John of St. Thomas and Suárez

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1. Baroque Theology[1]

The Baroque age, extending from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, was one of the most productive in the history of Catholic thought. It was an age with a passion for system and synthesis. Theologians never seemed to weary of contemplating the architectonic symmetry of the Catholic doctrinal structure, of meditating, with an almost mystical intensity, on the elegant logic of the religion of

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[1] Our quotations from John of St. Thomas and Suárez are taken from the following:
1. JOANNIS A SANCTO THOMA, *O. P. Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus* [henceforward *CPT*], Beato Reiser O.S.B, Marietti, Taurino/Turin 1930-1937. 3 vol. Vol. 1, *Ars Logica*. Vol. 2, *Naturalis Philosophiae*, partes I et III. Vol. 3, *Naturalis philosophiae,* pars IV.
2. JOANNIS A SANCTO THOMA, *O. P. Cursus theologici* [henceforth *CT*], *In Primam Partem Divi Thomae commentarii*, Solesmes Benedictines, Desclée, Paris, vol. 1, 1931; vol. 2, 1934.
3. R. P. FRANCISCI SUÁREZ E SOCIETATE JESU. *Opera Omnia*, Ludovicus Vives, Paris 1856, vols. 1-26). Vol. 1, *De Deo Uno et Trino. Tractatus Tertius. De Sanctissimo Trinitatis Mysterio*. Vols. 25-26, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* [henceforth *DM*], quoted as follows: *DM* : disputation : section : number. All the translations are mine.
Since the 1960s, Suarezian studies have been less prolific than previously, when they were dominated by the great figures of Pedro Descoqs (from the 1920's) and José Hellin (from the 1940's). Some idea of how extensive these studies were can be gauged from the Nota Bibliografica of A. GNEMMI's *Il fondamento metafisico. Analisi de strutture sulle "Disputationes Metaphysicae" di F. Suárez*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1969, pp. 337-351. However, from the late sixties, Suarezian studies have still been continued by an impressive roster of scholars, like José Aleu Benitez, Timothy J. Cronin, Jean-François Courtine, Douglas P. Davis, John P. Doyle, Eleuterio Elorduy, Jorge J. E. Gracia, David M. Knight, John D. Kronen, Carlos Noreña, Jeremiah Reedy, T. D. Sullivan, John L. Treloar and Norman J. Wells. Many of these names appear in the special issue on Francisco Suárez edited by Jorge Gracia for the American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly, Summer 1991, which augurs a revival of Suárez studies.

the Logos. Systems were constructed from the writings of Scholastic theologians of earlier times who are not known to have been system builders, or the systematic possibilities of whose thought had not been further developed in medieval days. Among these systems were Aegidianism, Anselmianism, Baconianism, Bernardism, and Henricism. But the major Baroque theological schools were developments of the three preeminent architectonic systems that had arisen in the age of classical Scholasticism: Bonaventurianism, Thomism, and Scotism, Thomism being the most influential, repeatedly recommended by the popes, like Urban V (*Laudabilis Deus)*, Pius V (*Mirabilis Deus*, 1567), Sixtus V (*Triumphantis Jerusalem*, 1588) and Paul V (*Splendidissimi*, 1607). And the Thomist system was championed not only by the Dominican order to which Thomas belonged, and by his fervent admirers like the Discalced Carmelites, but by other orders too, like the Benedictines, Cistercians, Mercedarians, Minorites; as well as by the seculars.

The Dominicans, of course, had long been dedicated to Thomism, and had thinkers of surpassing genius. Among the 15th century Thomists were Cajetan (Thomas de Vio, 1468-1534), reputed founder of classical Thomism; Franciscus Sylvester Ferrariensis (1474-1528), elaborator of Aquinas's polemics; Francisco de Vitoria (c.1492-1546), initiator of international law; and Domingo de Soto (1494-1560), creator of a variety of Thomism different from, and less succesful than, Cajetan's. The 16th century produced a race of Dominican giants like Melchior Cano (1509-1560), inaugurator of Baroque Scholasticism, with its balance of positive and speculative theology; Bartolomé de Medina (1528-1581), propounder of the ethical theory of Probabilism; Domingo Bañez (1528-1604), protagonist of the theory of physical predetermination; and the *Doctor Profundus* John of St. Thomas (João de São Tomás/Ponçote/Poinsot, 1589-1644), the consummator of classical Thomist systematics — the organization of a system embodied in the 24 Theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies in 1914. Classical Thomism was the normative form of the system from the 16th century to the early 20th, but was challenged in the mid-20th by newer modes of Thomism, which can be identified as the historical and the transcendental.

While the Baroque Dominicans produced the consummate classical Thomist, the Baroque Carmelites were responsible for the consummate classical Thomist opus, in three divisions. First, a systematization of Thomist philosophy, the *Cursus Complutensis* (1624-1625); second, a systematization of Thomist dogmatic theology, in twelve volumes, the *Cursus Theologicus Salmanticensis* (1624-1712); and third, a systematization of Thomist moral theology, in seven volumes, the *Cursus Theologiae Moralis* (1665-1709). The principal theologians of this undertaking were Antonio de la Madre de Dios (1583-1637), Domingo de Santa Teresa (1604-1659), and Juan de la Anunciación (1633-1701), the latter, the Spanish John, almost equal in speculative profundity to our Portuguese John. The productivity of these Baroque thinkers was prodigious, never equalled before or since. As John of St. Thomas's younger contemporary, the great Portuguese orator António Vieira (1608-1697) said about them, they seemed to write libraries rather than books, «*que mais parece escreveram livrarias, que livros*»[2].

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[2] A. VIEIRA, *Desvelos de Xavier acordado. Sermão primeiro. Anjo*, in Padre G. ALVES, *Padre António Vieira. Sermões* , Lello & Irmão, Porto 1959. Tom. 13, p. 170.

2. Francisco Suarez (1548-1617)

Towering above all these theologians and philosophers was the figure of the *Doctor Eximius* (the Extraordinary or Uncommon Doctor), Francisco Suárez, *Europae atque adeo orbis universi magister*, author of the most titanic theological enterprise ever undertaken by any single individual. His published *opera omnia* — which is not a collection of heterogeneous treatises and articles, but a unified systematic and literary structure — consists of 14 books, printed in 26 volumes, containing 4,212 sections, 22,365 chapters and nearly 15,000,000 words! The philosophical aspect of this achievement is thus described, in part, by a modern historian of philosophy, no friend of Suárez, and for whom Thomism was the definitive Scholastic system:

«Suárez enjoys such a knowledge of medieval philosophy as to put to shame any modern historian of medieval thought. On each and every question he seems to know everybody and everything, and to read his book [the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, 1597] is like attending the Last Judgment of four centuries of Christian speculation by a dispassionate judge»[3].

But it is arguable that Suarezianism is the definitive Scholastic system. For if such a system could have arisen only after most of the basic insights of Scholasticism's various schools — Augustinian, Thomist, Scotist and Nominalist — had been created, developed and debated; if that system could only have originated in a colossal intellect capable of viewing the tradition's entire achievement in a single optic, the only intellect, in other words, endowed with the ability to preside at Scholasticism's Last Judgment; if such an intellect had the requisite dispassionateness to adjudicate between the School's many doctrines, appreciate their complex nuances, control their intricate detail, while discerning a comprehensively simple structure behind them; and if that intellect was the intellect of Francisco Suárez — then the system of Francisco Suárez is Scholasticism's definitive system.

From the time of its inception, Thomism had come under attack: first from the Augustinians, then from the Scotists, and later from the Nominalists. But the thinker who presented the system its greatest challenge was undoubtedly Suárez himself. His critique was effective enough for Thomism to undergo what may be called a process of "Suarezianization" — the adoption of Suarezian tenets while retaining Thomist vocabulary, or else the retention of Thomist tenets but couched in Suarezian language. (As late as 1956 an important Thomist, Cornelio Fabro, 1911-1995, complained of *l'intention assez commune à la néoscolastique de concilier les positions maîtresses du thomisme avec la métaphysique suarézienne*[4]). The first example of this process is John of St. Thomas himself.

Suárez's critique was directed, of course, against the *classical Thomism* of

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[3] E. GILSON, *Being and Some Philosophers*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto 1949, p. 99.
[4] C. FABRO, *Actualité et originalité de l'"esse" thomiste*, «Revue thomiste», 56 (1956), p. 483: «the intention, quite common in Neoscholasticism, of reconciling the major positions of Thomism with Suarezian metaphysics».

Cajetan, eminently represented in our time by Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). But, as we noted above, since the time of the Uncommon Doctor at least two other Thomisms have come into being, which have turned their backs on classical Thomism and which claim to be more faithful than the Cajetanian system to the Common Doctor's thought — the *historical Thomism* of Etienne Gilson (1884-1978) allegedly based on the texts of Thomas himself, without recourse to the commentators; and *transcendental Thomism,* initiated by the Jesuit Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944) which holds that the full meaning of Thomas's teaching can only be perceived if scrutinized through the spectacles of Kant[5].

An example of the Suarezianization of Thomism is John of St. Thomas's abandonment of the commentarial method, such as had been followed by Cajetan and by Suárez's older contemporary Domingo Bañez (1528-1604); indeed, by his younger colleague, Gabriel Vazquez (1549-1604). Before the time of Suárez, the main lines of theological systematics had been outlined by John Damascene (c. 675-749), articulated by Peter Lombard (c. 1100-1160) and modified and elaborated by Aquinas. There was no equivalent structuring of philosophy; its teaching followed the loose order of the *Metaphysics* and other works of Aristotle. Theology and philosophy were generally expounded through commentaries on these masters' works. Suárez himself had begun his career employing this method, when working on the topic of the Incarnation, one that had been treated by Aquinas in the third part of his *Summa theologiae*. In these early works, Suárez's commentary on Thomas's text was followed by "disputations", divided into "sections", and subdivided into numbers, arranged in Suárez's own order, not that fixed by Aquinas. In lecturing on the Incarnation, Suárez found that he had often to interrupt his theological discourse to clarify its philosophical presuppositions. He then decided that theology would best be served if all its philosophical assumptions were to be organized into one complete and consistent work. This work was the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (1597), the first modern treatment of metaphysics not written as a commentary on Aristotle, where the discipline is structured for the first time in an organic way. With it began the definitive abandonment of the commentarial method by Baroque theologians, including John of St. Thomas. But the systematics of Suárez differs from that of John. Suárez imposes his own order on the entire work, on the principal and subordinate themes, on their outlines and details. As for John of St. Thomas, the plan of his total opus is an assemblage of the pertinent treatises (on logic, natural philosophy and theology) of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), Porphyry (c. 232-c. 304), Petrus Hispanus/John XXI (c. 1210-1277) and Aquinas. This is particularly evident in his *Cursus theologicus*, his masterwork, where he follows the order of the questions of Aquinas's *Summa*. However, after summarizing the Master's questions, he proceeds to express his own ideas in disputations, arranged in his own order and not that of Aquinas. Thus the architectonics of Suárez may be described as *macro-systematic*; that of John of St. Thomas as *micro-systematic*.

As a result of having written the *Disputationes Metaphysicae* according to his own plan and of having expressed his own philosophical views in a systematic manner and applied them methodically to his whole distinctive theology, the system

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[5] See G.A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism. The Internal Evolution of Thomism*, Fordham University Press, New York 1989.

118

of Suárez becomes the only Scholastic system where the founder himself organized the elements of its philosophical and theological aspects and integrated them into a unity. The founders of the other major Scholastic systems, Bonaventurianism, Thomism and Scotism were able to elaborate only their theologies. They did not articulate their philosophies as autonomous units; that task was brilliantly achieved by their later followers.

It has become customary to call the great Thomists of the Renaissance and Baroque periods "commentators". It is demanded of them that they be faithful interpreters of the *mens Divi Thomae*. But they deserve to be considered philosophers in their own right, no differently from any modern philosopher. John of St. Thomas himself is one of the great Thomists remarkable for their originality, for he was «the first semiotician to systematize the foundations of a doctrine of signs»[6], concerned with the communication between man and God, man and man, and man and nature. These Thomists may be considered commentators in the sense that Aquinas himself is a commentator, for, among a total of sixty of his writings devoted to theology and philosophy, forty are commentaries and only twenty independent works. The "commentators" can also be thought of as Thomists in the sense that Aquinas is an Aristotelian. They commented on Aquinas just as Aquinas commented on Aristotle, but no one today would identify Aquinas merely as an Aristotelian commentator.

3. Suarezian Critique of Classical Thomism

It is now time to confront these two basically irreducible systems, the Suarezian and the Thomist, the former a critique of the latter. For Suárez the basic principles of Thomism are, at best, open to debate and are unnecessary to found a metaphysics, a fact that makes the system, when not fallacious, superfluous. The rationale of Suárez's critique of classical Thomism is that it *tends to reify concepts*. Aquinas himself condemns such reification in the following words:

«It is not however necessary that the things which are distinct according to the intellect be so in reality, because the intellect does not apprehend things according to the manner of things, but according to its own manner»[7].

This asymmetry between mind and reality is explained by Suárez as follows. Speaking of the mental distinction with an extramental basis (*distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re)*, he observes that such a distinction

«is made through inadequate concepts of the same thing. For though the same thing is conceived by either of the two concepts, by neither is all that is in the

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[6] J. DEELY, *Semiotic in the Thought of Jacques Maritain*, «Recherches Sémiotiques», 6 (1986), no. 2, p. 112. For a more detailed characterization of this originality see the author's *Tractatus de Signis. The Semiotic of John Poinsot*, University of California, Berkeley 1985, Editorial Afterword, especially pp. 491-514.

[7] AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, pars 1, q. 50, art. 2: «Non est autem necessarium quod ea quae distinguuntur secundum intellectum sint distincta in rebus; quia intellectus non apprehendit res secundum modum rerum, sed secundum modum suum».

thing conceived exactly, nor is its entire essence and its objective significance exhausted, which (process) is often realized through conceiving that thing through a relationship to various other things, or according to their manner — and so such a distinction always has a basis in reality, but is formally said to come about through inadequate concepts of the same thing. In this way we distinguish justice from mercy in God, because we do not conceive the supreme simplicity of God's power as it is in itself and according to all its strength, but we divide it by concepts in relation to various effects, of which that eminent power is the origin; or else by an analogy to various powers which we discover to be distinct in men, and which are found in a most eminent way in God's supremely simple power»[8].

Reification seems to obtain in the Thomist principle of individuation, quantified matter (*materia signata quantitate*). Nature is said not to include the note of individuality in its essence; to become individual it requires to be "circumstantiated", John of St. Thomas claims, by quantified matter. Suárez, on the other hand, maintains that

«Every singular substance needs no other principle of individuation besides its own entity, or besides the intrinsic principles by which its entity is constituted»[9].

Entities, as exist outside the mind, are by themselves singular; they are not universals reified or singularized. But, as John of St. Thomas points out, «the express opinion of St. Thomas, in innumerable places, is that quantified matter is the first principle of individuation»[10].

What then is one to say about the fact that whatever is posited in reality is singular? John responds:

«by this very fact, that it is posited in reality, it is not posited bare and unconnected from every circumstance and state of incommunicability, but is posited in combination with that state — and in this way it is turned into a singular and individual entity, not by reason of its entity absolutely considered, but as circumstantiated and incommunicable. Therefore it is one thing [to say] that a nature posited in reality is singular, and another [to ask] by virtue of what principle and basis it is singular and this particular thing. And although nature by itself is indifferent to a plurality of individuals by a negative indifference [in that it prescinds from, but does not exclude, individuals], nonetheless, this indifference needs to be removed not by an essential principle, but by one modificative of the essence. This is because the indifference referred to is only

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8 SUÁREZ, *DM* 7: 1: 5. Vol. 25, p. 251.
9 *Ibidem*, 5: 6: 1. Vol. 25, p. 180: «omnem substantiam singularem, neque alio indigere individuationis principio praeter suam entitatem, vel praeter principia intrinseca quibus eius entitas constat».
10 JOHN OF ST THOMAS, *CPT*, *Naturalis Philosophiae*, pars 3, q. 9, art. 3. Vol. 2, p. 781: «Expressa Divi Thomae sententia est innumeris locis materia quantitate signata esse primum principium individuationis».

of such a kind that the nature has to be modified and materialized by singularity and individuation, and not further constituted in its essence»[11].

A Suarezian critique would be to ask if that absolute nature, which is indifferent to a plurality of individuals, is itself a singularity or an abstraction. If it is a singularity, it is individual by itself and needs no further principle of individuation. If it is an abstraction, it cannot, *unless it be reified,* be individuated by any modifier really distinct from itself. Since it is an abstract concept, its modifier need only be an added conceptual qualification. Thus, given the mind's inability to grasp the rich content of reality except through a plurality of concepts — an intramental plurality that does not necessarily imply an extramental one — the intelligible content of the same singular individual posited in reality can be conceived as constituted of two conceptual integrants, one signifying its absolute or common nature and the other its modifying incommunicability. Suárez himself has specifically addressed this problem. The opinion that each entity is self-individuated does not, he observes, deny that

«in that individual entity it is possible to distinguish the common nature from the singular entity, and for this particular individual to add, over and above the species, something conceptually distinct, which according to a metaphysical consideration has the significance of an individual differentia. But the opinion nevertheless adds... that the individual differentia does not, in the individual substance itself, have any special principle, or basis, which in reality is distinct from its entity. Therefore the opinion affirms that each entity, in this sense, is by itself this principle of individuation»[12].

A careful reading of John of St. Thomas's passage, quoted above, nowhere indicates that he is reifying absolute nature; rather he seems to be treating it, Suarezian fashion, as a distinct conceptual integrant of a singular entity's intelligible content. Except with doctrines which he believes were clearly enunciated by Thomas, and which he defends with unflinching loyalty, John is open to the influence of Suárez, sometimes with unexpected results.

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[11] *Ibidem*, Vol. 2, p. 775: «quod hoc ipso, quod ponitur in re, non ponitur nuda et absoluta ab omni circumstantia et statu incommunicabilitatis, sed cum illa [illo], et ita redditur unitas singularis et individua, non ratione entitatis absolute sumptae, sed circumstantionatae et incommunicabilis. Itaque aliud est quod natura posita in re est singularis, aliud ex quo principio et radice habet, quod sit singularis et haec. Et licet natura secundum se sit indifferens ad plura indifferentia negativa, tamen ista indifferentia tolli debet non per principium essentiale, sed per modificativum essentiae, eo quod illa indifferentia solum est, ut natura modificetur et materializaretur per singularitatem et individuationem, non autem ut amplius quidditative constituetur».

[12] SUÁREZ, *DM* 5: 6: 1. Vol. 25, p. 180: «Non enim negat haec opinio, in illa individua entitate posse ratione distingui naturam communem ab entitate singulari, et hoc individuum addere supra speciem aliquid ratione distinctum, quod secundum metaphysicam considerationem habet rationem differentiae individualis [...] Sed tamen addit haec opinio [...] illam differentiam individualem non habere in substantia individua speciale aliquod principium, vel fundamentum quod sit in re distinctum ab eius entitate; ideoque in hoc sensu dicit unamquamque entitatem per seipsam esse haec individuationis principium».

4. Comparison of the Suarezian and Thomist Systems

Unexpected agreement between the *Eximius* and the *Profundus* is reached on some basic principles of metaphysics. A discussion on these principles requires us to briefly compare the forms they take in the Suarezian and Thomist systems.

The system of Suárez is basically different from classical Thomism. It is founded on postulates also accepted by the latter; but Thomism adds other assumptions of its own, to be presently considered, which it believes are philosophically more profound that those it shares with Suárez. For his part, however, the *Eximius* argues that the commonly shared postulates disprove the special Thomist ones, or at least render them superfluous. In a strange way, John of St. Thomas seems to sometimes agree with Suárez on this point.

Every metaphysical system discourses on the nature of being and inquires into the ultimate *a priori* reason for its main categories or members, the phenomenal and the transcendental — or, as Suárez and John of St. Thomas would have it, the created and the uncreated (*ens creatum et increatum*). What a metaphysical system discovers in answer to this inquiry becomes its unifying principle.

We shall begin with the Suarezian notion of being as such and then discuss the *a priori* reason of its principal members[13]. As the Uncommon Doctor conceives it, being has four notes: existentiality, unity, imperfect precision and the inequality of dependence. The first note is *existentiality,* aptitudinal existence, or existence absolutely speaking (whatever is outside causes and outside nothing), considered with precision from whether it is actually exercised or not. Indeed, no one has affirmed the equivalence of being and existence more forcefully than has the *Doctor Eximius*:

> «*existentia ut existentia correspondet enti ut sic, estque de intrinseca ratione eius, vel in actu vel in potentia, prout sumptum fuerit ens*»[14].

The second note is *unity*. "Being" is the content of

> «one objective concept, adequate and immediate, which expressly signifies neither substance nor accident, nor God nor creature, but all these in the manner of a unity, that is to say, in so far as they are in some way similar and concur in existing [...] This objective concept prescinds in its meaning from all its particulars or members dividing being, even though they be entirely simple entities»[15].

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[13] For a masterly analysis of the Suarezian and Thomist notions of being and analogy, see J. Hellin, *La analogia del ser y el conocimiento de Dios en Suárez*, Editora Nacional, Madrid 1947).

[14] Suárez, *DM* 50: 12: 15. Vol. 26, p. 969: «Existence, as existence, corresponds to being as such, and belongs to its intrinsic significance, whether in act or in potency, depending on how one considers being».

[15] *Ibidem*, 2: 2: 8 & 15. Vol. 25, p. 72 & 75: «unum conceptum objectivum adaequatum et immediatum, qui expresse non dicit substantiam neque accidens, nec Deum nec creaturam, sed haec omnia per modum unius, scilicet quatenus sunt inter se aliquo modo similia et conveniunt in essendo [...] hic conceptus obiectivus est secundum rationem praecisus ab

The third note is *imperfect precision*. Just as what makes all beings similar to one another is being, what differentiates them is also being, for «the notion of being is transcendent, and intimately enclosed in all the particular and determinate types of beings» («*rationem entis esse transcendentem et intime inclusam in omnibus propriis et determinatis rationibus entium*»[16]). The same concept of being, *confusedly considered* "as such", is what unites them; the same concept, more *expressly focused* as "God", "creature", "substance", "accident", is what differentiates them. «The contraction of the concept of being to its particular modes», notes Suárez

«is not to be understood in the manner of a composition, but only in the manner of a more express conception (*per modum expressioris conceptionis*) of any particular being contained under being, in such a way that either concept, whether that of "being" or of "substance", is simple and irresoluble into two concepts, differing only in that one is more determined than the other»[17].

Some of John of St. Thomas's sentences, taken out of context, sound as though they could have been written by Suárez himself:

«And these very modes contracting being, in so far as they signify entity, are the concept of "being"; in so far as they signify the expression of modification (*expressionem modificationis*), are diverse»[18].

This unitary notion of being, for Suárez, is not univocal, because

«although according to its confused significance it is the same, just as it is one, nonetheless it is not entirely the same, because it is not of itself entirely uniform, this uniformity and identity being required by univocals in their essential content»[19].

The fourth note is *the inequality of essential dependence*, for the notion of being is attributed unequally according to a set order: primarily to some categories of itself (like substances, or God), and to others (like accidents or the creature), through essential dependence on the former. For

«being, however abstractly and confusedly conceived, postulates this order by

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omnibus particularibus seu membris dividentibus ens, etiamsi sint maxime simplices entitates».

[16] *Ibidem*, 28: 3: 21. Vol. 26, p. 21.

[17] *Ibidem*, 2: 6: 7. Vol. 25, p. 101: «non esse intelligendum per modum compositionis, sed solum per modum expressioris conceptionis alicuius entis contenti sub ente; ita ut uterque conceptus, tam entis quam substantiae, verbi gratia, simplex sit, et irresolubilis in duos conceptus, solumque differant, quia unus est magis determinatus quam alius».

[18] JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *CPT*., *Ars Logica*, pars 2, q. 13, art. 5. Vol. 1, p. 495: «Et istimet modi contrahentes ens, quantum ad rationem entitatis, conceptis entis sunt, quantum ad expressionem modificationis, diversi sunt».

[19] SUÁREZ, *DM* 28: 3: 21. Vol. 26, p. 21: «sicut secundum confusam rationem sit eadem, sicut est una, nihilominus non est omnino eadem, quia non est ex se omnino uniformis, quam uniformitatem et identitatem requirunt univoca in ratione sua».

itself, that it be applied primarily, and as it were completely, to God, and through it descend to the others, not existing in them except by a relationship to and dependence upon God. Therefore this being falls short of the meaning of a univocal concept, for the univocal is of itself indifferent in such a manner that it descends to its inferiors equally, and without the order or relationship of one member to another»[20].

Classical Thomist being, as described by John of St. Thomas[21], differs from the Suarezian primarily on the second note, unity. While Suarezian being may be described as *simpliciter (licet imperfecte) unum et secundum quid diversum*, Thomist being is *simpliciter diversum et secundum quid unum*. As John of St. Thomas (speaking of a concept which in Suarezianism is termed the transcendental univocal) puts it, the idea that

«this concept, which is one, imperfect and inadequate, so prescinds from its inferiors that it remains in potency with regard to them and is contractible by the addition of a differential concept — is deduced from the fact that it would thus be univocal. For "animal" is univocal to all its species, because it is conceived as actually one in such a way that it possesses the dividing differences only in potency and is divided by their addition. Therefore the analogical concept, which lacks that kind of unity, but has a unity only in a certain sense, must not include the diversity of its inferiors only in potency; for in this way it would remain simply one in actuality, which is what being univocal means, and it would be multiple and diverse only in potentiality. In order that the concept not remain simply one, it must actually include diversity, even though it not actually explicate the diversity»[22].

John of St. Thomas compares such a concept to that of a heap of sand seen from a distance, which, he claims, actually represents all the particular grains of sand that compose it, but not each grain explicitly. Here we also hit upon a basic difference in conceiving univocity. The Thomist univocal is a concept that has a simple unity. The Suarezian univocal is more complex: it is a simple unity, but applied to its inferiors

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[20] *Ibidem*, *DM* 28: 3: 17. Vol. 26, p. 19: «ipsum ens quantumvis abstracte et confuse conceptum, ex vi sua postulat hunc ordinem, ut primo ac per se, et quasi complete competat Deo, et per illam descendat ad reliqua, quibus non insit nisi cum habitudine et dependentia a Deo; ergo in hoc deficit a ratione univoci, nam univocum ex se ita est indifferens, ut aequaliter, et sine ullo ordine vel habitudine unius ad alterum, ad inferiora descendat; ergo ens respectu Dei et creaturarum merito inter analoga comptatur».

[21] Following the epoch-making treatise of CAJETAN, *De nominum analogia* (1498).

[22] JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *CPT*, *Ars Logica*, pars 2, q. 13, art. 5. Vol. 1, p. 493: «ita praescindens ab inferioribus, quod maneat in potentia ad illa et sit contrahibilis per additionem conceptus differentialis, ex eo deducitur, quia sic esset conceptus univocus. Nam animal ideo est univocum ad omnes species, quia concipitur ita unum in actu, quod differentias dividentes solum habet in potentia et per earum additionem dividitur. Ergo analogum, quod talem unitatem non habet, sed secundum quid, non debet solum in potentia includere diversitatem inferiorum; sic enim in actu simpliciter maneret unum, quod est esse univocum, et solum in potentia multiplex et diversum. Ut ergo non maneat simpliciter unum, actu debet includere diversitatem, licet actu non explicet illam».

indifferently, without any relationship of dependence. It is of two sorts, transcendental and universal. The transcendental univocal prescinds imperfectly from its particulars or inferiors; that is, the same concept, in different modes, both unifies and differentiates. "Being" is predicated of man and tiger, but to each independently of the other (hence univocally); it is predicated of God and the creature also, to the latter only dependently on the former (hence analogically). The universal univocal prescinds perfectly from its inferiors; that is, the concept that unifies is distinct from the concept that differentiates. "Animal" is predicated of man and tiger, to each independently of the other; the former differentiated from the latter by rationality, a differentia not included in "animal". As for the Thomist being, *simpliciter diversum et secundum quid unum*, it seems from the Suarezian viewpoint to be no different from the Nominalist universal — which is but a collection of particulars. As the *Doctor Incomparabilis* William of Ockham (c. 1290-c.1349) describes them, universals, like the notion of "man",

> «precisely signify singular things [...] it must be conceded that this name "man", with equal priority signifies all particular men. It does not follow therefore that this name "man" is equivocal, because though it signifies many particulars with equal priority, nonetheless it signifies them by a single ascription, and in signifying them subordinates them to one concept and not to many, because of which that concept is univocally predicated of them»[23].

Likewise, Thomist "being" actually represents all particular beings. As Suárez sees it, a concept constituted of many distinct particulars is no different from many distinct concepts, and their unity is a mere *flatus vocis*. The Thomists respond that their being is distinguished from a Nominalist universal by the fact that while the particulars of the latter are lumped together without any binding unity, the multiples of the Thomist concept are united by proportionality. The relationship of the essence of the creature to its existence is proportional to the relationship of the essence of the Creator to His existence. Such reasoning, Suárez would argue, is fallacious. In proportionality there need to be four terms, but in the example just given there are only three. The essence and existence of the creature, which for Thomists are distinct both conceptually and really, form two terms; the essence and existence of God, on the other hand, are distinct only verbally, being totally convertible; their distinction, which is not even conceptual, has no foundation in reality, so they constitute just one term. Besides, the argument appears to be circular: analogy is a method that aids us in knowing about God; all its notes must be determined before we have any

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[23] WILLIAM OF OCKHAM, *Summa logicae,* pars 1, cap. 17. Philotheus Boehner, *Venerabilis Inceptoris Guillelmi de Ockham Summa Logicae*, Cura Instituti Franciscani Universitatis S. Bonaventurae, N.Y. 1974, p. 60: «Dicendum est quod talia nomina significant praecise res singulares. Unde hoc nomen "homo" nullam rem significat nisi illam quae est homo singularis, et ideo numquam supponit pro substantia nisi quando supponit pro homine particulari. Et ideo concedendum est quod hoc nomen "homo" aeque primo significat omnes homines particulares, nec tamen sequitur quod hoc nomen "homo" sit vox aequivoca, et hoc quia quamvis significet plura aeque primo, tamen unica impositione significat illa et subordinatur in significando illa plura tantum uni conceptui et non pluribus, propter quod univoce praedicatur de eis».

knowledge of Him. But we cannot know what analogy is unless we already have prior knowledge of what the relationship is of God's essence to His existence.

But what does Aquinas himself say about analogy? Gilson tells us that

«His texts on the notion of analogy are relatively few, and in each case they are so restrained that we cannot but wonder why the notion has taken on such an importance in the eyes of his commentators»[24].

5. Suarezian Features of John of St. Thomas's Thought

It is now time to examine whether the reaction of John of St. Thomas to the ideas of Suárez was not just negative or cautionary, but positive as well. In response, it may be said that John of St. Thomas, if one may so put it, is the most Suarezian of Thomists, and it would be interesting to investigate just how many of the Jesuit's ideas the Dominican made his own. At least two such ideas can be indicated, the first mainly philosophical and the second philosophical with clear theological implications. First, that the basic principle of Thomism, the limitation of act by potency, is not necessary to found a philosophical system; and second, that the nature of God is best defined not as subsistent being, but as subsistent intelligence.

The discussion of "being as such", engaged in above, leads us now to consider the main divisions of being, which for Suárez are "being by essence" (*ens a se*) and "being by participation" (*ens ab alio*). God, the Creator, is being by essence, and the creature is being by total participation of essence and existence with reference to the Creator[25]. In other words, the creature's essence is *positiva seu radicalis dependentia*. Suárez categorically declares:

«*Principio igitur supponendum est (id quod est certum apud omnes) ens creatum, quatenus tale est, essentialiter includere dependentiam a primo et increato ente. Quia haec est prima ratio distinguens ens creatum ab increato [...]*»[26].

Indeed, continues the Uncommon Doctor,

«*absolute est de essentia Dei, ut habeat plenum dominium omnium creatorum entium, vel actu, vel potestate, ita ut si velit illa producere, non possit extra suum dominium illa constituere*»[27].

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24 E. GILSON, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* part 1, ch. 5, sect. 2, Random House, New York 1956, p. 105.

25 For a summary exposition of the system of Suárez see the following works of J. HELLIN, *Nociones de la potencia y del acto, y sus mutuas relaciones, según Suárez*, «Las Ciencias», 17-1 (1952), pp. 91-92; and his *Theologia Naturalis*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid 1950, pp. 890-896.

26 SUÁREZ, *DM* 31: 14: 2 & 4. Vol. 26, p. 308: «In the very first place, therefore, it has to be postulated (something that is accepted as certain by all) that created being, in so far as it is such, essentially includes dependence on the first and uncreated being. Because this is the primary reason that distinguishes created being from the uncreated [...]».

27 *Ibidem*: «It absolutely belongs to the essence of God, that He have full dominion over all

From the concept "being by essence" are derived, *a priori*, all the predicates characteristic of God: infinity, unicity, immutability, imitability in effects — the latter predicate being the *a priori* reason for the possibility itself of "being by participation." From the latter concept, in turn, are derived, *a priori*, all the predicates that characterize the creature, which are: contingence, dependence in conservation and activity, finiteness, potentiality by itself and in combination with act, the multiplication of beings into species and into individuals within each species, univocal similarities of genus and species, and the analogical similarities between substances and accidents, and also between the Creator and creature. In this way the absolute simplicity and unity of "being by essence" is the *a priori* reason for the infinite variety and multiplicity of "being by participation". The concept of "being by essence" is thus the unifying principle of Suarezianism; it defines the basis of what, to Suárez's mind, constitutes the simple and comprehensive structure behind the various modes of Scholasticism.

Classical Thomism accepts these postulates but (as we noted) judges its own principles to be philosophically more profound. The most basic of these principles, in its most abstract form, can be stated thus: *a category or being which does not include limitation in its concept acquires that limitation by the adjection of a really distinct category or being*. One mode of this adjection is what is known as "reception". Thus actuality, or act, of itself signifies only perfection and does not connote limitation; to be limited, it has to be received into a really distinct potency, one that signifies such a limitation, as having a capacity for only a certain measure of perfection and no more, «*sicut liquor in vase ad eius mensuram se accomodat*»[28] as John of St. Thomas has it. Another mode of the adjection is what, as we have seen, he calls "circumstantiation", which individuates nature by quantified matter.

The unlimitedness of act (or existence) and its limitation by reception into a really distinct potency (or essence) is classical Thomism's foundational tenet[29]. When unlimited by reception into this potency, act is Pure Act and is God Himself. All His predicates, like infinity and others, derive *a priori* from this fundamental illimitation. When limited by reception into that potency, act is impure or mixed, and constitutes the creature: this limitation is the *a priori* reason for the predicates of the creature alluded to above.

From Suárez's standpoint, this postulate reifies concepts and can be critiqued thus: is the act or existence that is limited by reception a concept in the mind or a reality independent of the mind? If it is a concept, it cannot, *unless reified*, be received into anything really distinct; if, as a concept, it needs to be limited, it merely requires an added conceptual modifier. If, on the other hand, this act or existence is an extramental reality, is it illimitable or limitable? If it is illimitable, then nothing,

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created beings, either in actuality or in power, so that if He were to wish to produce them, He could not establish them outside His dominion».

[28] JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *CT*, disp. 7, artic. unicus, n. 2. Vol. 1, p. 547: «as the liquor in the vase accomodates itself to its measure».

[29] This is the second of the famous 24 Theses of classical Thomism, approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies on 27 July 1914: «Actus, utpote perfectio, non limitatur, nisi per potentiam, quae est capacitas perfectionis. Proinde in quo ordine actus est purus, in eodem non nisi illimitatus et unicus existit; ubi vero finitus et multiplex, in veram incidit cum potentia compositionem».

by definition, can limit it, for illimitation will be intrinsic to its nature. Reception into something else does not change the nature of the received thing; a lion does not become a mouse if "received" into a pot. If this act or existence is limitable, it is already by that fact limited, since it lacks the perfection of illimitability or infinity.

Undeterred by such arguments, our ever faithful Thomist argues that just as reception implies finitude, irreception implies infinity:

> «because if existence be not received (*non sit recepta*) into any nature or form from which it is distinguished, it does not have limitation by reason of a receiving subject, since it lacks that subject... therefore if existence is incapable of being received (*irreceptibilis*), it needs to be infinite in every way [...] But an existence that is not received (*irrecepta*)is given in God [...] because He is Pure Act in every manner of being, devoid of all potentiality and materiality. Therefore such a form is in every way infinite»[30].

It needs to be noted here that John, surreptitiously, jumps from an existence that "*is* not received", *irrecepta*, to one that "*cannot be* received", *irreceptibilis*. For an existence that is not received can either be limited, unlimited, or illimitable. If it is already limited, the Thomist principle of limitation will be superfluous, and of course not serve to prove God's infinity. If the existence is unlimited, but capable of limitation by reception, the Thomist principle will be acceptable, but will apply only to the creature, not to God, whose existence is not only not limited or received, but also not capable of being limited or received. For John to show that the unlimited existence is God's, he will have to show that it is not only *irrecepta* but also *irreceptibilis*. He nowhere proves this, however, but only assumes it to be the case, and so evidently begs the question. A further objection to John's position is presented by Vazquez, one of the many great Baroque Jesuits, who is of the same mind as Suárez on this point. Vazquez objects that essence is not distinct from existence, so if essence is not received into anything, neither is existence[31]. Suárez adds that

> «in order that a being be finite, it is enough that it be received *from* another being in such and such a measure of perfection, although properly speaking it may not be received *into* any passive potency. And similarly the created essence can be limited by its intrinsic differentia, although it may not be related to existence in the manner of a receptive potency»[32].

Here Suárez clearly describes the two principles of limitation, which are termed the "objective" and the "subjective". In *objective limitation*, an entity is limited

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[30] JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *CT* disp. 7, artic. unicus, n. 3. Vol. 1, pp. 547-548: «quia existentia si non sit recepta in aliqua natura vel forma a qua distinguatur, non habet limitari ratione subiecti recipientis, quia caret illo [...] ergo si [existentia] est irreceptibilis, debet esse ex omni parte infinita [...] Sed in Deo datur existentia irrecepta [...] quia est actus purus in toto genere entis, omni potentialitate et materialitate carens. Ergo talis forma est ex omni parte infinita».

[31] G. VAZQUEZ, *Commentaria et disputationes in Primam Partem Sancti Thomae*, in q. 7, disp. 25, c. 2.

[32] SUÁREZ, *DM* 30: 2: 19. Vol 26, p. 70.

because, as a caused object, it receives a determinate perfection and no other from its cause; in *subjective limitation*, an entity, unlimited in its essence, is limited by being received into a subject that has a capacity for only so much perfection and no more. John's reply to Vazquez and Suárez is significant, for he evidently concedes that the basic tenet of classical Thomism is debatable — a strange admission on the part of the system's major architect:

«To that which Father Vazquez adds, I deny that existence is not distinguished from created essence, as has sufficiently been proved above. However, since this has to do with the opinion of some, and since the infinity of God must not be proved dependently upon any opinion, I add that in the opinion that does not distinguish existence from actual essence, the argument of St. Thomas still holds. Because though existence is entitatively the same as subsistent nature, still, the operation of proceeding from another being through production is dependently realized by the action of that other, and hence accidently applies to the produced thing — so the latter is received objectively [as a caused object] and participatively, although not subjectively [in a subject]. However, when Being itself is subsistent in such a manner that, neither in its entity nor in the operation of its procession from or production by another, does it possess being that is received, or one that accidentally pertains to it subjectively or objectively — such a being lacks all limitation, because in no way is it received, not even objectively. All this is clear from a sign: as such a being will not have in itself any received operation or accident. Indeed if it will not depend objectively on another for its production, neither will it depend on it for any perfection or operation. Hence by this very fact that a form is existence itself, it is optimally proved to be infinite, because it is not received, either subjectively or objectively — though according to St. Thomas it cannot be maintained that something be received objectively, without it being distinct in essence and received subjectively too»[33].

Suárez formulates the same argument, but more concisely:

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[33] JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *CT* disp. 7, art. unicus, n. 7 : «Ad id quod addit Pater Vazquez negatur existentiam non distingui ab essentia creata, ut superius satis probatum est. Sed quia hoc in opinione aliquorum versatur, et infinitas Dei non debet probari dependenter ab aliqua opinione: addo quod in opinione non distinguente existentiam ab essentia actuali, adhuc urget ratio Divi Thomae: quia licet existentia entitative sit idem cum natura subsistente, tamen illud exercitium procedendi ab alio per productionem, dependenter habetur ab actione alterius, et sic accidentaliter convenit ipsi rei productae: et sic est receptum obiective et participative, licet non subiective. At vero cum ipsum esse est subsistens taliter quod neque quoad suam entitatem neque quoad suum esse exercitium processionis et productionis ab alio, habet esse receptum, et accidentaliter conveniens tam subiective quam obiective, tale esse caret omni limitatione, quia nullo modo recipitur etiam obiective. Quod patet a signo: quia tale esse non habebit operationem vel aliquod accidens in se receptum. Si enim in suo produci non dependet obiective ab alio, neque in aliqua perfectione vel operatione dependebit. Quare hoc ipso quod forma aliqua est ipsum esse, optime probatur esse infinitum, quia non est esse receptum neque subiective neque obiective: licet apud Divum Thomam non stet aliquod esse recipi obiective, quin etiam sit distinctum ab essentia et recipiatur subiective».

«because existence by essence [or what is existent by virtue of its essence] does not have anything which can limit it. But participated being can be limited either by the will of the one who gives so much perfection and no more, or by the capacity of the recipient, whether that capacity be understood in the manner of a passive potency, or only in the manner of an objective potency, or of non-contradiction. However, in the primal being, which is existent of itself, no principle or rationale of limitation can be understood, because just as it has no cause of its existence, in the same way there can be no limitation in it, either on part of the giver, or from any other principle»[34].

It would therefore seem to follow that, since, as Suárez contends, the entire system of metaphysics can be deduced from the two postulates of God's entitative independence and the creature's entitative dependence, principles which are beyond debate and admitted as such by the Thomists also, and since the specifically Thomist principle of the limitation of act by potency or of existence by essence is debatable, that principle is superfluous for basing a solid metaphysics and can conceivably be abandoned.

6. Concord of The Two Doctors: on the Divine Nature and the Trinity

Be that as it may, on another, related, topic, the two Doctors, the Uncommon and the Profound, are unequivocally in agreement — on what constitutes the essence and nature of God, in so far as it can be expressed through imperfect human concepts. It is usual to find Scholastics, especially Thomists, saying that it is "increate entity" (*entitas increata*) or "subsistent being itself" (*ipsum esse subsistens*). Suárez agrees, but goes on to affirm that in a more precise sense the essence or nature of God is subsistent intellection itself (*ipsamet intellectio subsistens*), which he characterizes as «*veluti ultimum essentiale constitutivum divinae naturae*»[35], the ultimate essential constituent, so to speak, of the nature of the deity.

The Thomist position is thus stated by Aquinas:

«God's essence is therefore His existence. Now Moses was taught this sublime truth by the Lord [...] when the Lord showed him that His proper name is "Who Is." Now any name is intended to signify the nature or essence of something. Hence it remains that the divine existence itself is God's essence or nature»[36].

Suárez formulates his own view in these words:

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[34] *Ibidem*, *DM* 30: 2: 22. Vol. 26, p. 71.

[35] *Ibidem*, *DM* 30: 15: 15. Vol. 26, p. 174.

[36] AQUINAS, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, lib. 1, cap. 22: «Dei igitur essentia est suum esse. Hanc autem sublimem veritatem Moyses a Domino est doctus [...] ostendens [Dominus] suum proprium nomen esse "Qui est". Quodlibet autem nomen est institutum ad significandum naturam seu essentiam alicuius rei: unde relinquitur quod ipsum divinum esse est sua essentia vel natura».

«[God] has the intellectual life by essence and not by participation. To have by essence is nothing else but to have the intellectual life itself in the manner of pure and ultimate actuality without any efficiency or causality. And this is nothing else but that the divine essence is intellectual, not in the manner of intellectual principle or basis, but as subsistent intellection itself. But the intellection and knowledge of God are most formally the same: therefore actual knowledge by essence is so to speak the ultimate essential constitutive form of the divine nature. And so, conceiving as we do any intellectual nature in a twofold manner, either because it has an intrinsic relationship to intellection, or because it is intellection itself, we conceive of created intellectual nature in the former manner.... But the divine nature is intellectual in the latter manner, because this mode is characteristic of God, that is to say, because He is the most pure and abstract [i.e. abstracted from matter] intellection itself. Therefore, in this way, God's knowledge most formally constitutes and as it were specifies His essence»[37].

This new definition of the divine nature aids Suárez in resolving a problem of crucial importance in Trinitarian theology, one which Eastern Orthodox and many Latin theologians maintain is insoluble[38]. According to this theology the divine nature, by virtue of its unlimited fecundity, needs to communicate itself, since *bonum est diffusivum sui*. Such a communication cannot necessarily be to anything *ad extra*, since, with respect to all that is not God, the divine being is entirely unnecessitated or free. Necessity for God exists only within the latitude of His deity. The communication thus can only be *ad intra*. Communication entails multiplicity, for there has to be at least one communicator and one to whom something is communicated. But communication in God cannot multiply the deity itself, which is a single omniperfect absolute. The communication can thus only be relational, as multiple relations do not impair the unity of an absolute. There are in fact three such (subsistent) relations in the deity, the Persons of the Trinity; one communicator and two communicated relations. Since these communications are those of an intelligential being, and as such a being has intellect and will, with the latter consequent on the former, two communications can be postulated, those of the

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[37] SUÁREZ, *DM* 30: 15: 15. Vol. 26, p. 174: «[Deus] habet illam vitam intellectualem per essentiam, et non per participationem; habere autem per essentiam, non est aliud quam habere ipsam intellectualem [vitam] per modum puri et ultimi actus absque ulla effectione vel causalitate. At hoc non est aliud quam quod divina essentia sit intellectualis, non per modum principii aut radicis intellectualis, sed ut ipsamet intellectio subsistens; sed intellectio et scientia Dei idem formalissime sunt; ergo actualis scientia per essentiam est veluti ultimum essentiale constitutivum divinae naturae. Itaque, cum dupliciter concipiatur a nobis quod aliqua natura sit intellectualis, scilicet, quia habet intrinsecam habitudinem ad intelligere, vel quia est ipsum intelligere, priori modo concipimus naturam creatam esse intellectualem [...] Divina vero natura est intellectualis posteriori modo, quia est proprius eius, scilicet, quia est ipsum intelligere purissimum et abstractissimum. Sic igitur scire Dei formalissime constituit et quasi specificat eius essentiam».

[38] JOHN DAMASCENE, *De fide orthodoxa*, I: 8, *PG* 94: 824A: «We have learnt through faith that there is a difference between begetting and proceeding, but faith tells us nothing about the nature of that difference». See also ADAM OF ST. VICTOR, *Sequentia XI de S. Trinitate*, *PL* 196: 1459: «Quid sit gigni, quid processus, me nescire sum professus».

intellect and the will. The former communication expresses itself in the logos, concept, or word, and the latter in love.

Scholastic theology calls the process whereby a communication in God is realized a "procession", and declares that the procession of the intellect is the origin of the second Person, the Son, Logos or Word; and that the procession of the will is the origin of the third Person, the Holy Spirit or Love. The entire divine nature is communicated to both Son and Holy Spirit, the communicator of the first procession being the Father, and of the second the Father conjointly with the Son. Since they share the same divine nature as the Father, both Son and Holy Spirit proceed from Him in total similitude. What then differentiates the Son from the Holy Spirit? Why is only the second Person and not the third called a Son: a son being defined as a living being proceeding substantially from another living being in its similitude? This is the problem that Eastern Orthodox theologians declare is a mystery.

Suárez replies that that while both the Son and the Holy Spirit do in fact proceed from the Father in the similitude of nature, the intent or formal terminus of the procession of the Son is to communicate the divine nature as nature, and since the divine nature is subsistent intellection, the Son, who is that intellection in its relational or hypostatic mode, is recipient of the similitude to the Father in a formal sense. But the intent or formal terminus of the procession of the Holy Spirit is to communicate, not the divine nature as such, but the divine love of the Father and the Son; hence the Holy Spirit does not by intent proceed in similitude of nature, and is therefore not a Son. Still, since love is identical with nature in God, the divine nature is communicated to the Spirit through its identity with divine love. As Suárez himself states it, the Word alone is produced

> «*ex vi intellectionis paternae, ut sic, et non Spiritus Sanctus. Nam inde imprimis infero, communicari Verbo ex vi processionis suae divinam essentiam, ut primario constitutam in esse talis essentiae et naturae, Spiritui Sancto autem non ita communicari ex vi processionis, sed quatenus per identitatem in amore includitur*»[39].

John entirely agrees with this view. He further clarifies a problem not examined by Suárez: how God's essence or nature can be described as both *ipsum esse subsistens* (or *essentia increata)*and *ipsum intelligere subsistens*. In reply, John distinguishes between a transcendent essence and a specific one; both exactly characterize a being, but the latter more precisely than the former. Thus the specific essence of man is "rational animality", which distinguishes him from any other being; but his transcendent essence, which describes him no less exactly, is "created being", though the latter notion is applicable to all other creaturely things also. A similar distinction can be applied to God: *ens increatum* is His transcendent essence and *intellectio subsistens* His quasi-specific one. In John's words:

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[39] SUÁREZ, *De Sanctissimo Trinitatis Mysterio*, lib. 11, c. 5, n. 16. Vol. 1, p. 789: «[the Word alone is produced] by power of the Paternal [=of the Father] intellection as such, and not the Holy Spirit. Hence I infer from this, firstly, that the divine essence, by virtue of the procession itself, is communicated to the Word as primarily constituted in the being of such an essence or nature; but that to the Holy Spirit it is not communicated in this way by virtue of the procession, but only in so far as it is included through identity in love».

«Because "being or substance, existent of itself", in so far as it conveys the significance of Pure Act, is found in every attribute or Person, and in all that is divine — no less than "created being", or "being by another", is found in all that is created. Therefore this concept of "being existent of itself" cannot differentiate in God what is nature, from what is attribute, person, or operation. It only differentiates what is generically divine from what is created, and so distinguishes between transcendent and transcendent, namely between created being as such and uncreated being as such, not between divine nature, as nature, and the [divine] attributes[40]».

What then constitutes divine nature as such? John (who is no master stylist) answers with a verbose syllogism. Its main lineaments are as follows:

«*Major:* that has to be the formal constitutive of divine nature, which is the primary and intrinsic principle of a proper operation and which is primarily applicable to God [...]
Minor: but the operation proper to God is intellection (*intelligere*) [...] and it is primary, because the operation of the will presupposes intellection itself, since it is regulated and guided by it [...]
Conclusion: therefore it is necessary that the divine nature be formally constituted by [...] intellection (*intellectualitatem*) [...]»[41].

The major is the definition of nature itself, applied to God. The minor is clear, because the divine intellect is «supremely spiritual and removed from potentiality and imperfection, and is the first [operation], because the operation of the will presupposes intellection, since it is regulated and directed by the latter»[42].
Like Suárez, John maintains that the Son formally proceeds as intellection, «because He proceeds as the similitude of the object known by the intelligence and existing in the same nature, since in God intelligence and being are one and the same»[43]. As formally proceeding in the Father's similitude, He can be properly identified as the Son. As for the Holy Spirit, He

«formally proceeds as love who is identified with the divine nature, and yet does not proceed as a Son, nor by generation, because, formally speaking, He

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[40] JOHN OF ST.THOMAS, *CT*, disp. 16, art. 2, n. 9. Vol. 2, p. 338: «Quia esse a se seu substantia a se, ut dicit rationem actus puri, invenitur in omni attributo et Persona et in omni eo quod divinum est, non minus quam ens creatum, seu ens ab alio, in omni eo quod creatum est; ergo non potest iste conceptus entis a se discernere in Deo id quod natura est, ab eo quod attributum est vel Persona vel operatio: sed solum discernit id quod divinum est in genere, ab eo quod est creatum: et ita distinguit inter transcendens et transcendens, scilicet inter ens creatum ut sic et ens increatum ut sic, non inter naturam divinam, ut natura, et proprietates».

[41] *Ibidem*, *CT* disp. 16, art. 2, n. 19. Vol. 2, p. 341: «illud debet esse formale constitutivum naturae divinae, quod est per se principium operationis et per se primo conveniens Deo [...] sed propria operatio divina est intelligere [...] ergo oportet quod natura divina constituetur formaliter per [...] intellectualitatem [...]».

[42] *Ibidem*, «maxime spiritualis et segregata a potentialitate et imperfectione; et est prima, quia operatio voluntatis supponit ipsum intelligere, siquidem ab eo regulatur et dirigitur».

[43] *Ibidem*, disp. 16, art. 2, n. 14. Vol. 2, p. 339.

proceeds only according to the communication of impulse and love, though, through identity, He receives the communication of nature also»[44].

If the reasoning of Suárez and John of St. Thomas on this point is correct, then it demonstrates both the harmony of Scholastic philosophy with theology, and the falsity of the dichotomy between the God of the philosophers and the God of Christianity. For, as Suárez declares, in the opening lines of his great work, the *Disputationes Metaphysicae*:

«*Divina et supernaturalis theologia, quamquam divino lumine principiisque a Deo revelatis nitatur, quia vero humano discursu et ratiocinatione perficitur, veritatibus etiam naturae lumine notis iuvatur, eisque ad suos discursus perficiendos, et divinas veritates illustrandas, tamquam ministris et quasi instrumentis utitur*»[45].

7. Conclusion

In sum, it may be observed that in reacting to Suarezianism and to its critique of the classical Thomist system, John of St. Thomas is sometimes unyielding, and at other times accomodating and even concordant. In these cases he either retains or qualifies the classical Thomist tenets, and also either employs the reified Thomist language or the non-reified Suarezian one. He is *unyielding* when he retains Thomist ideas and language — as when he propounds the Thomist concept of being, the real distinction between essence and existence, and the limitation of act by its reception into a really distinct potency. He is *accomodating* when he retains Thomist ideas but expresses them in Suarezian language, as in the matter of the contraction of being to its particulars or inferiors, and in that of the individuation of nature by quantified matter. He is *concordant* when he adopts both Suarezian ideas and language, as in the characterization of the divine nature as subsistent intellection rather than as subsistent being; as well as in the partial abandonment of the commentarial method of literary expression for one that is more organic and distinctive of each individual author.

John of St. Thomas's agreement or disagreement with Suárez can thus be subsumed under the following five headings, which will be discussed summarily in turn:

1. Supplantation of the commentarial method by the author's own
2. The unity of being and its contraction to its particulars

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[44] *Ibidem*, p. 340: «formaliter procedit ut amor qui identificatur cum natura divina, et tamen non procedit ut Filius, nec per generationem, quia procedit solum secundum communicationem impulsus et amoris formaliter, identice autem accepit communicationem naturae».

[45] Suárez, *DM*, proemium. Vol. 25, p. 1: «Although divine and supernatural theology depends upon the divine light and on the principles revealed by God, since in fact it is completed by human discourse and reasoning, it is also aided by the truths known to the light of nature; and it employs them as ministers and (as it were) intruments to develop its discourses and to clarify the divine truths themselves».

3. The limitation of act by its reception into potency
4. The individuation of nature by quantified matter
5. The nature of God as subsistent intellection

First, *the supplantation of the commentarial method by the author's own*. Early in his career, Suárez abandoned the commentarial method current in his time and adopted one where the overall architectonic organization of his treatises as well as the elaboration of the details are his own. Inspired by Suárez, John of St. Thomas, like many others of his generation, gave up writing formal commentaries. John's architectonics, on the other hand, is formed of the assemblage of the classical structures of Aristotle, Porphyry, Petrus Hispanus and Aquinas, but the organization of the details within each of these structures is his own. Thus Suárez can be described as macro-systematic, and John, micro-systematic.

Second, *the unity of being and its contraction to its particulars*. For classical Thomism being is *simpliciter diversum et secundum quid unum;* it is a multiple concept that includes its particulars (like God and creature, substance and accident) actually, though not explicitly, particulars that are unified by proportional similarity. Contraction takes place by the explication of these particulars severally, by a process, from less to more explicit, which may be described as *maior explicatio*. Suarezian being, on the other hand, is *simpliciter (licet imperfecte) unum et secundum quid diversum*. It is a unitary concept that includes its particulars potentially, particulars that coalesce in a confused unitary concept only in so far as they signify concurrence in existence. Contraction takes place by a sharper focusing or determination of this confused concept, in a process, from confusion to expression, which may be termed *maior expressio*. In describing the concept of being, John firmly holds to the *simpliciter diversum*, but in explaining its contraction to the particulars, he uses language more appropriate to the *maior expressio* than to the *maior explicatio* — an instance of his being Thomist in idea and Suarezian in language.

Third, *the limitation of act by its reception into potency*. From both the Suarezian and the Thomist viewpoints, in theory at least, there are two modes of limitation, the subjective and the objective. Subjective limitation is foundational to Thomism. Act by itself is unlimited in perfection; it becomes limited to a determinate perfection by being received, as in a subject, into a potency that has the capacity for that determinate perfection and no other. In the reifying Thomist manner, act and potency are really distinct. John of St. Thomas uncompromisingly adheres to the Thomist principle (judged to be false by Suárez), and expounds it in reified Thomist language. Yet he does not consider the principle to be indispensable for demonstrating a basic truth of Thomist (and Scholastic) philosophy, God's infinity. He agrees that this infinity can well be proved by the principle of objective limitation (basic to the Suarezian system), whereby an entity or object is limited by virtue of its dependence on a cause, whose activity endows it with a determinate perfection and no other. Be that as it may, both Doctors agree that, whether demonstrable or not, the principle of subjective limitation, on which the majestic Thomist system is raised, is metaphysically dispensable and redundant. In this John clearly parts company from those classical Thomists who declare that the subjective limitation principle is a necessary one.

Fourth, *the individuation of nature by quantified matter*. This principle lands Thomism in some difficulties. It does not apply to spiritual substances, such as angels

(who are said to be individuated by their species), but only to material beings, when it sounds tautologous (that beings having matter are individuated by matter). Still, every being thus individuated has two aspects: absolute or common nature, which does not include the note of individuality in its essence, and the individuating principle itself, the quantified matter, which circumstantiates the absolute nature and renders it incommunicable. In the reifying Thomist mannner, the nature and the quantified matter are really distinct; for Suárez they are two conceptually distinct integrants of an individual reality that in this regard is indivisible. John accepts the quantified matter principle without reserve, but describes it in non-reifying Suarezian terms.

Fifth, and last, *the nature of God as subsistent intellection,* whereby God is defined not by the broadest and most indeterminate of perfections, being, or *esse* (*ipsum esse subsistens*), but by the intensest and sublimest of them, sapient consciousness or *intellectio* (*ipsamet intellectio subsistens*). This idea, advanced by Suárez, is unreservedly adopted by John of St. Thomas, who harmonizes the two definitions, when he declares that *ipsum esse subsistens* characterizes the divine nature broadly and transcendentally, and *ipsamet intellectio subsistens* more narrowly and as it were specifically. (The latter definition explains why the first divine procession, that of the Son, is generation, and not the second procession, that of the Holy Spirit.) In describing God more through the notion of intellect than through that of being our two Scholastics anticipate some modern thinkers, for whom God's essence is "pure understanding"[46]; these thinkers reflect modern philosophy's tendency to affirm the primacy of thought over being and to start with knowledge and terminate with being. It must not be forgotten that Suárez and John of St. Thomas were the contemporaries of the founder of modern philosophy, Descartes (1596-1650), the Jesuit being 48 years his senior and the Dominican seven. In contrast to modern philosophy, the Scholastic starts with being and terminates with knowledge. Accordingly, for the two Doctors, the Uncommon and the Profound, God's intellection is not, so to speak, a cognitive nebulosity ungrounded in the primal reality of being, but is the very consummation of God's basic essence as subsistent being; it is, in the words of Suárez, the *ultimum essentiale constitutivum divinae naturae*.

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[46] «For Lonergan the metaphysical essence of God is not *ipsum esse subsistens*, as Aquinas says, but rather "pure understanding", not *being* but *mind*». J.M. DE TORRE, *Transcendental Thomism and the Encyclical* Veritatis Spendor, «Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter», April 1995, p. 24.