

Smiglecius on *entia rationis*¹

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This paper deals with the discussion of impossible entities in the *Logica* written by the Polish Jesuit Martinus Smiglecius (1564-1618). Two preliminary sections give some information on Smiglecius' life and works, and on the general structure of his *Logica*. A third section offers some historical background on the logical *status* of impossible entities, and their inclusion in the class of *entia rationis*. The fourth and main section presents Smiglecius' ideas on this topic in some detail.

1. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF MARTINUS SMIGLECIUS

Born in Lvov (Leopolis) probably in 1564, Smiglecius was the most important Polish philosopher working between the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century. He began his studies in his native town, but soon the prominent Polish humanist and politician Jan Zamojski took him under his wing, paying for Smiglecius' education first at the Jesuit school of Pultusk, and later in Rome, where Smiglecius entered the Jesuit order (1581). It was probably on that occasion that he assumed the name (taken from the town of Smigle, where his family originated from) by which he was to be known: earlier he used the name of Lwowczyk, or Leopoltanus (from his native town). Smiglecius studied in Rome until 1586, then he went back to Poland, where he took his master's degree in philosophy at the recently established Academy of Vilnius.²

¹ I do not read Polish, and, since much of the existing secondary literature on Smiglecius is in Polish, this paper could not have been written without the kind help of Aleksandra Kralkowska, Librarian of the Polish Academy in Rome, and of Ewa Joanna Kaczynska. I am also indebted to Cesare Cozzo, who - with his abitudinal kindness and insight - has provided me with many useful comments on the first draft of this paper, and to Felicity Lutz for the revision of the English text.

² The college of Vilnius became a university academy between 1578 and 1579; cf. K. Drzymala, "Marcin Smiglecki TJ (1563-1618)", in *Studia Historyczne XXI*, 1978, pp. 25-43, p. 29.

In Vilnius Smiglecius also became a doctor of theology (1594), and taught both philosophy (for 4 years) and theology (for 10 years). Smiglecius was also actively involved in the administrative and institutional life of the Academy, as well as in the cultural and educational policies of the Jesuit order: he was among the members of the commission which had to refer on the project of the *Ratio Studiorum* sent from Rome. For Smiglecius, this was also a period of active participation in religious controversies, and his fame as a polemicist spread when, in 1594, he had a two-day public disputation with Jan Licyniusz, a supporter of Arianism. At the end of the disputation, Licyniusz gave in, declaring himself unable to resist the arguments of his opponent: as a result, twelve of the town's most influential noblemen abjured Arianism. In subsequent years Smiglecius was increasingly involved in an exchange of polemical writings with Arians, Socinians, Lutherans and Calvinists on subjects such as the divinity of Christ and the duties and powers of the priests.

The Jesuit order profitted from Smiglecius' organizational and polemical abilities, sending him where the need was felt to raise the level of studies and to re-organize colleges: thus, Smiglecius spent the last two decades of his life working in the colleges of Pultusk, Poznan, Kraków and Kalisz. He died in Kalisz on July 28, 1618. His tomb was in the town's monastic church, and in 1650, during restoration work on the church, his ashes were placed in a separate urn, with the whole alphabet written on it as a symbol of his wisdom.³

³ The above-summarized information on Smiglecius' life is mainly drawn from the following sources: L. Moreri, *Le grand dictionnaire historique*, 18th edition, t. 8, Amsterdam, 1740, pp. 306-307; Augustin and Alois de Backer, *Bibliothèque des écrivains de la Compagnie de Jésus*, ser. VI, Liège 1861, pp. 342-345, integrations in *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, nouvelle édition par C. Sommervogel, p. I t. VII, Bruxelles-Paris 1896, coll. 1320-1327; K. Drzymala, *Marcin Smiglecki...* cit.; I. Damska, "Kilka uwag o Marcinie Smigleckim i jego *Logice*", in *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Nauki Polskiej*, seria E vol. V (1973), pp. 3-27; W. Voisé, "The Career of a Polish neo-Aristotelian: Smiglecius", in *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences XXIX* (1979), pp. 23-27.

Twenty-three works attributed to Smiglecius are listed in Sommervogel's edition of the *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*.⁴ A shorter list is given in the bibliography at the end of the recent critical edition of the *Commentaria in Organum Aristotelis*, a formerly unpublished logical compendium written by a Vilnius student, Stanislaus Bedensky, under Smiglecius' supervision.⁵ Smiglecius' major works are: the *De fenore et contractu redimibili, censibus, communi quaestu, conductionibus, locationibus et monopolio brevis doctrina*, first published in Polish (Vilnae 1596), and of great interest for the history of economic and social ideas in Poland,⁶ which had more than ten editions, the last three of which were printed in Vilnius in the 1750s (1752, 1753 and 1758); the *Nodus Gordius sive de Vocatione Ministrorum disputatio*, Cracoviae 1609, which had editions in Germany (Ingolstadii 1613 and Coloniae 1622) and which gave rise to heated polemics between Smiglecius and Protestant authors (among those who were involved in the debate, writing refutations or discussions of Smiglecius' work, were Johannes Volkel, Valentin Smalcus, Andreas Reuchlin, Jacobus Zaborowski, Johannes Bissendorf); the *Nova monstra novi Arianismi*, Nissae 1612, which was the object of a long polemic between Smiglecius and Valentin Smalcus; and finally the *Logica*, published in Ingolstadt in 1618 (the *epistula dedicatoria* is dated 1616), which had three English editions: Oxoniae 1634, 1638 and 1658.⁷

2. SMIGLECIUS' LOGICA

⁴ *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* cit., coll. 1320-1327.

⁵ Martinus Smiglecius, *Commentaria in Organum Aristotelis*, ed. by Ludwik Nowak, *Textus et studia historiam philosophiae ac theologiae in Polonia excultae spectantia*, vol. XXII fasc. 1-2, Warszawa 1987, pp. 253-257.

⁶ Cf. K. Drzymala, "Traktat Marcina Smigleckiego *O Lichwie Y O Wyderkach, Czynszach, Spólnych Zarobkach, Najmach, Arendach Y Samokupstwie, Krótka Nauka*", in *Studia i Materiały* 1972, pp. 143-172.

⁷ The 1634 edition is given as printed in Kraków in W. Risse, *Bibliographia logica*, Hildesheim 1965, p. 131. I could not find a copy of this edition, but all the other references I found give it as published in Oxford.

The *Logica* is a collection of eighteen disputations, subdivided into 185 questions. The first edition of the text having been published in Ingolstadt in 1618 (the year of Smiglecius' death), this book seems to be the very last published by the author during his lifetime. This is interesting, since the study of logic still used to be chronologically the first in the university *curriculum* of the time, and the teaching of logic was usually one of the first steps in the university career of young professors. Smiglecius was no exception to this rule, since he taught logic at the very beginning of his career in Vilnius. We have what is probably a good testimony of his teaching at that time in the form of the afore-mentioned commentary to Aristotle's *Organon* written in 1586 by Stanislaus Bedensky "sub insigni doctrina, pietate et integritate, clarissimo viro Martino Smiglecio".⁸ It is interesting to compare this text with the later *Logica*. While one can safely assume that in writing the *Logica* Smiglecius used much of the material already present in his Vilnius teaching,⁹ the *Logica* does not appear to be a simple re-elaboration of this material. Thus - even if this can be explained by the need to follow Aristotle's (and Porphyrius') text more closely - hardly anything corresponding to the first two disputations of the *Logica* can be found in the *Commentaria*.

The *Logica* should therefore be regarded as a mature work, probably composed over a long period of time¹⁰ and resulting from the author's lasting interest in the subject he was dealing with. This impression is also confirmed by the complex history of its publication. The *Logica* (or at least the first part of it) was already completed in 1615,

⁸ Martinus Smiglecius, *Commentaria...* cit., p. 21.

⁹ Cf. I. Damska, *Kilka uwag...* cit., p. 4.

¹⁰ It may be interesting to observe that Smiglecius, as a prominent member of the Polish delegation to the Jesuit general congregation in 1608, asked how far the teaching of philosophy could deviate from Aquinas' views. The answer was given by Cardinal Aquaviva: one should not deviate from Aquinas' views when they are clearly expressed in Aquinas' own writings and are generally accepted by the subsequent commentators, but one is allowed to do so on the more dubious matters, where the opinions of the commentators are divided (cf. K. Drzymala, *Marcin Smiglecki* cit., p. 36). This question is not necessarily connected with Smiglecius' own philosophical activity, but if some connection exists, then it may well be with the preparatory work for the *Logica*.

and, as customary, Smiglecius sent it to Rome for approbation. But the opinion of the specially appointed censorship commission was not a positive one:

Legimus Logicam P. Martini Smigleccii: et censemus ut nunc est, non debere; quoniam continet opiniones non admodum receptas, vel etiam auditas in scholis; atque satis communiter auctores pro illis non citat.¹¹

The enclosed *censurae generales* to Smiglecius' book approved by the commission are the following:

1. Sequitur aliquas opiniones parum receptas in scholis nostris. 2. Non citat auctores pro dictis opinionibus; et cum aliquando citat auctores non notat eorum loca; et interdum etiam non satis fideliter eorum dicta refert. 3. Non videtur interdum ipse secum cohaerere, ut ex particularibus censuris patebit.¹²

One of the members of the commission, Johannes Lorinus, observed in a letter that the criticisms raised were so fundamental that it was almost impossible for Smiglecius to re-elaborate his work in such a way as to make it suitable for publication.¹³

Despite this, Smiglecius did not give in: we do not know how far he had to modify his book to meet the requests of the censorship committee,¹⁴ but in June 1616 he managed to obtain the *approbatio* of Stanislaus Gawronski, delegate of the Jesuit order for Poland. The book, however, was only published two years later - which may (or may not) indicate some further difficulties.

¹¹ Quoted in L. Nowak, "Logika Marcina Smigleckiego w opinii współczesnych i późniejszych", in *Ruch Filozoficzny* XXVI/3 (1968), pp. 219-222, p. 221. One of the four members of the commission did not agree with this opinion, and presented a separate report.

¹² Quoted *ivi*, p. 222. Apparently, the commission examined only the first part of Smiglecius' work, "usque ad praedicamentum relationis exclusive".

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ A detailed study of the *censurae particulares* would be of great interest in order to verify this; the relevant documents are preserved in the Roman Archives of the Jesuit order (vol. 654, *Censurae Librarum*, t. III, nn. 332 ff.).

After publication, the *Logica* became an influential logical textbook especially in England, where it had three editions between 1634 and 1658, and where a circle of 'Smigleciusians' was active during the second half of the century. Curious evidence of the book's fortune is the fact that Jonathan Swift had to answer also on Smiglecius' *Logica* during an (unsuccessful) examination in logic at Dublin university in 1685.¹⁵ According to Pierre Bayle - who devoted an article in his *Dictionnaire historique et critique* to Smiglecius¹⁶ - the pages of the *Logica*

omnia continere videntur, quae ad naturam operationum intellectus, ad vim ratiocinandi, ad fundamenta & principia veritatis pertinent; & si ea exceperis quae ipsi inhaerere necesse erat vel falsa vel abstrusiora ab ingenio Sectae quam sequebatur, certat in eo soliditas iudicii cum subtilitate atque perspicuitate.¹⁷

Let us now take a closer look to the structure of the work. The first disputation, and the one we shall focus on in the following sections, deals with *entia rationis*; Smiglecius' choice of opening the book with this topic is clearly connected with the idea that an extensive discussion of *entia rationis* is required in order to deal properly with the problem of the nature and the object of logic. Not surprisingly, the second disputation (*De logica in communi*) is devoted to this latter problem. The third disputation deals with the first operation of the intellect (the *simplex apprehensio*) and introduces disputations 4-11, discussing the traditional topics of *prepraedicamenta* and *praedicamenta*. Disputation 12, *De secunda operatione intellectus, seu de enunciatione*, opens the second part of the *Logica*, and embraces the whole theory of proposition,

¹⁵ Cf. W. Voisé, *The Career...* cit., p. 23; I. Dambaska, *Kilks uwag...* cit., p. 5. For further evidence of the English fortune of Smiglecius' *Logica*, which may have been among Locke's logical sources, cf. E.J. Ashworth, "'Do Words Signify Ideas or Things?' The Scholastic Sources of Locke's Theory of Language", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* XIX (1981) pp. 299-326 (reprinted in E.J. Ashworth, *Studies in Post-Medieval Semantics*, London 1985), p. 304.

¹⁶ Cf. P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, nouvelle édition, Paris 1820-1824 (anastatic reprint Genève 1969), t. XIII pp. 338-339.

¹⁷ P. Bayle, *Theses philosophicae*, in *Oeuvres diverses*, Den Haag 1731 (anastatic reprint Hildesheim 1968), v. 4 p. 133.

including the discussion on the meaning of terms. Disputation 13 can thus directly proceed to the third operation of the intellect (*De tertia operatione intellectus quae dicitur discursus*), and within it to syllogisms; this leaves the last five disputations free for such favourite post-medieval topics as the theory of demonstration (disputations 14-15), the theory of science (disputations 16-17) and the theory of definition (disputation 18).

There are considerable differences in the relative lengths of the various disputations, and an interesting feature of Smiglecius' work is the choice of the topics that he felt required a more extensive discussion. This is especially evident in the treatment of the category of relation (disputation 10), to which are devoted almost two hundred pages. One can compare this to the length of the disputations on the other categories: 63 pages are devoted to the category of substance (disputation 8), 53 to that of quantity (disputation 9), 44 to the joint treatment of quality and of the last six categories (disputation 11). This means that the space devoted to the category of relation is larger than that devoted to all the other categories put together.¹⁸

The first disputation, on *entia rationis*, is also one of the longest (95 pages); if one considers that the role of *entia rationis* is also discussed in the second disputation, and that the *relationes rationis* - usually included in the class of *entia rationis* - are discussed at length in the disputation on relations, it will be clear that the *entia rationis* are indeed among Smiglecius' main logical concerns.

Coming to the second part of the book, Disputation 12, devoted to the theory of proposition, deals in 96 pages and 14 questions with the *vox* (this is the only place in which Smiglecius discusses some elements of the traditional theory of terms), the difference between noun and verb, the nature of the proposition and the role of the copula, the theory of truth and the theory of opposition. No mention is made of the theory of supposition, with the exception of the general observation that the *voces* are

¹⁸ A similar, peculiar attention to the category of relation was already evident in the *Commentaria*: cf. Martinus Smiglecius, *Commentaria* cit., vol. I pp. 239-272.

signa suppositiva while the concepts are *signa manifestativa*.¹⁹ None of the questions within this disputation deals with such standard topics as the theory of modality and of modal propositions²⁰ (but one is devoted to propositions on future contingents). The attention paid to the theory of demonstration (165 pages) and to the theory of science (254 pages) is impressive, but not surprising in an early seventeenth-century author.²¹

3. ON WHAT THERE WAS NOT: IMPOSSIBLE ENTITIES AND *ENTIA RATIONIS*

The discussion on the ontological status of fictional and impossible entities and on the logical status of the terms used to refer to them is an old one.²² During the late-medieval and post-medieval period, this discussion largely focused - with different accents in different authors - on the following, often interrelated problems:

1) (mainly) semantical problems: a) what kind of *suppositio*, if any, can be attributed to terms 'referring' to fictional and impossible entities? This problem is linked to the discussion on the possibility of ampliating (*ampliatio*) the supposition beyond present, past, future and possible beings, so as also to include a fifth class: imaginable beings. Are impossible entities to be included in the class of imaginable beings?²³ b)

¹⁹ Martinus Smiglecius, *Logica*, Ingolstadii 1618, t. II pp. 4-5. On the difference between manifestive and suppositive signs - and in general on this section of Smiglecius' logic - cf. E.J. Ashworth, 'Do Words Signify... cit., particularly p. 323. The 1658 Oxford edition of the *Logica*, used by Ashworth, has a different pagination from the Ingolstadt edition.

²⁰ Once again, this also seems to be a feature of the *Commentaria*, where only a single page is devoted to modality: Martinus Smiglecius, *Commentaria...* cit., vol. 2 p. 69.

²¹ For a study on Smiglecius' theory of science cf. L. Nowak, "Marcina Smigleckiego teoria nauki", in *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* XIII (1977) pp. 109-143 and XIV (1978) pp. 49-88: Id., "Gnozeologiczne poglądy Marcina Smigleckiego", in W. Voisé and Z. Skubala-Tokarskiej, *Z historii polskiej logiki*, Wrocław 1981, pp. 113-172.

²² Cf. S. Ebbesen, "The Chimera's Diary", in S. Knuutila and J. Hintikka (ed.), *The Logic of Being*, Dordrecht 1986, pp. 115-143.

²³ The simple fact that the 'fifth' kind of ampliation (to imaginable entities) goes beyond the fourth (to possible entities) does not necessarily imply that it should include all kinds of impossible entities: one can well conceive the 'possibility' in the fourth kind of ampliation as weaker than logical possibility (for instance, as some kind of physical possibility), so that the imaginable can be identified with the logically possible. On the *ampliatio* to imaginable entities cf. E.J. Ashworth, "Chimeras and Imaginary objects: a Study in the Post-Medieval Theory of Signification", in *Vivarium* XV (1977), pp. 57-79, reprinted in Ead., *Studies...* cit.; J. Biard, "La

How do such terms signify? How do they acquire meaning? What kind of meaning do they acquire? Are they capable of definition? The common idea was that such terms, although lacking any denotation, are indeed meaningful - which differentiates a term like *chimera* from a non-significative term like *blytiris*. Ockham and Buridan's suggestion is that they possess only a nominal, and not a real definition. However, the kind of meaning that can be attributed to them is a debated question. Do they signify all and only the component parts of their nominal definition? Or do they rather signify all entities - which would make any two terms 'referring' to impossible entities synonymous? c) What are the truth-conditions of propositions in which radically non-denoting terms²⁴ appear? Ockham and Buridan took a rather drastic position: all the affirmative propositions in which something is predicated of a radically non-denoting term are to be considered false, and all the negative propositions in which something is denied of a radically non-denoting term are to be considered true. In this way, the (identical) proposition *chimera est chimera* would be regarded as false, and the (contradictory) proposition *chimera non est chimera* would be regarded as true. This position, clearly inspired by the need for ontological rigour, was quite popular among late medieval logicians, but seems to lose support later: Suárez, for instance, is much more liberal towards chimeras, allowing them not only to be themselves (*chimera est chimera* is considered true), but also to be imaginary animals, similar to one another and dissimilar from goat-stags, and even susceptible to such complex predications as

signification d'objets imaginaires dans quelques textes anglais du XIVe siècle (Guillaume Heytesbury, Henry Hopton)", in P. O. Lewry (ed.), *The Rise of British Logic. Acts of the Sixth European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics*, pp. 265-283; H. Hugonnard-Roche, "Analyse sémantique et analyse 'secundum imaginationem' dans la physique parisienne au XIV siècle", in S. Caroti (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Natural Philosophy*, Firenze 1989, pp. 133-153. G. Roncaglia, "Utrum impossibile sit significabile: Buridano, Marsilio di Inghen e la chimera", in L. Bianchi (ed.), *Filosofia e teologia nel trecento. Studi in ricordo di Eugenio Randi*, Turnhout (forthcoming). For a general introduction to the theory of ampliation cf. A. Maierù, *Terminologia logica della tarda scolastica*, Roma 1972, pp. 139-193.

²⁴ As I have done elsewhere (cf. G. Roncaglia, *Utrum impossibile...* cit.), here I use the expression 'radically non-denoting term' to label those terms to which no reference can be given through any of the kinds of *ampliatio* accepted by the author(s) at issue.

privative modal predications (according to him *chimera potest esse cecam* is also true).²⁵ d) A further logical issue raised by the consideration of impossible entities is clearly that of the definition and nature of modal terms. Do we have different 'kinds' of impossible entities corresponding to different 'kinds' of impossibility (for example, to logical impossibility and to physical impossibility)? How do we discriminate between possible and impossible entities?

2) (mainly) ontological problems: a) What kind of existence, if any, should be recognized for logically and/or physically impossible entities? This problem was often addressed within the context of discussions on the *latitudo entis* (what kind of entities are to be accepted in our ontology? Is there some general sense of 'being' which is common to real beings and to such non-beings as privations, negations, fictitious and impossible entities?), usually through the consideration of 'diminutive', 'indirect' or 'improper' forms of being. Since these were often regarded as a product of our intellectual activities, epistemological considerations also played a relevant role here. b) Which entities are to be regarded as impossible? This question is clearly connected with the last of the above-mentioned (mainly) semantical problems; goat-stags and chimeras are often - but, as we shall see, not always - prominent members of the class of *impossibilia*. c) Are fictitious and impossible entities to be classified - and how - within the Aristotelian table of categories? This problem was usually addressed at the beginning or at the end of the discussion of the ten categories.

3) (mainly) epistemological problems: a) What are the (intellectual and non-intellectual) powers used in conceiving fictitious and impossible entities? And what are

²⁵ Cf. J.P. Doyle, "Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (1)", in *Vivarium* XXV (1987) pp. 47-75, p. 64, and Id., "Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (2)", in *Vivarium* XXVI (1988) pp. 51-72, pp. 51, 54-55. It may be interesting to add a remark to Doyle's considerations: in accepting privative modal predications about chimeras, Suárez seems to be more liberal than Aquinas: according to the latter, a chimera may be "non videns", but - it seems - not blind. "Non videns enim potest dici tam chimera quam lapis quam etiam homo. Sed in privatione est quaedam natura vel substantia determinata de qua dicitur privatio: non enim omne non videns potest dici caecum (...)": Thomas Aquinas, *In IV. Met.*, 3, 2; cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The Domain of Logic According to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, The Hague 1966, p. 76.

the intentional attitudes we can have towards them? (For instance: can we *know* something impossible? Can we *want* or *desire* something impossible?) b) What kind of science, if any, can legitimately deal with impossible entities? This problem was debated not only with reference to metaphysics but also with reference to logic, thus connecting epistemological and logical considerations: are impossible entities to be included within the scope of logical discourse?

The subdivision into (mainly) semantical, ontological and epistemological problems is of course a partially artificial one: it is not to be found - at least not in these terms - in medieval and post-medieval authors, and it may be difficult to apply in concrete situations, since the discussions of the above outlined topics are often strictly interrelated and interdependent. Nevertheless, it may help us to shape the general theoretical landscape of the problem, a major need while taking into account some portion of the vast amount of available and relevant texts, in most cases still to be studied.

From the point of view of the above proposed classification, Smiglecius' discussion on *entia rationis* is more directly connected with ontological and epistemological problems, even if it has the ultimate aim of providing the background needed in order to answer the question on the object of logic. This latter task provides a basis for the inclusion of a section devoted to *entia rationis* at the very beginning of a logical textbook; however, Smiglecius' discussion - as well as most of the post-medieval discussions on impossible entities within the 'chapter' devoted to *entia rationis* - does not directly deal with such problems as the ampliation to *imaginabilia*, the kind of supposition possessed by radically non-denoting terms, and the truth-conditions of propositions containing them. As a general observation, it may be noted that Smiglecius' discussion takes up many of the problems that were debated at his time with reference to *entia rationis* not only in the field of logic but also in that of metaphysics. In particular, Suárez' *Disputationes Metaphysicae* appear to be one of the most important

of Smiglecius' sources. On the contrary, it seems that the above-mentioned semantical and logical problems, still quite popular in the first half of the 16th century²⁶, lose some appeal for logicians of the subsequent century.²⁷

Why were impossible entities included in - or even identified with - the class of *entia rationis*? The story behind this is a complex, and still largely unexplored one. The main feature of *entia rationis*, and one on which there was general agreement among medieval and post-medieval authors, is that they only exist in our intellect (where an *esse obiectivum* is usually attributed to them). The fortune of *entia rationis* in late-medieval and post-medieval logic is largely due to the authority of Thomas Aquinas, and to his view of the object of logic. According to Aquinas, who elaborated his theory of *entia rationis* mainly on the basis of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and of Arabic sources, there are two fundamental kinds of being, *entia rationis* and *entia naturae*, and the logician only deals with the former: it is there that we must seek for the proper object of logic.²⁸ But what are the *entia rationis*? If we start with the above-mentioned distinction between *entia rationis* and *entia naturae*, the term *ens rationis* covers everything which is not an *ens naturae*. This is a broad meaning, and according to Aquinas it seems that it includes at least²⁹ the following:

- * negations (such as "non videns") and privations (such as "caecitas");
- * fictions, such as chimeras; dreams are also included in this class;

²⁶ Cf. E. J. Ashworth, *Chimeras...* cit.

²⁷ Note however that the *ampliatio* to *imaginabilia* remains a debated issue even later: an interesting discussion (and rejection) of it is to be found in Fonseca in 1564 (P. Fonseca, *Institutionum dialecticarum libri octo*, ed. by J. Ferreira Gomes, Coimbra 1964, v. II pp. 726-728), and near the end of the century it is still mentioned (and apparently accepted) by Suárez (F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 54, 2 n. 18).

²⁸ For some of the relevant passages and a discussion of this theory cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The Domain...* cit., pp. 49-71. On late-medieval and post-medieval theories of *entia rationis* cf. L. Hickman, *Modern Theories of Higher Level Predicates*, München 1980; J.P. Doyle, *Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth* cit.

²⁹ Here I will not discuss the problem whether universals such as 'humanity' - which, while positively and immediately based on reality, do not exist as such in reality - are also to be included in the class of the broadly considered *entia rationis*. Cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The Domain ...* cit., pp. 75-93.

- * 'logical' second intentions, such as contrariety, definition, predicate, proposition and syllogism;
- * relations of reason, which are not grounded on intrinsic properties of their fundamenta.

Aquinas, however, gives elsewhere a different subdivision of *entia rationis* into two subsets which seem to be considered mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive: negations and relations of reason.³⁰ In speaking of 'negations' Aquinas seems to mean here both negations and privations, while there are good grounds for including 'logical' intentions in the class of relations of reason.³¹ As we shall see, the inclusion of fictions in this classification remains a debated issue.

According to Aquinas, therefore, the term *ens rationis* may cover different kinds of 'unreal' being. But in various passages he identifies, among those possible meanings, the 'proper' one:

Ens autem rationis dicitur proprie de illis intentionibus quas ratio adinvenit in rebus consideratis; sicut intentio generis, speciei et similium, quae non inveniuntur in rerum natura, sed considerationem rationis consequuntur. Et huiusmodi, scilicet ens rationis, est proprie subiectum logice.³²

³⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate* 21, 1, c.

³¹ Cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The Domain...* cit., pp. 89-93.

³² Thomas Aquinas, in *IV Met.*, 4, 5; on this and on similar passages cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The Domain ...* cit., pp. 53, 90.

The examples given by Aquinas make it clear that here he has in mind those which have been labeled 'logical' intentions, even if it may be difficult to give a clear definition of them.³³

Most late-medieval and post-medieval logicians drew from this tradition the general idea that the class of *entia rationis* is subdivided into negations, privations and relations of reason, and that the most important relations of reason are those 'logical intentions' which part of the Thomistic school considered the formal object of logic. Given these assumptions, it should come as no surprise that both the discussion of *entia rationis* and that of the category of relation played a very important role for the logician: the peculiar attention devoted to them by Smiglecius is therefore fully understandable within this tradition.

The location of fictitious entities within this classification is not always clear, but those who emphasize the fact that entities like the chimera result from an impossible composition, and are therefore to be considered as logically impossible beings, tend to include them in the class of negations. This opinion sometimes coexists with the attribution of an autonomous role to fictions: thus, the *Complutenses* propose a division of *entia rationis* into the three groups of 1) fictions, made up by putting together impossible parts, and lacking any real foundation, 2) privations and negations, taken together as having *non ens* as their proximate foundation, and 3) relations of reason, which have as their foundation some positive being.³⁴ In discussing this opinion, however, they leave a possibility for the inclusion of fictions in the class of negations:

³³ Traditionally, 'logical' intentions were identified with those second intentions which, while existing only in the intellect, are well-founded through an indirect reference to reality. Cf. R.W. Schmidt, *The domain of logic...* cit., pp. 85-89; P. Doyle, *Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (I)* cit., p. 67. These criteria, however, may not suffice to precisely select exactly those intentions which we wish to include in the class of 'logical' intentions: for an influential criticism of the Thomistic approach on this point cf. P. Fonseca, *Commentariorum in Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritae libros tomi quatuor*, Coloniae 1615 (anastatic reprint Hildesheim 1964), t. 1 col. 491.

³⁴ Cf. *Collegii Complutensis (...) Disputationes in Aristotelis Dialecticam*, Ludguni 1668 (anastatic reprint Hildesheim 1977), p. 73.

according to the *Complutenses*, if we take the term 'negation' in its broadest sense "pro quocunque non esse", then "etiam fictiones, seu chimerae, quia a parte rei nullum habent fundamentum, solent in hoc sensu appellari negationes";³⁵ in a similar way, according to Suárez the division of beings of reason into relations of reason and negations may be considered adequate "comprendendo sub negatione entia ficta et impossibilia".³⁶ The *Conimbricenses* also give two possible answers to the problem of the location of fictitious and impossible entities within *entia rationis*: we can either think that, although properly being *entia rationis*, they were not included in the above-mentioned classification because they lack any foundation in reality, or - and this is considered the best answer - we can assume that they are to be included in the class of negations.³⁷

The idea that logical intentions are to be considered the most proper kind of *entia rationis* is often not shared in the post-medieval period. Being 'well-grounded' - even if only mediately - in reality, logical beings of reason came rather to be seen by some authors as a somehow 'improper' (although very important) subset of the class of *entia rationis*. From this point of view, beings of reason in the most proper sense are those which have no foundation at all in reality. And this is the place of impossible entities. The position of those authors - and Smiglecius, as we shall see, is among them - who strongly identify *entia rationis* and impossible entities, is to be seen as the ultimate result of this tendency. In identifying *entia rationis* and impossible entities, the problem remained of how to justify the traditional attribution of the label of *entia rationis* also to other kinds of unreal beings, and especially to logical intentions. The usual move was to stress that they are not to be considered beings of reason because of

³⁵ Cf. *Collegii Complutensis...* cit., p. 74

³⁶ F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 54, 4, n. 10. For a scheme of the resulting classification of beings of reason according to Suárez cf. J.P. Doyle, *Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (1)* cit., p. 57.

³⁷ Cf. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis e societate Iesu in universam dialecticam Aristotelis*, Coloniae 1607, anastatic reprint Hildesheim 1976, col. 157.

their purely conceptual nature, but rather because they are artificially thought of *sub modum entis*, attributing them a form of being which they cannot possibly possess.

4. ENTIA RATIONIS IN SMIGLECIUS' LOGICA

First of all, I wish to stress that here I do not deal with Smiglecius' opinion on whether *entia rationis* are to be considered or not the proper object of logic - a problem which is addressed in the second disputation of Smiglecius' *Logica* - but only with his discussion on what *entia rationis* are.³⁸ This discussion is the subject of the first disputation, that opens with the obviously fundamental question *quid sit ens rationis?*

The first answer given is the traditional one: beings of reason are those which are not (either actually or potentially) real beings, but only exist in the intellect.³⁹ They can be considered both with reference to their opposition to real beings and with reference to their proper mode of being in the intellect. In the first case, we can observe that the concept of *ens rationis* does not entail the negation of every feature of the *ens reale*, since the *ens rationis* is also a being, though 'in its own way'.⁴⁰ We are here at the very core of the first of our (mainly) ontological problems. The idea that there is a sense of 'being' which is common to real beings and to beings of reason (even when they are identified with impossible beings) is not new,⁴¹ and at the end of the 17th century was to lead another Eastern European Jesuit, Maximilian Wietrowski, to the quite explicit

³⁸ It may be appropriate, however, to recall here that according to Smiglecius the answer to the question "An ens rationis directivum operationum sit obiectum logicae" (disputation 2, question 3) is that "longe probabilius est ens rationis directivum non esse obiectum formale logicae, sed operationes ipsas ut dirigibiles": M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 135.

³⁹ "Hoc enim nomen entis rationis intelligimus, quod cum non sit ens reale, in solo intellectu existit. (...) Ad rationem igitur entis rationis requiritur, ut nullo modo sit reale, nec actu, nec potentia": *Ivi*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ "Est enim suo modo ens", *Ibid.*

⁴¹ For its presence in Suárez, cf. P. Doyle, *Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (1)* cit., p. 55 n. 51. In the medieval period, Aquinas' distinction between *ens rationis* and *ens naturae* was also used by some authors to deny any opposition between *ens rationis* and *ens reale*, insofar as both *ens rationis* and *ens naturae* were seen as the subdivisions of *ens reale*: cf. R. Lambertini, "Resurgant Entia Rationis. Matthaeus de Augubio on the Object of Logic", in *Cahiers de l'institut du Moyen-Age Grec et Latin* LIX, 1989, pp. 3-60, p. 19.

observation that "sicut datur conceptus quidditativus entis realis et entis impossibilis, ita etiam datur conceptus entis abstrahentis a possibili seu reali et impossibili, qui conceptus vocatur ens supertranscendentale".⁴² According to Smiglecius, the opposition between the *ens reale* and the *ens rationis* is therefore not grounded on the fact that the *ens rationis* is not a form of being, but rather on the fact that it is by definition a being which is not, and cannot possibly be, an *ens reale*. Therefore, a being of reason is, according to Smiglecius, only one whose essence implies the impossibility of its real existence ("quod habet talem essentiam, cui repugnet in re existere"⁴³). If we take the term 'impossible' to mean that which cannot have real existence, then the *entia rationis* are identified with impossible beings. The impossibility which is at issue here is therefore limited to external reality (beings of reason can have intellectual reality); nevertheless, it is a logical, rather than a physical, impossibility. Smiglecius is quite clear on this point:

Voco autem impossibile non id quod potentiae creatae est impossibile, sed quod universim omni potentiae tam creatae quam increatae est impossibile, seu quod per nullam omnino potentiam fieri potest, eo quod implicet contradictionem.⁴⁴

The examples given are interesting: the traditional golden mountain is not, according to Smiglecius, a being of reason, since, although being impossible *naturaliter*, it is possible through God's absolute power.⁴⁵ The goat-stag, however, is logically impossible, because it would imply the composition of the two essences of goat and stag in a single essence: but those essences, pertaining to two different species,

⁴² Maximilian Wietrowski, *Philosophia disputata*, Praegae 1697, p. 232, cit. in P. Doyle, *Suarez on Beings of Reason and Truth (1)* cit., p. 56.

⁴³ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 3.

⁴⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁵ The flying donkey should also be added to the golden mountain in the list of traditional fictitious entities which are classified by Smiglecius as possible through God's absolute power: cf. *Ivi*, p. 10.

entail contradictory differences, and are therefore incompatible.⁴⁶ Suárez drew a similar distinction between the possible golden mountain and the impossible chimera.⁴⁷ The idea that such *ficta* as goat-stags and chimeras are logically impossible because of their involving incompatible essences is not new - Buridan even used this feature to *define* the chimera as that animal which is "compositum ex impossibilibus componi ad invicem"⁴⁸ - and in adopting it Smiglecius shows his debt to the late-medieval logical discussion of impossible entities. This approach was not shared by some of Smiglecius' contemporaries: Bartholomaeus Keckermann, for instance, included both the *mons aureus* and the chimera in the class of *ficta possibilis*, labeling them as *bonae phantasiae*.⁴⁹

An interesting problem, given the observation that the modal term 'impossible' is used by Smiglecius with reference to real existence and not to conceptual existence, is whether there is something that is impossible in such a way that it cannot exist either in reality or in the intellect. The way in which Smiglecius distinguishes two possible meanings of the term 'impossible' seems to leave open the way to conceptual impossibilities:

Impossibile aliquid dicitur dupliciter: vel quod non possit in re existere, vel quod non possit in ratione existere.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ "Nam etsi tam Hircus quam Cervus sint secundum se Entia realia, tamen composito ex Hirco & Cervo in unam essentiam non est realis quin potius realiter impossibilis, eo quod contradictionem implicet, eandem rem esse Hircum & Cervum", *Ivi*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ Cf. F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 54, 2, n. 18.

⁴⁸ Johannes Buridanus, *In Metaphysicam Aristotelis Questiones*, Venetiis 1518, Unveränderten Nachdruck Frankfurt a.M. 1964, f.23vb; on Buridan's definition of the chimera cf. G. Roncaglia, *Utrum impossibile sit significabile* cit.

⁴⁹ Cf. G. Roncaglia, "Buone e cattive fantasie: la riflessione sugli enti inesistenti nella logica di Bartholomaeus Keckermann", in *Metaxù* n. 13, maggio 1992, pp. 80-104.

⁵⁰ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 5.

However, a few lines later it is made clear that this second class should be regarded as empty, or, at least, that the intellect (our intellect?) cannot conceive it except as empty:

Quod si dicas: etiam ratio iudicat impossibilia esse impossibilia, respondeo: iudicat esse impossibilia ad existendum in re, non autem ad existendum in intellectu; imo iudicat impossibilia omnia posse ab intellectu cognosci, quod est, posse existere in intellectu.⁵¹

This position may be difficult to reconcile with Aquinas' view according to which we can neither conceive nor imagine in any form those non-entities whose definitions entail the impossibility of being realized:

Aliquid dicitur non ens dupliciter, uno modo, quia non esse cadit in definitione eius, sicut caecitas dicitur non ens; et talis non entis non potest concipi aliqua forma neque in intellectu neque in imaginatione; et huiusmodi non ens est malum; alio modo, quia non invenitur in rerum natura, quamvis ipsa privatio entitatis non claudatur in eius definitione; et sic nihil prohibet imaginari non entia, et eorum formas concipere.⁵²

It should be observed, however, that in disputation 3, question 2 Smiglecius adopts a position closer to Aquinas' own, holding that "non ens secundum se a nullo intellectu, sive creato sive increato, apprehendi potest".⁵³ This seems to imply that impossible entities are not to be considered *non ens simpliciter*: a position which may agree with the afore-mentioned considerations on the fact that, according to Smiglecius, *entia rationis* are a kind of being.

It is also interesting to observe that Aquinas - who writes before Ockham and Buridan's sharp attack on the logical possibility of chimeras - seems to include both the golden mountain and the chimera in the latter class, conceiving them as logically

⁵¹ *Ivi*, p. 6.

⁵² Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate* 3, 4, ad 6.

⁵³ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 208.

possible.⁵⁴ The different position adopted by Smiglecius seems again to testify the influence of the late-medieval debate on impossible entities.

A last problem dealt with in this first question is whether the opposition between the *ens reale* and the *ens rationis* is such as to admit the possibility of a *medium*. Smiglecius takes into account as a possible candidate for such a role the *ens in voluntate*. The discussion on whether the will can have an *ens rationis* (or something similar to it) as its object is a traditional one.⁵⁵ The argument described by Smiglecius runs as follows: if we want something impossible, such as (for a man) to be an angel, then the object of our will is not real (since it is impossible), and it is *formaliter* in our will rather than in our intellect: therefore, it is neither an *ens reale* nor an *ens rationis*. The argument is however rejected: the impossible object of our will "*licet qua volitum respiciat voluntatem, tamen qua ens respicit intellectum*".⁵⁶ The same problem is dealt with more extensively in the sixth question, "*utrum solum ab intellectu an vero etiam ab aliis potentiis ens rationis fieri possit*", and Smiglecius' answer is again the traditional one: only the intellect is capable of producing *entia rationis*.⁵⁷

The second question is devoted to the problem "*an ens rationis consistat in coniunctione impossibili plurium rerum*", and offers a good example of the modal interest of Smiglecius' discussion of *entia rationis*. The debated issue is an intriguing one: are impossible beings (and therefore *entia rationis*) all obtained through composition, or are there also simple impossible beings? Smiglecius first gives arguments for the latter position: negations and relations of reasons are usually included in the class of *entia rationis*; however, both of them are simple, and do not require any

⁵⁴ Cf. G. Roncaglia, *Buone e cattive fantasie...* cit., pp. 90-91.

⁵⁵ Scotus' theory according to which the will may produce a *relatio rationis* (Iohannes Duns Scotus, *Lectura in librum primum Sententiarum*, dist. 45 q. unica) was often mentioned as the main authority for this idea; Cf. *Commentarii Collegii Conimbricensis* cit., col. 152; *Collegii Complutensis...* cit., pp. 69-70.

⁵⁶ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 8.

⁵⁷ *Ivi*, p. 51. For a somehow similar defence of the same position cf. F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 54, 2, 17-18.

composition. Furthermore, our *vis fingendi* is capable of producing simple impossible fictions, and this is done through the first operation of the intellect: if all impossible beings were to be regarded as composite, then all *entia rationis* would depend only upon the second operation of the intellect. The last consideration is that impossible beings can also result from an impossible division (*divisio impossibilis*), separating in the intellect something that cannot possibly be separated in reality, such as God's attributes.

According to Smiglecius, the main argument for the opposite position is that our intellect "*nihil posse apprehendere, nisi vel reale, vel similitudinem entis realis*". This implies that the first operation of the intellect cannot handle impossible beings: all the *entia rationis* should therefore be considered composite. The defenders of this view have a single answering strategy to the arguments given by the supporters of simple *impossibilia*: in all the proposed cases a hidden composition is involved. Privations and negations are *entia rationis* only insofar as they are considered *sub similitudine entis*, and it is this way of conceiving them which entails a form of impossibility. The impossibility is then the result of a composition of something which only pertains to real beings with something that is not a being at all. The same is true of the relations of reason, which are to be regarded as *entia rationis* insofar as our intellect conceives them "*per modo aliarum relationum realium*".

A further, strictly logical argument is given to support the composite nature of impossible beings: impossible is what implies a contradiction; but

implicatio contradictionis esse non potest, nisi ubi sunt plura impossibilia, ita ut ex uno sequatur rem esse, ex alio non posse. Verbi gratia, in hac propositione, Asinus est rationalis, implicatur contradictio, quia duo sunt impossibilia, asinus & rationale, & ex uno sequitur quod asinus sit rationalis, ex altero (quia asinus) quod non sit rationalis. Necessse igitur est, ens rationis constare ex

incompossibilibus; ac proinde non esse quid simplex sed compositum, cum res omnino simplex non possit implicare contradictionem.⁵⁸

Here the main point is the following: in order to have a contradiction we should have ultimate *fundamenta* for both sides of it. Those *fundamenta* should be different (otherwise they would be unable to ground a contradiction). Since every impossibility results from a contradiction, there can be impossibility only when there is some kind of composition.

In order not to deny that the first operation of the intellect can produce impossible entities, the supporters of the composite nature of *entia rationis* may distinguish between two kinds of composition: discursive composition on the one hand, and simple composition "ex parte obiecti, quae fit per apprehensionem (...) absque ulla affirmatione & negatione",⁵⁹ on the other. This second composition can also be present in the first operation of the intellect, and it suffices to ground an impossibility.

Concerning those *entia rationis* resulting from division rather than from composition, it is observed that here the impossibility results from re-attributing the products of the division to the original subject (in the given example, from re-attributing to God his attributes once they have been artificially separated). The impossibility, therefore, follows again from a form of composition.

This is the position of the supporters of the composite nature of every impossible being. Smiglecius, however, seems to be dissatisfied with it, since he goes on to adopt once more the opposite and *communis* opinion, marked in the margin as *sententia Auctoris*, and to give counter-arguments in favour of simple impossible beings. The main one is that any relation - including the relations of reason, which are *entia rationis* and which are impossible *in re* - "est quid simplex in sua essentia, quam accipit a fundamento & termino". Therefore, relations of reason constitute an example of simple impossible being. As to the 'logical' argument according to which anything

⁵⁸ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I pp. 11-12.

⁵⁹ *Ivi*, p. 13.

which implies a contradiction cannot be simple, since it should offer separate foundations for both sides of the contradiction, Smiglecius' answer is that

Nec vero necesse est ut id quod implicat contradictionem semper componatur ex duobus quae fundent partes contradictionis, sed sine compositione potest fundari contradictio. Nam si aliquam relationem poni a parte rei implicet contradictionem, ea contradictio potest fundari in suppositione extrinseca relationi. V.G. si supponatur relatio rationis existere realiter, sequitur eam & esse ens rationis ob suam essentiam, & non esse ens rationis ex suppositione, quia realiter ponitur existere. Adde posse aliquid concipi tanquam impossibile, etsi non concipiatur implicatio contradictionis, sed solum defectus aliquis essentialis, vel si concipiatur, concipietur tanquam quid consequens impossibilitatem absolutam.⁶⁰

Smiglecius' answer presupposes that the simple act of positing a merely intentional object of our reason (for instance, a relation of reason) as having not only intentional but also real being, does not imply a 'composition' between the form which is proper to the being of reason and the form of real being.

The third question deals with the problem of whether *entia rationis* are to be seen as concepts or as extrinsic denominations. Extrinsic denominations are those which are drawn not from a form inherent in the denominated object, but from a form inherent in something else - typically, in the knowing or perceiving subject. In this way, we say of something, e.g. a wall, that it is 'seen' or 'conceived'. Now, if the only kind of being attributed to the *entia rationis* is that of being conceived, it seems to follow that they should be considered extrinsic denominations (that is, as denominated only through our act of conceiving them). The opposite is true if a 'stronger' form of being is attributed to them - for instance some kind of *esse diminutum* or *esse fictum*, on the grounds of which they can also possess intrinsic forms. If this *esse fictum* is seen as a form of conceptual being, then the *entia rationis* should perhaps be regarded as concepts.

⁶⁰ *Ivi*, p. 16.

The discussion of this problem is quite common among post-medieval authors; Smiglecius' own solution is interesting as it shows how seriously he takes the implications of giving to the *entia rationis* an intentional being: in his opinion, *entia rationis* are neither extrinsic denominations nor concepts, but are rather the objects of denominations and concepts. It should be stressed that the problem at issue here is one of great relevance not only from the ontological and epistemological points of view, but also from the semantical one⁶¹. Smiglecius' theory, although not explicitly dealing with such (mainly) semantical problems as the kind of supposition to be attributed to radically non-denoting terms, has clear consequences as regards the referential import of these terms: not only do they have a meaning, but they also seem to have a denotation, albeit within a domain of intentional objects. According to Smiglecius, the *entia rationis* cannot be concepts, because concepts *qua* concepts should have an adequate object of which they are *similitudines*:

Respondeo, obiectum neque ut res neque ut obiectum esse idem cum conceptu, quia conceptus est similitudo obiecti. Obiectum vero est res ipsa & essentia, cuius similitudo est conceptus: numquam autem res est idem quod sua similitudo.⁶²

The fact that *entia rationis* only exist when they are thought of, does not imply that they are simple concepts, but rather that they only have objective being in the intellect:

Ens rationis non est conceptus formatus ab intellectu, sed id de quo conceptus formatur, quod quia non existit, nisi quando de eo formatur conceptus, idcirco dicitur habere obiectivum tantum esse in intellectu.⁶³

⁶¹ On the interrelations between ontological, epistemological and semantical levels in the post-medieval discussion of *entia rationis* cf. L. Hickman, *Modern Theories...* cit.

⁶² M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 21.

⁶³ *Ivi*, p. 22.

A *fortiori* beings of reason cannot be purely extrinsic denominations: the essence of an *ens rationis* like the goat-stag is not given by its being conceived, but by its being a (fictitious) entity obtained through the (impossible) conjunction of the essences of goat and stag. The extrinsic denomination 'conceived' finds in the goat-stag its object, and cannot be identified with it.

The fourth question further investigates the way in which *entia rationis* can be considered a product of the intellect.⁶⁴ Again, the nature of intentional object attributed to them by Smiglecius is quite clear from his description of this 'production':

Modus igitur quo fit ens rationis ab intellectu est iste. Intellectus per actionem realem intelligendi producit in se cognitionem obiecti, quae cognitio est expressa quaedam similitudo obiecti, estque qualitas quaedam in intellectu producta; haec porro qualitas, cum sit repraesentativa obiecti, facit obiectum esse praesens intellectui: ex illa enim repraesentatione oritur praesentia obiecti in intellectu. (...) Haec actio productiva entis rationis dicitur a quibusdam actio intentionalis, quia per eam tendit intellectus in obiectum cognitum.⁶⁵

What differentiates the objective being proper to a being of reason from that proper to a real being *qua* known, is that the former is *obiective tantum*, and only exists when the intellect conceives it. However, as already stressed, the *ens rationis* exists as the object of the act of conceiving: it is 'produced' by this act, but it cannot be identified with it. Smiglecius rejects the idea that the act of conceiving should presuppose the conceived object: in the case of *entia rationis*, "non repugnat obiectum cognoscendo fieri".⁶⁶ The two moments of the production and of the knowledge of the object - although being *in re* the same - can however be distinguished by reason.⁶⁷ The same problem is further elaborated in the fifth question - "Utrum ens rationis tunc fiat quando cognoscitur" - whose main conclusion is that "non prius fieri ens rationis quam

⁶⁴ On Smiglecius' positions on this topic cf. L. Nowak, *Gnozeologiczne...* cit., pp. 135-141.

⁶⁵ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 26.

⁶⁶ *Ivi*, p. 31.

⁶⁷ *Ivi*, p. 33.

cognoscatur, nec prius cognosci quam fiat, sed cognoscendo produci, & producendo cognosci".⁶⁸

Of the remaining questions, special mention must be made of question 8, which displays some theological implications of the discussion of *entia rationis*, and question 10, which is devoted to their classification. The former deals with the problem "Utrum divinus intellectus cognoscat & faciat Ens rationis". In addressing it, Smiglecius deals with a theological problem which seems to have been the subject of much debate in the post-medieval period:⁶⁹ is it possible to attribute to God a direct knowledge of such an 'imperfect' form of being as that proper to *entia rationis*, without endangering his perfection? In order to understand the importance of this problem, one should not only take into account that such *entia rationis* as negations, privations and *impossibilia* are affected by the ontological imperfection connected with their lack of being, but that the very concept of *malum* was traditionally considered a kind of privation. It is on these grounds, for instance, that relevant considerations on the ontological status of non-existent entities are included in Aquinas' *De veritate* within the question "Utrum malum habeat ideam in Deo".⁷⁰ After a long discussion of the problem, Smiglecius concludes that God's knowledge of *entia rationis* is only mediate, "in ordine ad intellectum nostrum".⁷¹ This means that God does not directly know (and therefore does not directly produce) *entia rationis*, but rather conceives them as being produced by the human intellect.

As already mentioned, question 10 deals with the subdivision of the class of *entia rationis* ("Quot sint genera entium rationis"), and is therefore of special interest.

⁶⁸ *Ivi*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ An influential discussion is in F. Suárez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae* 54, 2, 19-24; the position adopted by Smiglecius is not the one defended by Suárez, but one which Suárez mentions and judges 'non improbabilis', apparently considering it as a variant of his own: cf. *Ivi*, 54, 2, 24.

⁷⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, 3. 4.

⁷¹ M. Smiglecius, *Logica cit.*, t. I p. 63.

According to Smiglecius, the first and more general subdivision is between those *entia rationis* which lack and those which have a foundation *in re*. The first group is that of mere fictions, while the second one is characterized by having "fundamentum aliquod in re, quod quasi exigat illam fictionem".⁷² The latter is the case of the 'logical' beings of reason, and it is interesting to observe that Smiglecius includes in this class not only, as was usually done, the logically relevant relations of reason, but also negations and privations. To understand the meaning of this move it may be useful to consider the examples given in question 11 ("An denominationes logicae sint vere entia rationis"), the very last of this first disputation.⁷³ Here Smiglecius informs us that while *esse praedicatum* is an example of a relative being of reason, *esse abstractum* is an example - or rather *the* example - of a negative one.

Since - as we have seen - according to Smiglecius only logically impossible beings can be considered *entia rationis*, in order to include in this class the 'logical' being of reason he is drawn to add a condition:

tam relationem quam negationem & privationem tunc solum esse entia rationis, cum coniunguntur aliquo modo impossibili, vel in seipsis cum concipiuntur per modum entium cum non sint entia, vel respectu subiecti, cum ei tribuuntur, cui non conveniunt nec convenire possunt, quare si modus impossibilis desit, tam negatio quam relatio erit suo modo realis.⁷⁴

The strategy adopted here is the one we have already mentioned in the third section of this paper: as a consequence of the growing emphasis on the impossibility attributed to a being of reason, the need was felt to characterize as *impossibilia* also

⁷² *Ivi*, p. 75.

⁷³ The disputation closes with a concluding "Explicatio aliquot difficultatum de entibus rationis" (pp. 86-95), which takes up again some of the issues debated in the preceding questions. Although this section does not seem to add anything really new, the cautious way in which Smiglecius often expresses himself here (for example on the problem of the possibility of God's directly conceiving the *entia rationis*) may suggest a link between these pages and the *censurae* addressed to the first redaction of the *Logica*: an hypothesis, however, that would require a detailed study of the *censurae particulares* to be confirmed.

⁷⁴ M. Smiglecius, *Logica* cit., t. I p. 78.

'logical' beings of reason - and this was done through reference to the fact that they are conceived *sub modum entis*. It seems that, in order to have at hand his own object of study - and even to conceive it - the logician should necessarily make an 'ontological mistake', by taking it as if it were a real being. Only in this way do 'logical' intentions come to be constituted as *entia rationis*, and can Aquinas' claim that *entia rationis* are the proper object of logic be reaffirmed.