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JOSÉ LASHERAS HELLÍN'S INTERPRETATION OF FRANCISCO SUÁREZ'S VIEWS

1. Introduction

This article is an attempt to reveal and present the interpretation of Suárez's philosophy suggested by Hellín, specifically Suárez's metaphysics. The author of the article focuses mainly on the characteristics and presentation of the attributes of the created and uncreated being. According to Hellín, Suárez's fundamental thesis bases on a statement that God is existence through a being, whereas the creature owes its permanence in existence and action to the so-called dynamic participation. The metaphysical essence of the creature, after Hellín, consists neither in a real composition of a being and existence nor in its finiteness, nor in the predicative interrelation called *mensurae et mensurati* but it bases on a radical relationship also called dynamic participation or casual participation.¹

In the first part of the article a figure of José Lasherasa Hellín will be presented. Although he is regarded as a world authority and an expert in the analysis of the philosophical system by Francisco Suarez, he is still peripheral for the historians of philosophy. None of his numerous works (over sixty publications) have been translated into Polish. Whereas the second article part is a presentation of Hellín's interpretation of Suarez's metaphysics on the basis of Hellín's text titled *Suarezianismus*. Not only does the said text have cognitive value but also has a very interesting story behind, which I try to recount briefly in the first part of the article.

¹ See Hellín, Jose, Lasheras, Suarezianism, in: *Archivo Teológico Granadino*, no. 63, Granada 2000, p. 195.

2. José Lasheras Hellín – *Princeps Suarezianorum*

José Lasheras Hellín (1883–1973) is not well-known for the Polish reader.² However, this Spanish Jesuit is regarded by the researchers of scholastic philosophy as the greatest authority in the field of the studies related to Francisco Suárez’s philosophy and the reception of his views. The original interpretation of suarezianism as well as his own independent judgement both characterising Hellín’s masterpieces made his work important and valuable not only for Spain and the Iberian culture but also for other remote territories. As Verdi said: “His knowledge was encyclopaedic and he had no competitor in philosophical suarezianism (*suarismo filosófico*), of which he was the unquestionably greatest expert: «princeps» of his epoch. Although his thought functioned in the circle of the “Distinguished Doctors” (*Doctor Eximius*), he never abandoned the independence of thought characteristic for a real philosopher”.³

Except a short time when he was giving lectures at the University of Murcia (1941), he belonged to young Jesuits for all his life. During his long 50-year career of a lecturer he gained the title of full professor in psychology and theodicy. He also taught criticism, metaphysics, and cosmology. He gave lectures and wrote on a wide variety of subjects in almost all philosophical fields and disciplines; his productivity is proved by a vast amount of publications (over sixty works).

Hellín became famous also as a founder of the Spanish Philosophical Association and as a lecturer in the national and international conventions. However, he owed his fame to his numerous publications in *Pensamiento* periodical, of which he was a co-founder and co-editor.

Hellín is said to be one of the most eminent representative of Neo-Scholasticism of the 20th century. His philosophical stance constituted an attempt to create a coherent metaphysical system, which included all philosophical disciplines and which had its base in God as essential existence and in a being as existence through dynamic participation, i.e. the being’s existence and activity are identified with its essence. Basing on these principles, Hellín deduced *quasi a priori* all attributes of God and a being.

Hellín’s *Suarezianismus* constituting groundwork for this article is an attempt to present the hallmarks of Francisco Suárez’s philosophical concept.

² Biographical data come from G. M. Verdi, Hellín José Lasheras, [in:] *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-Temático*, Ch. E. O’Neill, S.I., J. M. Domínguez, S.I. eds., Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, 2001, p. 1896–1897.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 1897.

In the Polish research of modern philosophy his concept is still peripheral for the historians of philosophy and remains unknown to a great extent⁴ and, with absolute certainty, underestimated. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is the prevailing opinion that the turn of 16th and 17th centuries, the time when Suárez was creating his works, was a period when Scholasticism declined and a new opposing philosophy was born. The misconception of this stance was discovered already by Władysław Tatarkiewicz, who indicated that “it is a failure to understand Renaissance as a sudden change of the old philosophy to the new philosophy that will rule with absolute power.”⁵ Scholasticism, whose influence seemed to decline from the beginning of the modern era due to the Counter-Reformation, revived to gain its perfect form as a philosophical system created by the Spanish philosopher – Suárez. However, this is not an accident that the new scholastic thought originated from the Spanish land. In those days Spain was one of the most thriving centres of the Christian philosophy. Moreover, the history of the Spanish philosophy is full of eminent individuals, specifically among mystics, such as St. John of the Cross, St. Ignatius of Loyola, or Luis de Molina, a professor at the University of Coimbra who gained great popularity by his lecture which triggered a lively discussion in relation to divine grace and human free will between the Dominicans and Jesuits.⁶

The discussed text by Hellín not only has the aforementioned obvious cognitive value but also a very interesting history behind. In 1966 the author sent his article titled *Suarezianismus* to Schwabe & Co. Publishing House in Basle in order to publish it in a dictionary *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. However, this text never appeared in the dictionary which was not published until 1998. The dictionary, however, included Knebl's article which was significantly shorter and focused on the historical development of suarezianism, whereas Hellín's text had a systematic character and concentrated on Suárez's metaphysical system. Hellín's original article was found after more than thirty years from its postage in a theological archive in Granada, where Hellín was a lecturer between 1921 and 1931, hence, until frag-

⁴ Stanisław Ziemiański SJ should be replaced among the Polish experts of Suárez; he is the author of: Franciszek Suárez, WAM Publishing House, Kraków 2004. The following titles are also noteworthy: A. Maryniarczyk, *Od scholastyki do ontologii. Dwa studia, Suárez*, Warszawa 1995, p. 25–76; M. Bożyszkowki, *Suárez a św. Tomasz z Akwinu – przegląd literatury filozoficznej*, “Roczniki Filozoficzne” XII, issue 1, Lublin 1964, p. 113–119; J. Rosiak SJ, Suárez 1548–1617, “Przegląd Powszechny” 65 (1948), volume 226, pp. 353–367; W. Seńko, *Ewolucja poglądów na temat istoty i istnienia*, volume 2, Warszawa 1978.

⁵ F. W. Tatarkiewicz, *Historia filozofii*, volume 2, Warszawa 1988, p. 31.

⁶ Ibidem.

menting the Society of Jesus by the Spanish Republic on 23 February 1932. Since then Hellín had to lecture abroad – at first in Portugal (1932–1934) then in Belgium (1934–1938). He did not return to Spain, more specifically to Durango, until 1938. Following the end of the Spanish civil war, he began lecturing on philosophy in Chamartín (1939–1955). In 1955 he was finally transferred to Madrid where he died on 1 August 1973 after a surgery intervention. He was 90 years old.

Discussing Hellín's article, we must remember that it was originally intended for a publication in a dictionary, that is why such elements as: Suárez's biography, its influence, the concept of the human soul or the philosophy of law were only outlined by the author, as his entire intellectual effort focused on deliberations on metaphysics, specifically on the opposition and relationship between the finite and indefinite existence, and the created and creating existence.

Suarezianismus is divided into four parts. The first part, which Hellín purposefully shortened and condensed, has a historical character and illustrates the fundamental and the most important events in Suárez's life, his influence on later scholasticism and the rise of the new philosophy. In relation to this philosophy the author stated that Suárez's thought had not been reflected in the ideas propagated by the modern and contemporary philosophy.⁷ Hellín indicated also the rightness of the Decadence and the decline of suarezianism.

The second and the most elaborate part of Hellín's article concerns Suárez's metaphysics and is carefully analysed in the second part of my article.

The third part is dedicated to the issue of the human soul which, according to Suárez, constitutes a substantial form of the body and the human being. Here, the author also analysed the basic epistemological assumption of Suárez's philosophy, the assumption which was to live up to simplicity, clarity, and empiricism required by the new epoch. According to this assumption, mind distinguishes individual existence as superior and has direct access to such an existence. This stance is termed "epistemological singularity".

The subject matter of the fourth and the last part of the article is Suárez's concept of ethics, politics, and law. According to Suárez, both ethics and politics are born from natural law which as such is rational, for it is founded in God and takes part in His invariability. In reference to state

⁷ Jose Hellín, *Suarezianismus...*, op. cit., p. 193.

policy Suárez stated that God directly entrusts a political community with power; the community, in turn, chooses its representative so that he/she could care for its interests. If the person who was entrusted with power disappoints the community and betrays the imperative of common interest, he/she can be deprived of power and severely punished. After Suárez, there is also a transnational community which should follow the so-called human law. We should remember, as Hellín also pinpointed, that this was the philosophy of law that made Suárez popular. Nevertheless, preferring the concept of St. Thomas from Aquinas to other philosophies, the Church turned away from Suárez after the encyclical by Leo XIII and a document issued by Pius X.

3. José Lasheras Hellín's Interpretation of Suárez's Metaphysics

According to Hellín, the subject of Suárez's metaphysics is "existence as existence" understood as real existence realistically and notionally disregarding matter; thus, metaphysics focuses on the fundamental types of existence, which uses the same method to separate form matter (*abstracción*).

Suárez provides the notion of real existence shared by all. This notion should be described as something real and existing in an action or potency. "This notion is one." – Hellín wrote. "As it does not allow mind to find any diversity but at the same time it is imperfectly one and imperfectly disregards differences and modes which it already encompasses as the reason of being or existence. That is why, this is a transcendental notion which embraces the entire existence, the existence of each object to which it is applied or can be applied and which establishes the diversity of each object; as a result existence cannot be in different existence (*entes*) in the same way or in the unambiguous way but analogically through the analogy of internal attributes."⁸ Nevertheless, Hellín claimed that we do not learn about the analogy of the notion through mere usage – we learn about it only if we assume that God exists and that all that was created essentially depends on Him; we learn about it if we assume that both "are similar in relation to *raison d'être* with simultaneous infinite dissimilarity."⁹

According to Hellín, Suárez, proving necessary existence *a posteriori*, at the same time specifies its quasi metaphysical essence which, according

⁸ Ibidem, p. 194.

⁹ Ibidem.

to the author of *Suarezianismus*, is not the self-contained nature but the Lasting Existence (Subsistente), *Ipsum Esse*¹⁰. From this predicate... – as Hellín concluded “[...] Suárez deducted quasi *a priori* all the attributes of God such as: unity, (unicidad) invariability and infinity. “Necessary Existence is through being, is one through being, and is invariable through being.”¹¹ Infinity is deducted by Suárez the same way. Hellín said: “God is a creator of everything that exists and He can create everything that is internally possible, that is why, He necessarily and invariably includes the entire perfectness in an act.”¹²

According to Hellín, in connection to Suárez’s notion of the created existence, we should explain its origin, quasi metaphysical essence, and its essential properties.

Origin: In metaphysics Suarez assumed that everything that existed beyond God was created out of nothing: Hellín wrote: “Uncreated Existence is one and hence all that exists beyond it is created; otherwise, we would have two uncreated things.”¹³ Moreover, Hellín states that Suárez makes the permanence of existence in its being and its activity essentially dependant on the free act of God. “The necessity of the relationship between action and another action is founded in the fact that the created thing does not exist through being, so the creature has this deficit in its existence, permanence (en el existir), and its activity.”¹⁴

Quasi Metaphysical Essence of a Creature In metaphysics Suárez rejects the real composition of existence blended from both being and existence. This thesis was then acquired and radicalized by the representatives of the scholastic philosophy current referring to Suárez’s intellectual legacy, specifically to his metaphysics. The current is termed “suarezianism” and is characterised by radical essentialism, that is: “a doctrine seeking the main cognitive and ontic *principium* in a being, abolishing the real difference between the being and existence and reducing the entire existence (entitas) of a thing to the structure and determination of its essence.”¹⁵ As Hellín wrote: “The metaphysical essence of the creature consists neither in the real composition of the being and existence, nor in its finiteness, nor the

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 195.

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ B. Paź, *Suarezianizm*, accepted for printing in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, volume IX, A. Maryniarczyk, Lublin 2008.

predicative interrelations called *mensurae et mensurati*, but consists in the radical relationship called also dynamic participation, another words casual participation; it also consists in the essential poverty of the creature which needs internal and essential influence of God as an exemplary cause (*causa ejemplar*), effective and final, in order to exist.”¹⁶

Essential Properties (propiedades) Later on Hellín revealed the following essential properties of the created being deduced *a priori* by Suárez: contingency, finiteness, potency, variability, subordination to becoming, real composition of potency and act, infinite multitude of species (*especies*), the possibility of infinite number of individuals in all species, inborn tendency to manifest perfectness and glory of God from whom they come. Hellín wrote: “Thus the completeness of unity (*Suma Unidad*) is a beginning of the completeness of multiplicity (*suma multiplicidad*) and the completeness of multiplicity returns to the completeness of unity.”¹⁷

Consequences In this deduction of properties Suárez established also other universal principles revealing relationships between the Existing Being (*Ser Subsistente*) and non-conditioned existence, and between the existence definitely dependant and conditioned existence. One of these principles indicates that the creature is actually identified with its existence in the created existence. “The radical relationship provides the distinction of reason (*de razón*) between both the creature and its existence but does not provide real distinction. God is Existence and Existence itself: the creature is determined through the internal relationship.”¹⁸ Moreover, Suárez rejects the assumption separating an act from potency, which is basic for Thomism and Aristotelianism. For Suárez only actual existence constitutes existence and only existence in act exists.

4. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, José Lasheras Hellín was a modern ambassador of suarezianism. He unceasingly spoke in defence of the scholastic mind and played a significant role in attempts to promote and modernize it. Although some of his statements presented herein may rise doubts and be controversial (e.g. in

¹⁶ Jose Hellín, *Sobre el constitutivo esencial i diferencial de la creatura*, in: *Actas del IV Centenario del nacimiento de Francisco Suárez 1548–1948*, volume II., Burgos 1949–1950; volume I, pp. 251–290; Idem, *Sobre la limitación del acto por la potencia*: *Las Ciencias*, no. 16, Burgos 1951, pp. 325–365.

¹⁷ Jose Hellín, *Suarezianismus...*, op. cit., p. 195.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 195–196.

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the case of Hellín's statement that Suárez's thought had no influence on the modern and contemporary philosophy and that "[...] the fundamental principles which served as the basis for Cartesianism, Kantism, subjectivism, idealism, pantheistic monism, and atheistic existentialism were rejected beforehand and opposed the entire context of Suárez's philosophy." I decided that one of his numerous articles was worth discussing and presenting to the Polish reader. Moreover, I think that this text, whose subject matter is the thought of such an eminent philosopher of the modern era philosophy, can contribute to fill the gap in the Polish philosophical literature.