

Michael Renemann: Reply to Lukáš Novák's article – *Studia Neoaristotelica* 9 (2012) / 2, p. 202 sq.

I thank Lukáš Novák for his review of a crucial aspect of my book *Gedanken als Wirkursachen*, and I thank the editors of *Studia Neoaristotelica* for the invitation to reply to Novák's paper. Since a paper of mine on how Suárez's position concerning the possibles relates to the traditional positions (including Scotus) will soon be published in the Brill Companion to Francisco Suárez (edited by Victor Salas and Robert Fastiggi), I would rather confine myself to some short remarks on two claims which I deem central to Novák's paper:

Scotus says that in the second instant God "produces the stone in the intelligible being *and conceives the stone*". The *production* and *intellection* falls clearly into one and the same instant of nature, viz. the second. (Novák, section VI, p. 190)

The intramental "conceptual content" is not something *third* "in between" the act and its extramental object, it is not any "ersatz-object" within the mind, but it is *the very extramental thing itself*. (Novák, section IX, p. 197)

I agree with Novák on the first claim, but I disagree on the second claim. I agree that God, for Scotus, conceives (*intelligit*) the stone in the second instance of nature. At this point, though, the stone does not yet exist in reality (in *esse simpliciter*), but only has intelligible being. This kind of being is Scotus's way to explain why creation is rational (in the sense that God knows beforehand what he will create) – against the explanation of Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Gent who hold that God knows the creatures just by seeing in his own essence ways in which this essence could be imitated. Consequently, for Scotus, God is "sapiens perfectissime in primo instanti (i.e. when he conceives his own essence *sub ratione mere absoluta*), sed non 'sapiens omnino' in primo instanti sine secundo" (Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* I, d. 35, q. un., n. 43; ed. Vat VI, 263). Suárez will later say that God, for Scotus, has two separate "knowledges" (*duplex scientia*), insofar as he knows himself and the things separately (cf. Francisco Suárez, *De divina substantia* III, c. 2, n. 16; Vivès 1:200b). Suárez rejects this *duplex scientia*: "knowledges must not be unnecessarily multiplied (not even according to reason), but here, there is no necessity" (cf. Francisco Suárez, *De divina substantia* III, c. 2, n. 16; Vivès 1:200b).

So the stone in intelligible being is not directly included in God's essence, nor does it presuppose the existence of the real stone (the stone in *esse simpliciter*). Scotus even uses a statue of Caesar, which continues being a statue of Caesar even after Caesar has been annihilated, to explain why we need intelligible being: Caesar in intelligible being has always been and continues to be the reference point of the statue. From this, I conclude that for Scotus, the thing in intelligible being is located between God's intellection and the thing outside (the stone in *esse simpliciter*). This conclusion is not only easier to grasp than the identification (suggested by Novák) of intramental conceptual content and the very extramental thing itself (because "intramental" and "extramental" are normally considered as opposites). It also has the advantage of being in line with the interpretation of Scotus which the orthodox Scotists Mastri and Belluto present.

In our context, it is interesting to see that Suárez does consider the thing outside to be the direct object of the intellection (cf. Francisco Suárez, *DM* II, s. 1: n. 1). But the framework in which Suárez manages this is different from Scotus's. First and foremost, he drops the idea that God has to know *beforehand* what he will create. This idea is a driving force behind any traditional treatment of the possibles, including Scotus's.