHWEILER, *Die Philosophie der spanischen Spätscholastik auf den deutschen Universitäten des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts*, in *Spanische Forschungen der Görres-Gesellschaft I*, Aschendorff, Münster 1928, pp. 251-325, here p. 307. For further substantial discussions in recent literature of the historiographical challenge posed by Baroque-Age scholasticism, see M. FORLIVESI, *A Man, an Age, a Book*, in M. FORLIVESI (ed.), *Rem in se ipsa cernere. Saggi sul pensiero filosofico di Bartolomeo Mastri (1602-1673)*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2006 (Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina, 8), pp. 98-114 (interestingly with some hesitation regarding the use of the term “Baroque” as applied in this context, cf. especially p. 113), and S.K. KNEBEL, *Suarezismus. Erkenntnistheoretisches aus dem Nachlass des Jesuitengenerals Tirso González de Santalla (1624-1705)*, *Abhandlung und Edition*, Grüner, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 2011 (Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 51), pp. 251-258; for short appraisals of these volumes, allow me to refer the reader to my reviews in *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*, 71 (2008), pp. 302-306, regarding the volume edited by Forlivesi, and *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 121 (2014), pp. 194-197, regarding Knebel’s book.

method consists in a close, analytical reading of the pertinent texts. In all cases, these are longer disputations on beings of reason from works by the mentioned authors. Generally, important texts are offered in English translation, whereas the Latin text is found in the endnotes. Passage by passage the scholastic discussions are regularly being boiled down to their constituent theses, which are then being compared and tested as to their consistency. An appendix documents the disposition of the individual disputations, enabling the reader to form his or her own impression of the rich material investigated in the main text. Since the authors dealt with tend to discuss the same issues (without doubt also an effect of Suárez's long-term influence), their positions are easily compared with one another. Such issues include the nature of beings of reason, their causes, and their division. In the following, to give an impression of the debates in question, I will highlight and comment upon some of Novotný's important findings and, in particular, focus on similarities and differences between the approaches discussed; afterwards, I will address a few critical issues.

III. A motif which is central to the whole discussion of beings of reason is the question of the nature of this kind of being. Suárez expresses his view on this issue when he defines a being of reason as "what has only objective being in the intellect, or, it is what is thought of by reason as a being, even though it has no entity in itself" (Novotný's translation, p. 50). The idea (expressed in the first part of the definition) that beings of reason have only objective being in the intellect is so central to Suárez's doctrine that Novotný in general speaks of it as "Suárez's objectualism". For Suárez, it is important to stress that not every content which is objectively in the intellect must be a being of reason, since it may very well also possess real being apart from being the object of an intellectual act; only such contents of the intellect count as beings of reason which do not in addition have any other kind of being apart from being an object in the intellect ("obicii intellectui") (p. 49). That there are such beings, explains Suárez, is undeniable since even speaking of them, presupposes that they exist objectively in the intellect; in effect, this means that even discussing their existence philosophically proves that they exist. Tacitly drawing a comparison with Anselm's approach in his (so-called "ontological") proof for the existence of God, Novotný classifies Suárez's strategy as an "ontological" kind of argumentation (p. 51). Interestingly, later on we learn that Caramuel, in his *Leptotatos latine subtilissimus* from 1681, i.e. almost a whole century after the publication of Suárez's *Disputationes metaphysicae*, directly refuted this line of argument by pointing out that knowing "what beings of reason would be *if* they existed" does not entail that one knows "what they are"; though we speak of beings of reason, they may in fact not exist (pp. 173-174). Caramuel's own view on beings of reason is in line with this cri-

tique. To him, a being of reason is characterized by its being self-contradictory or impossible. While Suárez in fact would attest to this as a description of one kind of beings of reason, the chimeras, Caramuel takes it in a radical sense, meaning that any being of reason is just an extrinsic union of incompatible things (pp. 169-173). According to Caramuel, such a union is possible thanks to nothing but *language*. He denies that beings of reason should be regarded a kind of being in its own right and to designate them properly introduces the term “*entia linguae*”. Novotný in general speaks of this theory, which is in accordance with Caramuel’s preoccupation with language and which “anticipates the linguistic turn of twentieth-century analytic philosophy” (p. 178), as “Caramuel’s linguistic eliminativism”.

Caramuel is, according to Novotný, the first scholastic philosopher “who openly ridicules the whole traditional preoccupation with beings of reason”, though some criticism against this doctrine – anticipated by Ockham, Francis of Meyronnes, and Antonio Bernardi della Mirandola – had already occurred from within the Jesuit order itself (p. 177; cf. also pp. 45 and 248-249). For all its radicalness, in some points Caramuel’s approach appears to have been foreshadowed by Hurtado’s discussion of beings of reason in the two versions of his complete textbook on philosophy (from 1615 and 1624, respectively), also dealt with by Novotný. Quite unlike Suárez, who strongly emphasizes the utility of a doctrine of beings of reason for other disciplines than metaphysics, not least for theology (pp. 37-38; cf. also pp. 54, 83, and 86)⁶, Hurtado regards beings of reason as something that is “made up only by false mental acts” (p. 115), indeed, as Novotný puts it, as “an unfortunate by-product of our fallibility” (p. 136). Hence, Novotný in general speaks of this position as “Hurtado’s fallibilism”. To Hurtado, an erroneous proposition such as “a quality is a substance” is an example of a being of reason. It does have objective being in the intellect; but whereas this point is crucial to Suárez, to Hurtado the falsity of the proposition is what really matters. Thus, even a chimera, which is a self-contradictory being, must not necessarily be a being of reason since it may be an object of a true judgment, as when we speak of chimeras made up by others or by ourselves in the past. This, in Novotný’s judgment, “prima facie shocking claim” (p. 117) that self-contradictory beings need not be beings of reason does not altogether do away with beings of reason. It does entail, however, that any being of reason at some other time or in some other perspective may not be a being of reason.

⁶ Here, let me add a general point not made by Novotný, namely that Suárez’s emphasis on the utility of a doctrine of beings of reason, especially for theology, in fact is in perfect harmony with his over-all purpose of writing down his work on metaphysics, i.e. to provide supernatural theology with a genuine metaphysical foundation; cf. Suárez’s short foreword *Ratio et discursus totius operis, ad lectorem* at the very beginning of F. SUÁREZ, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, ed. C. Berton, Vivés, Paris 1866 (Francisci Suárez Opera omnia, 25-26), repr. Olms, Hildesheim 1965.

There is nothing in a being of reason itself which would justify its classification as a particular kind of being. This, at least to me, appears to be an important step in the direction of a genuine eliminativist approach *à la* Caramuel. For a comparison with Caramuel, a further trait of Hurtado's discussion, spelled out in the 1624-version only, is of special relevance: When explaining that some objects have both being in the mind and outside the mind, whereas other objects do not, since they do not have being outside the proposition ("non extra ... propositionem") by which they are affirmed or negated, Hurtado almost equates being in the mind with being in a proposition (pp. 128-129). Is this not a decisive step in the direction of Caramuel's view of beings of reason as *entia linguae*? It would seem to be worthwhile to elaborate on the similarities of Caramuel's and Hurtado's positions. Novotný refrains from this, though he, on more than one occasion, does emphasize that when Hurtado expressly calls upon the authority of Suárez this does not at all mean that Hurtado in fact follows Suárez when it comes to philosophical detail; he, in fact, rather "transforms [Suárez's doctrine] into something wholly different" (p. 136, cf. also pp. 128 and 131).

A stark contrast to both Hurtado's and Caramuel's approaches is found in Mastri's and Belluto's lengthy (indeed, the lengthiest of the ones investigated) discussion of beings of reason in their jointly published⁷ textbook on Aristotelian logic from 1639. On a number of issues, these representatives of the Scotist school in Baroque-Age scholasticism follow and improve upon Suárez's doctrine; in fact, so much so that Novotný in general speaks of their approach as "Mastri/Belluto's modified objectualism". Novotný reckons that their version of this doctrine should be regarded as "superior to Suárez's" (p. 160, cf. also p. 163). One improvement which would seem to justify such a claim consists in their explanation that beings of reason must be knowable before they are known. Whereas Suárez had stressed the dependency of beings of reason upon intellectual acts and, according to Novotný, left the question concerning their status in absence of such acts undiscussed, Mastri and Belluto introduce a distinction between a being of reason's formal-actual and its virtual potentiality, the latter kind of potentiality being the one a being of reason possesses when it is not actually an object of an intellectual act (pp. 143 and 161). In Novotný's words, "Virtual knowability means that the intellect has the power (*virtus*) to make up beings of

⁷ This volume was probably first of all authored by Mastri; however, Novotný does not dwell on such philological details; in fact, since the volume on logic was published as a jointly written work (i.e. with both authors' names on its front page), it makes good sense to speak (as does Novotný) of the doctrines it contains as products of both Mastri's and Belluto's thought. For a discussion of the authorship of the individual parts of Mastri's and Belluto's five-volume *Cursus philosophicus*, here in particular of the volume on logic, see M. FORLIVESI, *Scotistarum princeps. Bartolomeo Mastri (1602-1673) e il suo tempo*, Centro Studi Antoniani, Padova 2002 (Fonti e studi francescani, 11), p. 156 (in support of an older hypothesis by Francesco Costa).

reason, based on some foundation (which is a real and mind-independent entity). Virtual potentiality is extrinsic and derived from the intellect” (p. 145).

With this explanation, one more important motif in Mastri’s and Belluto’s doctrine is touched upon, namely that of the foundation of beings of reason. To understand what is at stake, however, it is useful to start elsewhere: In his explanation of the division of beings of reason, Suárez had distinguished between beings of reason which have a foundation in reality and such which do not. To the former belong negations, privations, and relations, to the latter chimeras (although according to Suárez these, as self-contradictory objects, may as well be regarded a kind of negations and thus theoretically may be numbered among the former kind of beings of reason) (pp. 85-88). Though initially in favor of Suárez’s division, Hurtado, in the 1624-version of his philosophy textbook, only considered chimeras to be true beings of reason (pp. 112 and 130), and Caramuel simply did not discuss negations in the context of *entia rationis*, rather taking for granted that the two themes have nothing to do with each other (pp. 168, 175, and 177). In contrast, the differentiation between beings of reason with and without a foundation in reality is quite important to Mastri and Belluto, who with Suárez share the view that a doctrine of beings of reason is valuable in regard to the epistemology of the sciences⁸; whenever this point is made, always an explanation of beings of reason with a foundation in reality (by Mastri and Belluto extended beyond Suárez’s negations, privations, and relations, cf. p. 85) is meant, not a theory of chimeras. The said differentiation is in fact of some historical importance, since it is also discussed by much later authors (Baumeister, Kant), as seen above. Now, the interesting thing about Mastri’s and Belluto’s discussion of this differentiation is that they maintain that both kinds of beings of reason must have some sort of foundation in reality. As Novotný points out, this position is an “apparent contradiction” since one of the kinds of beings of reason is defined by not having a foundation in reality. To solve this problem, Mastri and Belluto distinguish between a remote and a proximate foundation in reality, the point being that the, traditionally so-called, beings of reason without a foundation in reality only have the latter sort of foundation, whereas those of the former sort have a proximate foundation, which consists in an “occasion that urges the intellect to form the being of reason” (p. 160). Mastri and Belluto do not tell us much about the relation between the two kinds of foundation, and Novotný does not go deeper into this particular question. At least, it seems to be clear that the explanation

⁸ Cf. B. MASTRIUS / B. BELLUTUS, *Philosophiae ad mentem Scoti cursus integer tomus primus, continens disputationes in Aristotelis Logicam*, disp. III, proem., ed. Venetiis 1718, p. 118 (a text not quoted by Novotný): “[C]ognitio entis rationis, et secundarum intentionum valde inservit logicae in se, ut pote quae multum juvat directionem operationum intellectus; [...] adhuc magis deservit logicae ab Aristotele traditae, quae tota sub terminis secundarum intentionum est instituta [...]”.

of the virtual potentiality of beings of reason, mentioned above, applies to both sorts of them; only, this explanation must be combined with a consideration of the different degrees of foundation peculiar to the various kinds of beings of reason. It appears to me that the most significant consequence of this is that even the chimeras are somehow, if only cautiously, drawn into the realm of real being. On a deep level, there thus seems to be a hidden alliance, seemingly behind the back of Suárez, between Mastri and Belluto and Caramuel and Hurtado; for the latter two thought that chimeras are not beings of reason at all (Hurtado, cf. p. 117), or they are just a “special case of real beings” (Caramuel, cf. p. 173). (Let me return to one more aspect of this discussion below).

Apart from the authors dealt with in detail, Novotný also throws glances at other representatives of 17th-century scholasticism. Besides his main authors, the biographies of Antonio Rubio, Marcin Smiglecki, Francisco de Araújo, John of St. Thomas, Rodrigo de Arriaga, and John Punch are briefly introduced in the opening chapter (pp. 17-22). Still other authors that appear in the discussions include Richard Lynch, Bernaldo de Quiros, Valentín de Herice, Georges de Rhodes, and Gabriel Vázquez. To mention one example, in the chapter on Hurtado’s discussion, we learn that there was a controversy between Suárez and Vázquez (one more Spanish Jesuit) over God’s knowledge of beings of reason: Whereas Vázquez held that God does not know any *entia rationis* as such (since knowing things differently than they really are implies imperfection), but only their real constituents, Suárez held that God does know *entia rationis*, namely insofar as he knows the acts of human intellects; Hurtado himself supports Suárez’s position, which in fact is in harmony with Hurtado’s own doctrine on the human intellect’s cognition of beings of reason (pp. 120-122, cf. above; for Suárez’s position cf. also pp. 76-79).

Another debate dealt with by Novotný, and extensively so, is the one over the dependency of beings of reason upon extrinsic denominations (such as “being seen” or “being thought”, which are denominations of a thing through its relation to vision or a mind): The affirmation of such dependency is generally regarded a traditional Thomist position, the rejection of which, however, was “almost universal” in the tradition which followed upon Suárez (p. 149). It was discussed again and again, though, probably because of its undeniable relevance for an understanding of what an *ens rationis*, i.e. a kind of being which is defined through its peculiar relation to an intellect, is. Suárez himself points out that extrinsic denominations stand for something real (an intellect’s thinking of a thing is real) and thus cannot suffice for an explanation of beings of reason. On Novotný’s interpretation, Suárez’s position is that “extrinsic denominations are necessary but insufficient conditions of beings of reason” (p. 71). Mastri and Belluto are also critical toward a too narrow connection between extrinsic denominations

and *entia rationis* (cf. pp. 147-150); and yet their explanation of virtual potentiality (also called “virtual knowability” by Novotný) as a foundation of beings of reason, as reported above, clearly presupposes at least some connection between beings of reason and the doctrine of extrinsic denominations. Whether Matri’s and Belluto’s view on this connection in fact resembles the view held by Suárez, as it would seem, is not discussed by Novotný.

IV. One of the virtues of Novotný’s book is that it honestly addresses its own limitations and, at the same time, makes suggestions regarding future scholarship in the field. The author thus expressly refrains from tracking motifs from Baroque-Age discussions in Medieval or Renaissance material (p. 208). A result of this approach is that we do not learn, e.g., to what extent Matri’s and Belluto’s doctrine may be regarded a prolonging or rather a (Suárez-inspired) transformation of Scotus’s teaching concerning beings of reason. Though this would have been interesting, Novotný’s decision in this regard is understandable, especially given the wealth of understudied material from Baroque-Age scholasticism which needs our attention. In light of this, questions concerning the continuity within the over-reaching scholastic tradition may very well be reserved for later investigations; in Novotný’s words, “We first need to get hold of the subtleties of Baroque philosophical culture” (p. 182)⁹. Accordingly, the book concludes with an encouragement to engage in collaborative research on Baroque-Age scholasticism. Having focused on just one important topic discussed in this tradition, Novotný sees a special need for “more synthetic” studies, i.e. studies of entire philosophical and theological systems or visions, in order to appreciate the achievements of Baroque-Age scholasticism adequately (pp. 182-183). I could not agree more¹⁰. Yet, also the present book could have profited from a slightly more synthetic, be it a hermeneutic or a concept-historical, approach, which would have integrated the analytically achieved results in an overall perspective (the methods of analytical philosophy being best suited for dealing with analytical philosophy, after all). Also, issues important for an understanding of the investigated material, though only indirectly addressed in the texts dealing with beings of reason, are hardly considered. Let me, in anticipation of such

⁹ A similar care for the philosophical “culture” of Baroque-Age scholasticism has lately been expressed by Sven Knebel in his *Suarezismus*, p. 261; cf. my aforementioned review in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 121 (2014), p. 197.

¹⁰ This is not to say that such studies do not exist at all; for a noteworthy example, see P. DI VONA, *I concetti trascendenti in Sebastián Izquierdo e nella Scolastica del Seicento*, Loffredo Editore, Napoli 1994 (Libertà della mente, 3); this monograph has a special focus on one particular doctrine, the one concerning transcendental concepts, but at the same time it introduces a number of related metaphysical issues in Izquierdo as well as in other scholastic authors writing immediately before and after him.

synthetic studies required by Novotný, and rather than criticizing any of his results, illustrate my point by way of two examples.

1) Novotný criticizes Suárez's teaching regarding a number of issues, one of them being Suárez's thoughts on real efficient causation of beings of reason: Suárez explains that a being of reason needs some real being, namely an intellectual act, on which it is founded and that the efficient cause of this real being is at the same time the cause of that being of reason which is an object of the act. Novotný criticizes that Suárez in fact only explains the causation of the intellectual act, but not its object, a being of reason, which then, in Novotný's words, is supposed to come "for free" (pp. 61-62); or it is only, according to a "problematic claim" on the part of Suárez, "indirectly caused" (p. 64). However, the crucial point in Suárez's explanation is that an intellectual act, also called a *formal concept*, always terminates in an object, also called an *objective concept*. In his second metaphysical disputation, which deals with the nature of being, Suárez had explained the relationship between these two kinds of concepts, important to him at that point because the existence of a formal concept of real being necessarily entails an objective one¹¹, so that an analysis of the nature of being may start with focusing on its formal concept since we evidently do have such a concept (it is, in fact, presupposed even when we speak of "being"; thus, already at this level we find an "ontological argument", to use Novotný's language, cf. above), and then proceed to an investigation of its object. In the same context, Suárez explicitly made the point that an objective concept at times may be something real, at other times, though, a being of reason with only objective being in the intellect¹². Thus, Suárez's discussion of the two kinds of concepts clearly anticipates his explanation of the causation of beings of reason in his 54th metaphysical disputation; to demand more than an explanation of the real causation of the intellectual act in fact amounts to questioning the immediate relationship between the formal and the objective concept. Though this may not satisfactorily do away with all problems surrounding the causation of beings of reason, it does shed light on the discussion in the 54th disputation and, at the same time, it shows that what is at stake here concerns a core doctrine of Suárez's entire ontology.

2) The division of beings of reason is a recurring theme in the texts investigat-

¹¹ Cf. F. SUÁREZ, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. II, sect. 2, § 3, ed. Berton, p. 70, and disp. II, sect. 2, § 8, p. 72. These are the most basic texts on the correspondence between the two kinds of concepts; in disp. VIII, sect. 7, § 25, cit., p. 303, Suárez adds that an objective concept in fact is nothing but an extrinsic denomination of a thing insofar as it is a term of an intellectual act, i.e. a formal concept ("[C]onceptus objectivus nihil praeter rem addit, nisi denominationem termini conceptus formalis").

¹² Cf. F. SUÁREZ, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. II, sect. 1, § 1, ed. Berton, p. 65; for the latter point, cf. in particular: "[C]onceptus] objectivus vero non semper est vera res positiva; concipimus enim interdum privationes, et alia, quae vocantur entia rationis, quia solum habent esse objective in intellectu".

ed by Novotný. As seen above, the differentiation between such beings of reason which have a foundation in reality and such which do not is quite important to Suárez. It is, however, surprising that Suárez also operates with two different kinds of distinctions of reason, which he differentiates in the way just mentioned, i.e. one of them, the so-called *distinctio rationis ratiocinatae*, has a foundation in reality whereas the other, the *distinctio rationis ratiocinantis*, is a pure mind product¹³, though he never discusses whether these distinctions of reason should themselves be numbered among beings of reason. In his discussion of the latter, he twice addresses the issue of distinctions of reason, but only in order to elucidate what is meant by a relation of reason, which is included in his division of beings of reason: In order to understand things better our intellect may pose relations where there are none in reality, and just like there are two kinds of distinctions of reason, one with and one without a foundation in reality, there are also two different kinds of relations of reason available to the intellect¹⁴. It seems obvious that Suárez does not have any good reason not to count the distinctions of reason among the *entia rationis*, and maybe the only reason why he does not discuss this option is that it would challenge the traditional division of beings of reason into negations, privations, and relations which he adopted (p. 86). However, half a century later, Mastri, in his *Disputations on metaphysics* from 1646-1647, a work not dealt with by Novotný but which deserves to be quoted in the present context, not only reports that recent authors have started calling beings of reason with a foundation in reality “*ens rationis ratiocinatae*” and those without such a foundation “*ens rationis ratiocinantis*”, thus employing the terminology previously reserved for distinction theory¹⁵, but also himself

¹³ The two distinctions of reason are introduced and discussed in the seventh metaphysical disputation, cf. F. SUÁREZ, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. VII, sect. 1, §§ 4-8, ed. Berton, pp. 251-252. For a comparison with the doctrine of beings of reason, it is of special interest that Suárez, in § 6, explains that though a distinction of reason may, though must not, hold between beings of reason, the distinctions of reason being called thus because they are formed by reason, not because they hold between beings of reason. Also, in § 8, he states that although the divine intellect does not produce any distinctions of reason, it does know of such distinctions insofar as they are produced by the finite intellect of man (“Quapropter intellectus divinus per se non proprie facit distinctionem rationis, quamvis comprehendat illam, quae ab intellectu finito et imperfecte concipiente fieri potest”); in fact, as we have seen above, Suárez teaches just this with regard to beings of reason, as does, at a later point in time, Hurtado. The differentiation between the two kinds of distinction of reason is traditionally seen as a Thomist doctrine.

¹⁴ Cf. F. SUÁREZ, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, disp. LIV, sect. 1, § 8, ed. Berton, p. 1017, and sect. 6, § 5, p. 1040; Novotný quotes from both texts (pp. 51-52 and 99), but fails to really ponder upon the relationship between distinction theory and the doctrine of beings of reason.

¹⁵ Cf. B. MASTRIUS, *Disputationes ad mentem Scoti in duodecim Aristotelis Stagiritae Libros Metaphysicorum*, disp. II, quaest. 9, art. 1, § 249, ed. Venetiis 1718, p. 91: “[...] circa varias divisiones entis rationis, quae solent assignari, illam praesertim dedimus disp. cit. q. 7. de ente rationis fundato, & non fundato, ut satis consuetam in schola nostra, quam tractant Recentiores sub aliis terminis in ens rationis ratiocinatae et ratiocinantis, seu chimericum”. The reference in the quote is to Mastri’s and Belluto’s discussion of beings of reason in their work on logic.

expressly calls both distinctions of reason “beings of reason”; in fact, he says that both of them, in a sense, are “beings of reason with a foundation in reality” (which makes sense, since he is here elaborating on his and Belluto’s doctrine of the foundation of all kinds of beings of reason, cf. above)¹⁶. This certainly attests to Novotný’s contention regarding the advancement of Mastri’s (and Belluto’s) theory in comparison with that of Suárez. However, Mastri’s observation on the terminology employed by his contemporaries also sheds light on the future development of the discussion of beings of reason. The differentiation between the two different kinds of beings of reason as found in the representatives of German Enlightenment philosophy quoted in the beginning of this essay was framed in the terminology described by Mastri and, accordingly, should be regarded a distant echo of a development within post-Suárezian scholasticism.

It thus seems to be justified to conclude with a modest prophecy that attention to the development of this particular terminology, and the doctrine behind it, will take us beyond the divide between those Baroque-Age scholastics dealt with by Novotný and German Enlightenment metaphysicians. The activation of the critical potential of the whole *ens rationis* theme, as seen in the examples from de la Mettrie and Kant, where core metaphysical assumptions come under suspicion of being *entia rationis*, may then be regarded a more genuine Enlightenment application of the traditional doctrine¹⁷.

¹⁶ Cf. B. MASTRIUS, *Disputationes ad mentem Scoti in duodecim Aristotelis Stagiritae Libros Metaphysicorum*, disp. VI, quaest. 14, § 263, cit., p. 315: “[...] loquendo de fundamento entis rationis in hoc sensu non minus est ens rationis fundatum distinctio ratiocinans, quam ratiocinata [...]”.

¹⁷ That the scholastics of the 17th century were aware of the polemical (if not critical in the Enlightenment sense of the term) potential of the doctrine of beings of reason is, however, proved by a book title such as *Ens rationis luthero-calvinicum ab Aristotele redivivo explicatum* by the Jesuit philosopher Melchior Cornaeus (Ex officina typographica Jobi Hertzii, s.l., 1659). For some remarks on Cornaeus’s view on beings of reason, as expressed in his theoretical writings, cf. P.R. BLUM, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2012 (Scientific and Learned Cultures and Their Institutions, 7), p. 128.

Abstract: This review-article examines Daniel Novotný's new book on *entia rationis* in Baroque-Age scholasticism. Novotný's presentation of Francisco Suárez', Pedro Hurtado's, Bartolomeo Mastri's and Bonaventura Belluto's as well as Juan Caramuel's theories of beings of reason is discussed. Beyond Novotný's results, it is pointed out 1) that Suárez' theory of the causation of beings of reason is anticipated by his explanation of the relationship between formal and objective concepts, and 2) that the traditional division of distinctions of reason lies in the background of some scholastic authors' differentiation between *entia rationis ratiocinatae* and *entia rationis ratiocinantis*; this latter motif is echoed in German Enlightenment metaphysics.

Key words: *Entia rationis* / Beings of reason; Francisco Suárez; Bartolomeo Mastri; Metaphysics; Scholasticism; Philosophy in the 17th century.

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