

Formal and Universal Unity

Formal Oneness

For Consideration

- Situating *DM VI*
 - Beings, just in so far as they are beings, and irrespective of any categorial features they may have, are *one*.
 - This is a *transcendental* feature of beings as beings.
 - Transcendental Unity, in general (*DM IV*)
 - Individual Unity and Individuation (*DM V*)
 - Formal Unity and (hence) Universal Unity (*DM VI*)

The Overarching Framework

- A threefold distinction:
 - A *real distinction, in re*, existing individuals in the extramental world:
 - often, but not always, given in terms of a capacity for independent existence — often, but not always, in fact, in terms of a symmetrical capacity for independent existence.
 - so, e.g., trains are distinct from teardrops (symmetrical) or a substance and its real accidents (generally non-symmetrical)
 - A mental distinction, *distinctio rationis*, created by the mind, with no extramental foundation
 - often here thought of as a merely intensional distinction, carrying no implication — in fact often denying any implication — of a capacity for independent existence
 - so, e.g., Ismene has the property of being despised by Antigone and her being disparaged by Antigone, or this wall's having the property of being ochre and of being brownish or of being coloured
 - Some manner of intermediate distinction, not *in re*, but still with some extramental foundation (so, Peter John Oliva speaks of *rationes reales*, Scotus of a formal distinction)
 - often, but not always, tracking hyperintensional distinctions, between necessarily co-extensive features not related as determinable and determinate

This *Middle Way*

- ‘Not merely by reason of the one conceiving it but in virtue of a property of the thing itself’ — Aquinas (*Comm, in lib. I Sent.*, D 2, Q 1, A 3)
- Hence, e.g., the sort of question posed in our *DM* VI 2: ‘Whether the Unity of the Universal Nature Be Distinct from Formal Unity Actually in Reality, Prior to the Operation of the Mind’

One Question Then

- Given that individual unity is incommunicable—your being numerically one and the same as what *you* are is not the same as my being one numerically the same as *I* am—we must ask of those features who are, or seem to be communicable or shared.
- Is your humanity one and the same as my humanity?
- Formal and universal unity ‘intrinsically requires a nature communicable to many inferiors’ (*DM* VI, proem)
 - Evidently, ‘communicable’ in this formulation just means shared, or able to be shared, by a plurality.

A Seeming Answer

- ‘Things which are denominated universals truly exist in reality (*res quae universales denominatur vere in re existunt*). First it must be established that those things we denominate universal and common are real and exist in things themselves; for we do not fabricate them mentally, but rather apprehend them and understand them to be in things, and we produce definitions, construct demonstrations, and we seek knowledge of them thus conceived.’ (*DM* VI 2.1)
- So, it seems: yes, there are extra-mental universals.

Yet

- All extra-mental entities are singular and individual (*DM VI 1.2*; cf. *DM V passim*).
 - And what is singular and individual is *not* common.
 - Moreover, ‘formal unity, as it exists in a thing, is incommunicable’ (*DM VI 1.11*)
 - Cf. Scotus (*apud* Suárez): ‘Scotus does not think that this formal unity or the nature considered as having this formal unity, is multiplied in number in the individuals themselves, but that all the individuals of the same nature have one and the same formal unity, one (I say) not only mentally but really.’ (*DM VI 1. 2*)
- So, what gives?

A Typical Sort of Argument: *DM*

VI 1.4

1. Human nature as it exists in Peter and Paula can be defined by a unique and fully proper definition (*unica et propriissima definitione potest definiri*).
2. If one, this nature has a determinate unity.
3. If it has a determinate unity, then human nature has its unity in either a mind-dependent or a mind-independent way (= from itself).
4. Human nature does not have its unity in a mind-dependent way.
5. Hence, human nature has its unity in a mind-independent way (= from itself).
6. If (5), human nature is a true and real unity (*ergo est vera et realis unitas*).

Suárez's 'True and Contrary Opinion'

- In all real things, there is a formal unity *per se*, belonging to each essence or nature. (*DM VI 1.8*)
 - As a result, every individual is not only one in number but one essentially.
- Formal unity is distinguished from singular unity by reason (*per rationem*) (*DM VI 1.9*)
 - An individual unity does not belong to the common essence ϕ just by itself; something must be added; formal unity, by contrast, takes one directly to an essence ϕ , without any addition, even by reason.
- Even so, this difference is not given *ex parte rei*, but by reason alone (*sed ratione tantum*) (*DM VI 1.10*)
 - The common essence and the singular entity are distinguished not on the basis of the nature of the thing (*ex natura rei*), but by reason; hence, the formal and individual unities are not distinguished on the basis of the nature of the thing (*ex natura rei*).
- Formal unity, as it exists in a thing, is incommunicable (*unitas formalis prout in re existit, incommunicabilis est*). (*DM VI 1.11*)
 - The formal unity marches in step with the nature of a thing, and in real things there is no common nature; instead, 'nature and essence are multiplied as many times as there are individuals'.
- Finally, while formal unity at the individual level is MLI, formal unity as common is not MLI (*DM VI 1. 12*)

Positioning this View

- Ross: ‘It is my opinion that there is no reliable secondary source on Suarez’s doctrine on universals and the most charges of “nominalism” made against Suarez are entirely irresponsible’ (5).
- Unreliable Secondary Source (me): Suárez is a nominalist.

The Most Important Word

- ‘Things which are **denominated** universals truly exist in reality (*res quae universales denominatur vere in re existunt*). First it must be established that those things we denominate universal and common are real and exist in things themselves; for we do not fabricate them mentally, but rather apprehend them and understand them to be in things, and we produce definitions, construct demonstrations, and we seek knowledge of them thus conceived.’ (*DM* VI 2.1)
- *Res quae universales **denominantur**; vere in re existunt.* — Principio statuendum est naturas illas quas nos universales et communes denominamus, reales esse et in rebus ipsis vere existere; non enim eas mente fingimus, sed apprehendimus potius, easque in rebus esse intelligimus, et de illis sic conceptis definitiones tradimus, demonstrationes efficimus, et scientiam inquiremus.

Two Candidates

- Two candidates for universality:
 - ϕ^c , where ' ϕ^c is a universal' means: the concept ϕ is a universal.
 - ϕ^c is here understood as an *ens rationis* and thus constituted by the intentional activity of a mind.
 - ϕ^c is thus *not* a MILE.
 - ϕ^r , where ' ϕ^r is universal' means: the thing (*res*) ϕ is a universal.
 - ϕ^r is *not* constituted by the intentional activity of a mind.
 - ϕ^r is thus, unlike ϕ^c is , a MILE.

Our Question

- Granting that a ϕ^c is universal, but only as an *ens rationis*, is the other universal something, the ϕ^r , also an *ens rationis* or is it, rather, a MLIE?
- Some subordinate questions:
 - Should we accept this contrast as given?
 - If so, do we still have the wherewithal to distinguish ϕ^c and ϕ^r ?
 - Or must we, on the same supposition, end up saying that the notion of an ϕ^r merely collapses into that of an ϕ^c , such that talk of an extrinsic denomination is just talk of concepts, put into a linguistic idiom?

The Contrast as Given

- The ϕ^r is *either* an *ens rationis* or a MLIE.
- Two thoughts:
 - These are mutually exclusive categories.
 - This is correct.
 - These are exhaustive categories.
 - This is questionable, in the sense that it has been responsibly questioned.

What might be neither?

- Perhaps there are incomplete objects (?).
- Consider Avicenna (Avicenna, *Logica*, III (Venice, 1508), fol. 12rl.):
In itself *animal* is neither universal nor particular (*In se autem hujus nec est universale nec est singulare.*)
 - Although the argument is wanting, the position is possible.
 - If so, we would not be constrained to treat the common nature, as the shared essence, as either universal or particular, and thence, neither an *ens rationis* nor a MLIE (if, that is, we regard those categories as populated exclusively by universals and particulars).

A Further Distinction

- Universals in reality are not separate from singulars. — Secondly, it must be supposed that these things or natures which we denominate universals, are not really separated from singular things, since, as has been demonstrated above, every thing which exists is necessarily singular and individual; and it clearly involves an absurdity that a man should exist, for instance, really separated from all singular men, and that he be universal with respect to all of them. For, if he is separate, he is not in them intrinsically and essentially; if, however, he is universal, he ought to be in them intrinsically and essentially since this is part of the notion of such a universal; nor indeed can he be simultaneously separated from them and intrinsically in them, since these two involve an inconsistency [or mutual exclusion] when assumed to hold in the same reality.
- *Universalia in re non sunt a singularibus separata. — Secundo supponendum est, has res vel naturas, quas nos universales denominamus, non esse realiter separatas a rebus singularibus; quia, ut supra demonstratum est, omnis res, quae existit, necessario est singularis et individua; apertamque involvit repugnantiam quod existat homo, verbi gratia, ab omnibus singularibus hominibus realiter separatus, et sit universalis respectu omnium illorum. Nam, si est separatus, non est in illis intrinsece et essentialiter; si autem est universalis, esse debet in illis intrinsece et essentialiter; quia hoc est de ratione talis universalis; neque vero simul esse potest separatus ab illis, et intrinsece in illis; quia haec duo in re ipsa sumpta involvunt repugnantiam. (DM VI 2.2)*

The Distinction and a Suggestion

- The distinction: perhaps we should say that universals are *in rebus* rather than *ante rem*.
 - ϕ is an *ante rem* universal =_{df} (i) ϕ is a universal; (ii) for any particular ϕ -things, $\Diamond (\phi \text{ exists and no } \phi\text{-things exist})$.
 - ϕ is an *in rebus* universal =_{df} (i) ϕ is a universal; (ii) for any particular ϕ -things, $\neg \Diamond (\phi \text{ exists and no } \phi\text{-things exist})$.
- The suggestion: perhaps ϕ^r are simply *ante rem* universals.

No: Two Arguments

- First Argument

1. If ϕ (e.g. *being human*) is a universal, then ϕ ought to be in ϕ -things (humans) intrinsically and essentially.
2. If ϕ (e.g. *being human*) is separate, ϕ is not in ϕ -things (humans) intrinsically and essentially.
3. Ergo, ϕ is not separate.

- Second Argument, evidently in support of (2):

1. $\neg \Diamond (\phi \text{ is both intrinsically in } \phi\text{-things and separate from } \phi\text{-things})$
2. If ϕ (e.g. *being human*) is both separate in ϕ -things (humans) intrinsically, then (1).
3. Ergo, If ϕ (e.g. *being human*) is separate, ϕ is not in ϕ -things (humans) intrinsically—and a fortiori, not in ϕ -things (humans) both intrinsically and essentially [=2].

‘Things which are **denominated** universals’

- What does our most important word mean?
 - Working backwards
 - Working forwards

Working Backwards

- ‘There are no purely extrinsic denominations, denominations which have absolutely no foundation in the very thing denominated.’ — Leibniz, *Primary Truths*
- So, one easy thought:
 - ϕ is an extrinsic denomination of a iff (i) a is called ϕ ; and (ii) ϕ has no foundation in a .
 - ‘Leibniz says that one of his most important doctrines and, indeed, one of the most important doctrines in all of philosophy, as well as theology, is his doctrine that there are no purely extrinsic denominations Unfortunately, despite his view of the importance of the doctrine, he nowhere offers an explicit statement as to what he meant by it.’ — Plaisted (2002, 1)

Working Forwards

- The *Antepraedicamenta* (= *Categories* 1):
- (S) Synonymy: a and b are synonymously ϕ iff: (i) a is ϕ ; (ii) b is ϕ ; and (iii) the accounts of ϕ -ness in ' a is ϕ ' and ' b is ϕ ' are the same
- (H) Homonymy: a and b are homonymously ϕ iff: (i) a is ϕ ; (ii) b is ϕ ; and (iii) the accounts of ϕ -ness in ' a is ϕ ' and ' b is ϕ ' are not the same
 - 'When things get their name from something, with a difference of ending, they are called paronymous. Thus, for example, the grammarian gets his name from grammar, the brave get theirs from bravery.' — Aristotle (*Cat.* 1a11-15)
- (P) Paronymy: a is paronymous iff: (i) a is ϕ -ish; (ii) is called ϕ -ish because there exists something b which is ϕ , such that a is called ϕ -ish 'from' a 's relation to b (presumably, that is, to b insofar as b is ϕ)
 - First thought: these distinctions are not co-ordinate
 - Second thought: that first thought obtains because (S) and (H) are metaphysical relations, whereas (P) is a linguistic relation.

Moving Forward: Denomination

- Moreover, there are two ways in which a thing is predicated denominatively: first, from something external to it; as from place a person is said to be somewhere; from time, some-when; second, from something present in it; as white from whiteness. In truth, however, nothing is denominated from a relation as existing outside it, but only as inhering in it. For example: a man is not denominated father except from the fatherhood which is in him. Therefore, the relations by which God is referred to creatures cannot possibly be realities outside Him. Having proved that these relations have no real existence in God, and yet are predicated of Him, it follows that they are attributed to Him solely in accordance with our manner of understanding, from the fact that other things are referred to Him. For in understanding one thing to be referred to another, our intellect simultaneously grasps the relation of the latter to it, although sometimes that thing is not really related.
- *Duplex est modus quo aliquid denominative praedicatur. Denominatur enim aliquid ab eo quod extra ipsum est, sicut a loco dicitur aliquis esse alicubi, et a tempore aliquando: aliquid vero denominatur ab eo quod inest, sicut ab albedine albus. A relatione vero non invenitur aliquid denominari quasi exterius existente, sed inhaerente: non enim denominatur aliquis pater nisi a paternitate quae ei inest. Non igitur potest esse quod relationes quibus Deus ad creaturas refertur, sint res aliquae extra ipsum. Cum igitur ostensum sit quod non sint in ipso realiter, et tamen dicuntur de eo, relinquitur quod et attribuantur solum secundum intelligentiae modum, ex eo quod alia referuntur ad ipsum. Intellectus enim noster, intelligendo aliquid referri ad alterum, cointelligit relationem illius ad ipsum: quamvis secundum rem quandoque non referatur. — Aquinas (SCG ii 3-4)*

Not *really* related?

- Internal and External Relations
 - x and y are internally related in respect of ϕ *iff* (i) x and y are related by ϕ (whether symmetrically or non-symmetrically); and (ii) the bearing of ϕ between x and y is necessitated by the intrinsic properties of x and y.
 - So, e.g., *being the same shape as*, *being con-specific with*, *being taller than*
 - x and y are externally related in respect of ϕ *iff* (i) x and y are related by ϕ (whether symmetrically or non-symmetrically); and (ii) the bearing of ϕ between x and y is not necessitated by the intrinsic properties of x and y.
 - So, e.g., *being three meters from*, *being loved by the same boy as*, and (more controversially) *being a sibling of*

Extrinsic Denomination

- x is ϕ according to a *purely* extrinsic denomination *iff* (i) x is called ϕ ; (ii) x 's being called ϕ is grounded in an external relation
 - So, e.g. *being a colleague, being seen by, being thought by S as being ϕ , being regarded as being married*
- x is ϕ according to a *grounded* extrinsic denomination *iff* (i) x is called ϕ ; (ii) x 's being called ϕ is grounded in an internal relation
 - So, e.g., *being veridically regarded as being the same height as, being seen to be the same colour, and, yes, being veridically thought to share a common nature with*

One Hypothesis

- According to Suárez, the formal unity between any two con-specific individuals is a *grounded* extrinsic denomination.
- It is an extrinsic denomination because it obtains not intrinsically, but rather only because and in so far as it is ascribed by a discerning mind.
- It is none the less grounded, because it is justly based upon on objectively given similarity of formal unities.

One Crucial Text

- And it follows from these considerations, first, that although some individuals may be, *a parte rei*, formally one apart from the thinking of the mind, nevertheless several individuals which are said to be of the same nature are not one thing with the true unity which is in the things, but only either by way of being grounded or through the intellect. . . It follows, secondly, that it is one thing to speak of formal unity and another thing to speak of the community of this unity, for unity is in things, as has been insisted; community, however, properly and strictly is not in things, for no unity which exists in things is common, as we have shown, but there is in singular things a certain similarity in their formal unities in which their community is grounded, which community the intellect is able attribute to such a nature, as conceived by it, which similarity is not properly unity, since it does not represent the undividedness of the entities on which it is based but only their congruence or their relation or their co-existence with one another (*DM VI 1.12*)
- *Atque ex his sequitur primo, quamvis unumquodque individuum a parte rei sit formaliter unum absque mentis cogitatione, tamen plura individua, quae dicuntur esse eiusdem naturae, non esse unum quid vera unitate quae sit in rebus, sed solum vel fundamentaliter, vel per intellectum. . . Secundo sequitur, aliud esse loqui de unitate formali, aliud de communitate eiusdem unitatis; nam unitas est in rebus, ut declaratum est; communitas autem proprie et in rigore non est in rebus quia nulla unitas quae in re existit communis est, ut ostendimus; sed est in rebus singularibus quaedam similitudo in suis unitatibus formalibus, in qua fundatur communitas quam intellectus attribuere potest tali naturae ut a se conceptae, quae similitudo non est proprie unitas, quia non dicit indivisionem entitatum in quibus fundatur, sed solum convenientiam, seu relationem, aut coexistentiam utriusque.*

One Inescapable Result

- The formal unity obtaining between genuinely similar things, however grounded in similarity, *would not be there anyway*—without, that is, having been conceived and ascribed by an attending mind.
- So, Suárez is a nominalist.