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## THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALS AT THE BEGINNING OF JESUIT PHILOSOPHY

### 1. Introduction

There is a common conviction that the philosophical issues of the early scholasticism were centred around the classical concept of *universalia*. What is more: throughout all philosophical periods, beginning from the ancient times up to the modern times this concept was of the paramount importance to philosophy – both on the epistemological and metaphysical field. It was undoubtedly very important in the Middle Ages when philosophers made it the top criterion of distinction and differences among them and their philosophical thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

The restoration of scholasticism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century renewed discussions about the nature of *universalia* and thus heated disagreements among *the antiqui* and *the moderni* – e.g. supporters of different types of realism and nominalism – were being continued.<sup>2</sup> In other words: realists were supposed to belong to *via antiqua* schools – they were primarily Duns Scotus's followers, whereas Wilhelm Ockham's followers were in favour of the radical reism. There were different philosophical stances in this respect but realism and reism were dominant and they were the basis to differentiate between the old and the new way of looking at that problem and its various categories.

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<sup>1</sup> See among others the following books: S. Swieżawski, *Dzieje filozofii europejskiej w XV wieku*, vol. III: *Byt*, Warszawa 1978, pp. 19–21, 287–288; E. Gilson, *Historia filozofii chrześcijańskiej w wiekach średnich*, translated by S. Zalewski, Warszawa 1987, p. 142; J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la Métaphysique*, Louvain 1927, p. 76; J. Paulus, *Henri de Gand. Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Paris 1938, p. 69; C. Giacon, *Guglielmo di Occam*, vol. I, pp. 48–49, 128–129; G. Manser, *Das Wesen des Thomismus*, Freiburg 1935, pp. 207–208.

<sup>2</sup> See, Swieżawski, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Philosophers of the newly founded Jesuit Congregation join in not only in the flow of discussions on the above mentioned subject but also their philosophical conclusions are introduced in a syllabus curriculum of school education. Later they marked the way of the philosophical thought in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In those times it was virtually impossible to be present in philosophy without a reference point – most philosophers of the time were dedicated to the Jesuit philosophy – and that was Francis Suarez and his philosophy. Jesuits among others were supporters of the notion that the direct and suitable subject of the intellectual acquisition is the individual being.<sup>3</sup> This conclusion led to the very realistic or concretistic approach to definition of general terms. Were they represented by the philosophy of Jesuits as a result? This article is aiming at answering this basic question on the grounds of Fonseca's philosophical doctrine – one of the most prominent Jesuit philosophers on the outset of the philosophical activity of the order.

## 2. Disputes among realists and nominalists

As far as universals are concerned, generally speaking, a question of the existence of generality was expected to be answered. Realists – taking into account the fact of differentiation between *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem* claimed that the existence of universals is possible in the three above mentioned forms but they seemed to understand it in many different ways. Nominalists, on the other hand, claimed that the existence of generality was impossible and was a kind of the conventional outcome of language.<sup>4</sup>

At the beginning of the modern times reistic nominalism found its ground for development as it was assisted by the notional realism. The concept of fundamental realism did not benefit the goodness of theology and the orthodox theology, thus it was in disfavour and there was a saying: *Universalia realia sunt haeresis seminaria* (the real *universalia* are the grounds for heresies). So this kind of approach to fundamental realism resulted in a development of different forms of niminalism: buridan and ockhamism in the first place.<sup>5</sup>

The philosophical thought of Francis Suarez reflects those tendencies: he is the one to claim that the nominalists' thinking is not far from the real doctrine. Ideas of the nominalists – he wrote in his *Disputationes me-*

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<sup>3</sup> See, K. Gryżenia, "Primum cognitum" w filozoficznej szkole jezuickiej, in: *Philosophia vitam alere*, edited by S. Ziemiański SJ, Kraków 2005, pp. 183–198.

<sup>4</sup> See, Swieżawski, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

<sup>5</sup> See, *ibidem*, pp. 30–31, 289.

*taphysicae* – are rejected on the grounds of their presentation but in natural fact they were rational. Nominalists are of the opinion that natures that are described as universal and common are non-existent in objects but exist as object of the intellect solely. They are wrong to say, however, that scientific proofs and definitions are not grounded in things. According to Suarez, everything that is associated with terms is simultaneously reflected in the definite things.<sup>6</sup> Carlo Giacon states that Suarez defends in his declarations and opinions moderate realism of Thomas Aquinas, and being in opposition to the fundamental realism of Duns Scotus and nominalism of Ockham but in his philosophical thought, in natural fact, becoming similar to the later.<sup>7</sup>

In the theory of Suarez one cannot notice considerable influences of Scotus's philosophy, and that is why his speculations on the grounds of general terms i.e. *universalia* are out of accordance with thomism<sup>8</sup> and in fact brings it closest to nominalism of Ockham. When Suarez verbally criticises nominalism – Silvia notices – then it is worth studying Fonseca's dissertation on the subject.<sup>9</sup>

The latter, on the other hand, being in a constant conflict with nominalists was criticising them severely.<sup>10</sup> It was – most likely – due to the fact

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<sup>6</sup> See, F. Suarez, *Disputationes metafisicas*, Ed. Y trad. S. R. Romeo, S. C. Sanchez y A. P. Zanon, vol. I, Madrid 1960, d. VI, sec. 2, p. 1; see also C. Giacon, *La seconda scolastica*, vol. II: *Precedenze teoretiche ai problemi giuridici*, Toledo, Pereira, Fonseca, Molina, Suarez, Milano 1947, pp. 225–226.

<sup>7</sup> C. Giacon, *La seconda scolastica*, vol. II, pp. 225–226.

<sup>8</sup> Numerous authors are of such an idea: C. A. Ferreira da Silva, *Teses fundamentais da gnoseologia de Pedro da Fonseca*, Lisboa 1959, p. 8; J. Alejandro, *La gnoseologia del Doctor Eximio y la acusacion nominalista*, Comillas 1948; L. Feutscher, *Akt und Potenz*, Innsbruck 1933; R. Gironella, *La sintesis metafisica de Suarez*, “Pensamiento” IV (1948), pp. 169–213.

<sup>9</sup> Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Fonseca outlines his doctrine about universals at length: commenting in the first place books V and VII *Metafizyki* of Aristotle. See first of all: P. Fonseca, *Commentariorum in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*, vol. II, Coloniae 1615, 947 A – 987 F (issues I–IV). The above mentioned edition was based on: P. Fonseca, *Commentariorum in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae*, Coloniae, vol. I–III, 1615; vol. IV, 1629; reprint of all: Hildesheim 1964. In vol. I i II *Commentariorum* so called *quaestiones* are presented in two columns on each page. Columns are divided into sections from A to F. Further citation: *Commentariorum* II, 947 A – 987 F, in which II means volume, Arabic letters – suitable columns, letters of the alphabet – sections of the columns.

<sup>10</sup> “Ubique de hac re agitur, perpetua nobis sit ea cum Nominalibus quos illi plane sequuntur, contentio”. *Commentariorum* III, 410b E. “Sunt enim nominales, ut multiplicitatis realitatum, entitatumve, et essentialium osores”. *Ibidem*, 303a C. In volume III the author of the work still keeps to the division of the book into columns and sections on each page but columns do not have a separate number system: they have just page numbers. In order to make it clear which column I cite, I introduce the following letters: a and b. Thus 410b E and 303a C.

that he himself had been accused of favouring nominalism. For this reason – being at the same time aware of the objections<sup>11</sup> of others against him – he was passionately trying to prove its groundlessness.<sup>12</sup> Nominalists of his time he tended to compare with those of the ancient times, primitive philosophers like: Heraclitus, Antisthenes and Epicures, who – perceiving individual beings to have nothing common and permanent in them – rejected any sureness of knowledge.<sup>13</sup> More contemporary philosophers, and Wilhelm Ockham in particular, says Fonseca, did not negate the validity of knowledge but still kept limiting it to general terms which had no equivalent in reality.<sup>14</sup> Nominalists – writing about the existence of common natures and accepting purely identity of terms – proved to be unworthy to label them as philosophers.<sup>15</sup>

In the times of the first Jesuit philosophers, it seems that realism and nominalism are in opposition to one another and are unacceptable as such. They received in that respect critical reviews. Having criticised them, Fonseca himself moves onto the next stage: he outlines his own theory on the subject. To his mind – unlike nominalists – common natures do exist in

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<sup>11</sup> “Non desunt tamen, qui dicat, nos libro 5. postquam impugnavimus eam Nominalium sententiam, qua tollunt de medio omnem differentiam individuam, et naturas omnes, quas communes dicimus, afferunt esse ex se ipsis individuas, iterum in impugnatam sententiam incidisse”. *Ibidem*, 410b D.

<sup>12</sup> See, *Commentariorum* II, 951 B – 956 E (sections I–II). The fact that Fonseca was opposed to nominalism mentions: C. Giacon, *O Neo-aristotelismo de Pedro da Fonseca*, “Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia” 9 (1953), p. 409; D. Martins, *Essencia do Saber filosofico, segundo Pedro da Fonseca*, “Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia” 9 (1953), pp. 399–401; Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> “Occasionem huiusmodi Philosophis dederunt Heraclitus, Antisthenes, et Epicurei, qui cum singularia omnia fluxa et caduca esse crederent, neque in eis stabile quicquam conciperent, scientiam omnem, certamque rerum cognitionem de medio tollebant. (...) Huius opinionis, veterum Scholasticorum realium industria pene iam sepultae, instaurator fuit Guillelmus Ockham, Scoti auditor, homo ingeniosus quidem, sed novarum rerum studiosior, qui apud recentiores Nominales tantum autoritatis obtinuit, ut quasi novam philosophandi viam primus invenerit, venerabilis inceptoris nomen assequutus sit”. *Commentariorum* II, 951 D – 952 A.

<sup>14</sup> “Nullam etiam, quemadmodum et illi communem naturam, quae per se stabilis esset, et constans, in singularibus esse arbitrarentur: quanquam non negarunt, plurima esse singularia stabilia et perpetua, de quibus, quia singularia essent, et quae haud proprie definiri possent, scientiam quoque proprie haberi nolverunt”. *Ibidem*, 951 E–F. “Sed nominales (quod eorum pace dixerim) dum omnem rerum inter se communionem de medio tollunt, nullamque omnino cum alia in natura ulla communi, sed in solis earum communibus vocabulis convenire dicunt: sepsos Philosophorum choro indignos esse ostendunt”. *Ibidem*, 953 C–D.

<sup>15</sup> See, previous footnote and: “Nomina enim nec sunt in pluribus, cum singularia quaedam entia sint, nec de pluribus dicuntur, nisi ratione rerum, pro quibus sumuntur, tamen importunum quoddam Philosophorum genus facit, ut quaestionem hanc discutiamus”. *Ibidem*, 951 C.

reality and against Scotism such nature is universal. Is this reason sufficient enough to talk about his proposed moderate realism?

There have been so far two different outlooks and interpretations of the matter in respect of Fonseca's understanding of the problem. Cassiano Abranches in one of his reviews presents Fonseca as a representative of moderate term realism.<sup>16</sup> Abranches notices that Fonseca is generally regarded to be the author of the radical term realism; not mentioning who the authors actually are.<sup>17</sup> Abranches is opposed to such assessment since to his mind the main works of Fonseca suggest something different i.e. moderate realism of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Diamantino Martins and Custódio Augusto Ferreira da Silva claim that philosophy of Abranches is closest to Duns Scotus, who was considered to have represented radical term realism.<sup>18</sup> This divergence of interpretations of Fonseca needs closer attention and more analyses of his theory.

### **3. Unity and ability to multiply through crucial properties of universals**

Fonseca begins his considerations by giving three ways of understanding universals: a) in cause (*in causando*), b) in signification (*in significando*), c) in predication (*in praedicando*).<sup>19</sup> He thinks that only in predication is there the proper sense of universals, since it denounces its full meaning. Thus, he puts forward further aspects:

1. Universals are those general terms, such as: "substance", whose existence is of paramount importance or "animal", which is a subordinate genus. These universals are in themselves timeless; they are not born and they do not perish.

2. As far as correlation of generality and particular things are concerned, they depend on the same nature and time: i.e. they are unable to exist independently; and we cannot comprehend their existence independently.

3. According to the propriety of universality (*ratio universalitatis*) as something indirect one can adopt the first meaning, and that can be the basis for the latter.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> C. Abranches, *A Teoria dos Universais em Pedro da Fonseca*, "Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia" 12 (1956), pp. 291–298.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 291.

<sup>18</sup> Martins, article cited, pp. 401–403; Silva, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–40.

<sup>19</sup> "Universale (...) tamen apud Philosophos tribus modis potissimum usurpatur: in causando, ut aiunt, in significando, in praedicando". *Commentariorum* II, 947 C.

<sup>20</sup> See, *ibidem*, 949 D–F.

Fonseca draws our attention to the third point of the issue saying that the philosophical disputes concentrate on that meaning. Discussing the problem of universals, Fonseca claims that of paramount importance it is to elucidate the fact it whether *ratio universalitatis* is prior to or rather later than individual beings. Referring to the ongoing discussion, he points to its beginnings in the classical period of the ancient times. He reminds us that for Plato universals are prior to individual beings and that they do exist in reality and independent of them. For Aristotle, on the other hand, they are posterior to them and separated from them in the abstract way: that gives them objective existence in the mind and they are at the same time identical to the natures of individual things.<sup>21</sup>

Fonseca is of the opinion that universals are generally understood as “something unique and able to exist parallely in different things and (consequently) they can define many beings”;<sup>22</sup> or adequately “something unique existing in different individual things and defining many”<sup>23</sup> thus *universale in essendo* and *universale in praedicando*. To put it briefly – universals are defined by their own oneness and their ability of realisation in many different objects and consequently ability to define many. These two essential parts of universals – oneness and ability to multiply – cannot exist independently without simultaneous negation of identical predication of many things.<sup>24</sup>

Oneness, intrinsic to universals, according to Fonseca is connected with the nature of things and the latter is existent in many different forms. As a result, Fonseca talks about three forms of nature and relevant to them three forms of oneness, following the Scotus notion of the common nature and the Avicennian understanding of the third nature; as well as referring to the classical differentiation of universals: *ante rem*, *in re* and *post rem*.

1. The state of priority in which common nature proceeds individualisation.

2. The state of limitation in which nature is restricted to individual differences, identifying with them at the same time.

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, 950 A–B.

<sup>22</sup> “Unum quid aptum ut insit in pluribus et (consequenter) ut praedicetur de pluribus”. *Ibidem*, 950 C.

<sup>23</sup> “Unum quid in multis et de multis”. *Ibidem*, 947 D.

<sup>24</sup> “Primum est unitas rei, non nominis tantum, sed rationis etiam; alterum aptitudo, ut in multis insit per modum identitatis, ac proinde, ut eo pacto de multis dicatur. Nam neque unitas sine aptitudine, neque aptitudo sine unitate satis est, ut rem faciat vere ac proprie universalem: siquidem analogia, ut ens, suo modo apta sunt, ut in multis insint”. *Ibidem*, 950 C–D. These two characteristics of the universals that are discussed by Fonseca are also considered by Silva, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 37; Abranches, article cited, p. 292.

3. The state of simplicity (*praecisionis*), i.e. abstract in which nature is separated from individuality. Each state of this kind of nature is characterised by adequate oneness.

In the first state nature is characterised by a certain universal oneness prior to any intellectual activity. Common natures are deprived – as it may seem – of the universal oneness when restricted to individuals. In the second state nature maintains oneness with the individual things that are identified with them. Finally, in the third state nature in the abstract, by means of intellectual process, is characterised by the universal oneness, i.e. oneness of simplicity (*praecisionis*).<sup>25</sup>

Fonseca, in spite of the differentiation, still asks what the oneness of the common nature is. For this reason he introduces further terms which demand particular attention of the reader. From the outset of these rather intricate disputes he states that the characteristic of the universality of nature is not true to say when considering its various forms. Thus universality seems to have different values depending on a form of nature it belongs to. Of paramount importance is the nature before and after thing – emphasizing the first form of the existence of nature. The author suggests: “Oneness of universals is not characteristic of themselves unless it is prior to its specific substance in particular things”.<sup>26</sup> And he gives an example saying: if “animal” is prior in being to “rational” and “irrational”, thus refers to humans and animals; in the same way “man” is one of universals before he is – due to individual qualities – restricted to an individual being.<sup>27</sup>

Oneness being intrinsic to natures as such and natures meant as absolute natures – therefore nature prior to its specific substance in particular things – is not the oneness in the numerical sense in its simplicity (*simpliciter*).<sup>28</sup> Neither is it oneness purely formal,<sup>29</sup> but oneness of its specific kind, proper to natures in the state *ante rem*.<sup>30</sup> Fonseca calls this oneness either a mixtum

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<sup>25</sup> See, *Commentariorum* II, 960 A – 962 B (section II).

<sup>26</sup> “Unitas universalium non est ipsis propria, nisi quatenus illa praecedunt contractionem sui ad particularia”. *Ibidem*, 961 A.

<sup>27</sup> “Veluti animal, quatenus praecedit contractionem sui per rationale et irrationale ad hominem et bestiam; itemque homo, quatenus praecedit contractionem sui per differentias individuantes ad particulares homines”. *Ibidem*, 961 A–B.

<sup>28</sup> “Unitatem rerum universalium propriam non esse numerarem simplicitem, sive qua numerantur res omnino singulares, ut homines singuli aut equi”. *Ibidem*, 960 A.

<sup>29</sup> “Unitatem rerum universalium propriam esse ex genere formalium, saltem puro”. *Ibidem*, 960 B.

<sup>30</sup> “Eam unitatem, quam quaerimus esse ex genere earum, quae sunt quidem peculiare rerum communium non proprie tamen illis per se conveniunt, nisi quatenus naturae ordine praecedunt contractionem sui ad particularia”. *Ibidem*, 960 D.

unity coming from the numerical and formal oneness or a unity of simplicity (*unitatem praecisionis*), which is proper to universals *post rem*.<sup>31</sup>

The discussed author notices that this terminology does not solve all problems in this respect yet. He states that the terms “a mixtum unity” or “a unity of simplicity” entitle us to use other terms such as “a numerical unity” or “a formal unity”. It seems that Fonseca used additional terms: “numerical unity of simplicity” and “purely formal unity” suggesting further possibilities of deduction. Thus, each term is adequate. Giving his reasoning of the following terms, Fonseca uses the term “unity of simplicity” to distinguish it from “formal unity” and to say that he means the nature whose oneness is of no kind – namely just before becoming existent in particular things.

He is of the opinion that this state of nature should be called “a mixtum unity” constituting as a result of “formal and numerical unity” since common natures are the result of forms of particular things. Fonseca is evidently aware that this unity is to a certain extent a formal unity being multiplied in individuals as well as the numerical unity limiting the number of the proper natures – and that is impossible when considering purely the formal unity. Thus, the formal and numerical unities are compatible and they create a new kind of unity the “mixtum unity”. The common nature is therefore indefinite and not constrained. Apart from its common existence and prior indifference to the state of individuality, one cannot say anything about it.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. Avicenna and Scotus’s origin of the doctrine

Fonseca’s common nature equipped in *ex natura rei* – i.e. its own comprehensible oneness – is of Avicenna and Scotus’s origin. Nature itself, for Avicenna as well as for Duns Scotus, is neither common nor particular but

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<sup>31</sup> “Unitatem, de qua est controversia (...) praecisionis appellavimus. Unitas universalium mixta ex formali et numerali dici potest”. *Ibidem*, 961 D. More on the subject of understanding of the following types of oneness write: Abranches, article cited, pp. 292–294; Martins, article cited, pp. 401–402.

<sup>32</sup> “Si ad generalem divisionem unitatis in numeralem et formalem revocanda est, etsi quodammodo mixta ex formali et numerali dici potest: tamen numeralem potius appellandam esse. Cur autem praecisionis dixerimus, illa est ratio: quia non convenit rebus, quae denominantur universales, nisi praecise in eo prioritatis gradu, quo illa praecedunt contractionem sui ad sua particularia, quod autem quodammodo mixta dici possit”. *Commentariorum* II, 961 D–E; see, *ibidem*, F. Bargiel, *Kazimierz Ostrowski i jego wkład w nowoczesne filozofii scholastycznej*, Kraków 1990, p. 31.

as if neutral and indifferent to individuality and generality. Then, nature is “anterior” its individuality as well as “posterior” its generality. It is pure potentiality and nothing else. Since it does not possess differentiation and it is indefinite and not constrained – it can become either specific in the particular things or common in the intellect. It possesses its own *modus* i.e. its own way of existence. Duns Scotus – following the pattern of the third nature by Avicenna – admits that nature itself has priority equally in relation to the specifically existing reality as well as to the creating and acquisition of a term.<sup>33</sup>

Fonseca understands nature in the way portrayed above although he notices certain specific differences in understanding its universality. According to Scotus the universality of nature is non-existent without prior working of the intellect. The common nature possesses in itself no universality – it acquires it through the working of the intellect. In the process of intellectual acquisition the intellect – according to Dr Subtelny – plays the role of *father*, and the object of acquisition plays the role of *mother*. He has a tendency to underline the role of the intellect which coincidentally meets a nature of some kind and creates an object of recognition in the state of an undetermined generality.

Consequently, Fonseca ascribes to the common nature – considered in the state prior to its individual existence and multiplication in the individual things – universality (which can be repossessed by nature by means of the abstract working of the intellect) and calls it adjustable, potential, fundamental or multiplying. A characteristic of this type of nature goes down to two inseparable qualities: the unity of simplicity and the ability to multiply. It possesses its *modus* as well, i.e. its internal way of existence. It is not, however, its actual *modus* of existence, but – Fonseca claims – positive, potential, and separated i.e. independent of particular things and the intellect. The problem of the existence of nature Fonseca explains in the following way: “one can say that the adjustable universality is not the actual way of existence as there is the very act of being in many things which we call actual – as it is in the nature of things, in the intellect – but it is the potential way of existence: such as the way of existence of some effect in its cause; and finally it does not exist in the way of total separation as it is in the case of the existence of incidental and necessary, complete or incomplete beings: but it is separated in the way the existence of things

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<sup>33</sup> See, E. Gilson, *Byt i istota*, translated by P. Lubicz i J. Nowak, Warszawa 1963, pp. 107–116.

in their causes. Therefore, particular things cease to exist in their causes (then we talk about their existence outside causes), universals in the same way, if they are dependent on the individual differences, they are dependent on their causes; and when they become abstract they begin to exist independent of the differences i.e. subjectively in the mind, and due to this reason the adjustable universality is possible".<sup>34</sup>

Fonseca concerned himself with giving subjective value for notional acquisition and prompted him to claim that the formal notion, as far as objects are concerned (a parte rei), corresponds to a certain reality formally distinguished.<sup>35</sup> There is also one condition according to which every formal notion, distinguished in the mind, should have its own separate formality in the reality. It is not possible for one adequate term to express the whole subject in its integrity. On the contrary: one particular object may have many different terms which describe its actual existence and point to its many different formalities. Each formality possesses in its essence its own and proper existence different from the existence of an individual object; separated from it, though.<sup>36</sup>

The above presented concept of parallelism between the notional and real orders shows clearly that Fonseca's stance in this regard is close to that

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<sup>34</sup> "Dicere enim possumus, hanc aptitudinem esse modum essendi intrinsecum rebus quae denominantur universales, hoc est, non per aliam entitatem eis convenientem: non tamen esse modum essendi actualem, ut est ipse actus essendi in pluribus multoque; minus eam, quam vocamus actualem existentiam, sive in rerum natura, sive in intellectu, sed esse modum essendi potentialem, ut etiam est modus essendi cuiusque effectus in sua causa: ac denique non esse modum essendi omnino inseparabilem, ut sunt necessarium esse et contingens, finitum et infinitum; sed modo aliquo separabilem, ut est modus essendi rerum in suis causis. Nam quemadmodum res singulares, postquam productae sunt, desinunt esse in suis causis (unde et extra suas causas esse dicuntur) ita res, quae denominantur universales, si desinant abstrahi a differentiis individuantibus, desinent quoque habere aptitudinem essendi in pluribus suo modo existentem, nempe obiective, qua sola ratione ea aptitudo existere potest". *Commentariorum* II, 974 F – 975 B.

<sup>35</sup> "Peto... utrum univocata conveniant in solo nomine et ratione formali quae in mente est, an etiam in ratione aliqua obiectiva, quae sit in ipsis rebus univocatis. Certe non dicent in solo nomine, et ratione mentali, sed in ratione etiam aliqua obiectiva, quae sit in rebus: alioqui plane faterentur se Nominales non modo re ipsa, quod non omnino negant". *Commentariorum* III, 383b E–F.

<sup>36</sup> "Potest enim intellectus, ea quae non univoce, sed analogice tantum conveniunt, unire in unum conceptum formalem, aut omnino confusum, aut partim confusum, partim distinctum, sive expressum, ut diximus... eaque dicere in rebus ipsis aliquo modo secundum eum conceptum esse unum, non tamen efficere potest, ut vel is conceptus formalis sit omnino unus in repraesentando, vel in rebus ipsis illi respondeat obiectum omnino unum". *Ibidem*, 393b E–F. "Dicendum est: etsi intellectus tantam vim habet, ut distinctissima ac disiunctissima etiam uno simplici conceptu apprehendat, nempe quatenus ea unum aliquid efficiunt, sive simpliciter, sive secundum quid, nunquam tamen concipere posse univoco conceptu quae analogice tantum natura sua conveniunt". *Commentariorum* II, 512 D–E; see, *ibidem*, 398 F – 401 E (section II); III, 296.

of Scotus for whom parallelism was a necessary condition of the subjective value of our acquisition.<sup>37</sup>

At this stage, one should be aware of certain nuances and differences in the terms used by Fonseca and those used by Scotus, although Fonseca followed the latter in the matter.<sup>38</sup>

It is commonly believed that Dr Subtelny was of the opinion that the ability of nature – in order to distinguish many individual beings – does not belong to the common nature *per se*, but such an ability is possible when it becomes *intentio prima* in the intellect. It is interesting to notice that the two philosophers (Scotus and Fonseca) carry on their deliberations on two different levels: theoretical and metaphysical. Fonseca, talking about the universals capable of multiplying in many objects and consequently able to describe many: thus talking about the universals *in essendo* and *in praedicando*, he pays attention to the universals *in essendo* in the first place. He is not interested in the problem of the logical or cogitative universality, which seems to be an outcome of the intellect. Silva draws our attention to the fact that Fonseca and Scotus adopt two different stances on the matter: Fonseca focuses on universal *in praedicando*, the latter puts emphasis on universal *in essendo*. In other words, for the Franciscan master the universality of nature would be adequate first of all in predication, and for our Jesuit – in existence prior to individual objects.<sup>39</sup>

Intellectual abstraction, leading to purification of nature of all different and numerous individual conditions, according to Fonseca is purely objectifying the nature without its modifications. The intellect does not create the adjustable universality of nature but it is its cause; it makes that universality in the abstract gains the quality of the unity of simplicity and the ability of adjustment: i.e. the ability to multiply that was typical of nature in its state prior to its limitations to individual differences.<sup>40</sup>

If we wanted to do a synthesis of our considerations made up to the present, we can say that nature existing prior to its particular beings is

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<sup>37</sup> More on the Scotus's doctrine write among others: E. Gilson, *Jean Duns Scot. Introduction a ses positiones fundamentales*, Paris 1952, p. 180; P. Stella, *L'ilemorfismo di Giovanni Duns Scoto*, Torino 1955, pp. 84–85, 114–115; Giacon, *Guglielmo di Occam, op. cit.*, p. 179; Silva, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–28. It is worth mentioning that in the thomistic theory there is a certain parallelism between concept acquisition and reality but, all the same, it is still different to the one defended by Scotus as well as – what we can see – by Fonseca. In the thomistic theory one cannot talk about clarity in logic and metaphysics; thus about the absolute oneness but proportional.

<sup>38</sup> The difference shows perfectly well Silva, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–39.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 39.

common in its act, it has its unity in simplicity and the ability to multiply; and it is nature's positive and separate, not actual but potential way of existence. In other words: it is universality *in essendo* or universality *ante rem*. In Fonseca's considerations this approach to the concept of universals gives universals a possibility of undetermined and potential way of existence – its determined and actual existence is guaranteed in the actual and real existence of particular things.<sup>41</sup>

Similar qualities like the unity of simplicity and the ability to multiply are also characteristic of universality *in praedicando*, i.e. *post rem*. It possesses actual universality and in fact existing in reality, though its existence is dependent on the intellect. Its formal unity is obtained due to processes of thinking in the abstract.

When, however, the common natures are constrained by individual differences, they are deprived of the unity of simplicity and multiplying universality. In particular objects the common nature is identical to individual beings. It has no longer its potential but actual existence. Thus, the common nature which is characterized as unity of precision (*praecisionis*) and has the potential way of existence is not capable of co-existing in particulars together with the actual and determined nature since it would be at the same time potential and actual, determined and undetermined – and that is obviously an absurd.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, Fonseca claims on the one hand that the quality of universality is typical of common natures before their existence in particulars as well as abstract notions, on the other hand. Universal common natures are non-existent in reality but potentially, or in the state prior to individual beings or even in the process of abstract thinking. He thinks that the theory is consistent to that of St. Thomas Aquinas and other philosophers of scholasticism, like Albert the Great, Alexander from Hales, Avicenna, Aegidius from Rome and others.<sup>43</sup> This stance of Fonseca is presented in his

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<sup>41</sup> See, *Commentariorum* I, 758 A.

<sup>42</sup> "Naturam sequitur per se unitas formalis: modum autem essendi potentialem naturae, sive aptitudinem, ut sit in pluribus sequitur unitas praecisionis. Unde non mirum est, si unitas formalis descendat cum natura ad omnia eius particularia; cum tamen impossibile sit unitatem praecisionis cum natura descendere, nec sane alia ratione, nisi quia is modus potentialis aptitudove simul esse non potest cum natura actuata et determinata iam esset actuata et non actuata, determinata et non determinata". *Ibidem*, 986 E – 987 A.

<sup>43</sup> "Naturas communes non solum habere suam univesalitatem in suis particularibus, verum neque ex seipsis esse universales, sed sola operatione intellectus universales effici. Afferunt autem D. Thomam, et poene totam Scholasticorum antiquitatem in suae opinionis confirmationem. Divus enim Thomas (...) non tantum afferit, sed etiam probat,

other considerations: “There is, therefore, one definite opinion of the scholastic philosophers that the common natures exist of themselves (*ex se*), prior to their individual beings or even prior to the process of the intellect in the abstract. They are universal in the act, not just in possibility, although they have no universality actually existing – unless it is existent in the mind without individual differences”.<sup>44</sup>

Abranches, taking into account Fonseca’s stance on the matter of universals – that they do not exist in the way Plato’s notions do – says that these are sufficient reasons for not calling Fonseca a representative of moderate term realism. He claims that Fonseca’s theory of universals should be considered to be moderate realism defended by St. Thomas Aquinas and other scholastic philosophers.<sup>45</sup>

One cannot unconditionally adopt the way of thinking of Abranches. We can agree on his conclusions concerning logical universals, being a result of the intellect in the abstract. Fonseca’s doctrine does not differ from other scholasticists in this regard. As far as universals existing *a priori* objects are concerned, the matter is more complex. Fonseca’s unique stance on universals having solely potential but not actual way of existence defends him against the accusation of being a radical realist. He says nothing, however, that universals are a means of getting to know God. He states only that their existence is unlike the existence of intentional beings but similar to that of particulars. Therefore, Fonseca’s philosophical considerations on the whole, make us conclude that he is inspired by the theory of the third nature by Avicenna and the common nature by Duns Scotus – what is highlighted in opinions of C. A. Ferreira da Silva and D. Martins.<sup>46</sup> Is it then radical term realism? Followers of Duns Scotus were frequently ranked among radical realists. It was due to their statements that individual beings are not the only way of existence of beings. General beings also had unique forms

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naturas communes nec secundum se, nec ut sunt in suis particularibus, sed ut sunt in intellectu, esse universales, et in eo tantum obiective sibi vindicare universalitatem: quod Avicennae etiam et Commentatoris auctoritate confirmat. Idem ex veteribus Scholasticis et priores D. Thoma, ut Albertus et Alensis: et posteriores, ut Aegidius et coeteri reales sensisse videtur”. *Ibidem*, 994 E–F.

<sup>44</sup> “Est igitur vera germanaque et omnium ut credere par est, veterum Scholasticorum sententia, naturas communes ex se, et ante eam operationem intellectus, qua a suis particularibus abstrahuntur, nempe prius natura, quam in suis particularibus existant, aut contractae in eis sint, esse actu et non potentia tantum universales, tametsi non habent suam universalitatem existentem, nisi cum intellectum, nisi differentiis contrahentibus obiiuntur”. *Ibidem*, 995 D–E; see also: “Naturasque universales non existere per proprias et peculiare existencias, sed per existencias singularium per se”. *Ibidem*, 758 A.

<sup>45</sup> See, Abranches, article cited, pp. 196–298.

<sup>46</sup> See, Silva, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Martins, article cited, pp. 401–403.

of existence different from individual objects and from intentional beings. It is not, however, Plato's way of thinking, but it is less radical aspiring to the moderate term realism.<sup>47</sup> Fonseca in the same way would – all in all – represent some form of the moderate term realism.

## 5. Conclusion

Fonseca's considerations on the subject of different ways of existence of universals are quite complicated and demand a lot of concentration on the side of the reader. It is difficult to count him in as one of those representing either side of two different philosophical opinions in the time of scholasticism: the radical realism and the reism of nominalists. As a matter of fact, he criticised nominalism and was inclined to support realism, but it does not mean that he wanted to adopt it in his philosophy without his own considerations, interpretations and specifications. Analysing the philosophical thought of Duns Scotus, he was trying to work out a theory that would settle ongoing disputes on the matter for centuries. Finally, one can say that he has placed himself somewhere in between the two above mentioned philosophical trends of that time – and it is the moderate realism. Whatever one may say about Fonseca in this regard, one should also admit that he managed to do a thorough analysis of conditions in which universals come to exist. Generally speaking, one can notice that in the initial period of the Jesuit philosophy Fonseca and Suarez – being in opposition to the radical realism of Scotus (many philosophers seen him that way at that time) and the nominalism of Ockham – in fact Fonseca is in favour of Scotus's philosophical considerations on the matter under discussion, and the latter in favour of Ockham.

Translated by Marian Nycz

## S U M M A R Y

The issue of universals seemed to appear in almost all ages as a basic philosophical subject on the epistemological as well as metaphysical plane. It was definitely that way in medieval period when it was placed in the foreground and was considered as the main criterion of divisions and differences between philosophers and currents. Along with revival

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<sup>47</sup> See, Swieżawski, *op. cit.*, pp. 290–292.

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of scholasticism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the dispute over nature of universals became again the subject of polemics between *antiqui* and *moderni*, that is between supporters of different variants of realism and nominalism. From the wide range of taken stands in that matter tendencies for realistic and reistic points of view were dominant. Will one of them be presented by philosophers of the newly established at that time Jesuit order? Answers to that question was searched on the example of Peter Fonseca's doctrine – leading Jesuit philosopher in the early scientific phase of the order's activity.

Completed analyses do not allow to count Fonseca explicitly among followers of one of two leading positions at that time, namely – either extreme realism or nominalist reism. As far as logic universals are concerned, which were the effects of intellect's abstraction, Fonseca's doctrine is not different from the doctrines of the previous scholastics. Another way it is with the issue of universals existing before the thing. The very specific concept of Fonseca, in which he ascribes only potential not current way of existing to universals. It defends him from accusation of the extreme realism. He doesn't say anything about universals being the subject of learning God. Fonseca emphasizes that universals live in such a way that it is impossible to bring them either to existence typical for concretum or to the way of existence of intentional being. Such a presentation induces the conclusion that Fonseca is inspired by Avicenna's theory of the third nature and Scot's theory of common nature. It is not extreme Platonic solution but less radical, indirect one which aspired to moderate realism. More generally speaking, it is noticed that in the early period of Jesuit philosophy Fonseca and later Suarez, being in opposition to extreme – as it was commonly believed – realism of Scot and Ockham's nominalism, in fact is closer to Scot's solutions while Suarez more into Ockham's.

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