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Suarez and the Infinity of God

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SUAREZ AND THE INFINITY OF GOD

by

FRANK J. WIEMAN, S.J.

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER
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VITA

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INTRODUCTION

No Catholic philosopher, in as much as he is a Catholic, can deny that God is infinite or that this infinity may be proven from reason. As a philosopher, however, he may or may not construe a proof which will with certitude prove the infinity of God. He may, moreover, fail to see precisely what is the nature of this infinity. The purpose of this paper is to consider the philosophical treatment of infinity as presented by Francis Suarez, S.J. The paper will present the concept of infinity as understood by Suarez and his proofs for the actual infinity of God, and will endeavor to give a criticism of the position of Suarez.

Owing to the difference between the philosophy of St. Thomas and that of Suarez it is sometimes questioned whether or not Suarez can prove that God is infinite. The points which give rise to this question are the different concepts of being, of act and potency, and the different principles which follow on these concepts. The chief proof which Thomists employ for the infinity of God is based on a principle of act and potency, namely that an act which is not received into a potency is without limit, infinite. Since Suarez
does not hold that an act can be limited only by potency, it is doubted whether he can prove infinity. Even Thomists, however, use other arguments to demonstrate that God is infinite, especially the argument from creation. But here again, since the fact of creation and the consequent reasoning to infinity cannot be demonstrated without making use of the concepts of act and potency and of being itself, Thomists question the validity of the Suarezian approach.

Before actually getting into the matter it seems well to recall what infinity means. Infinite means not finite, not limited. The notion is first had from an analogy with quantity, which we know from experience as having actual limitation. A stick which is three feet long has a certain positive extension. When compared with a stick six feet in length it is seen to lack something, to be limited. To this concept of limitation the intellect can prefix a negative and arrive at the concept of non-limitation.

This concept of non-limitation, however, is not restricted to the genus of quantity, but may be applied to other perfections and even to being itself. One white object compared with a brighter object may be said to lack a certain whiteness. From this notion of limited whiteness the mind can rise to the concept of unlimited, or infinite, whiteness.
A stone when compared with a man is certainly seen to lack something of being that the man has, to be limited. From this the mind can rise to the concept of infinite being.

These few examples, however, are not enough to give an understanding of infinity. There are various interpretations which ought to be taken into consideration. A certain being may be infinite, that is, lack all terms or limits, and yet be naturally destined to have limits. Such, for example, is prime matter, which is said to be infinite privative, that is, in virtue of the privation of the limits which it is ordained to have. In opposition to this infinity is infinity negative sumpta, the infinity of a being which is in no way destined to have limits.

There is categorematic and syncategorematic infinity. That being is syncategorematically infinite which is limited with respect to the act which it has now, but which can have this act increased ad infinitum. A six inch line, for example, has a definite, limited extension, but its extension can be added to without limit. A being is categorematically infinite if the act which it has here and now is absolutely without limit.

Finally there is intensive and extensive infinity. Extensive infinity may be predicated of a passive, or an active
potency. Prime matter, for example, is extensively infinite because it is in potency to an infinite number of forms. The omnipotence of God is extensively infinite because it can produce an infinite number of effects. It must be noted, of course, that, since God is Pure Act, there is no such thing as His being in potency to these various effects. Finally the perfection of God is extensively infinite in so far as it embraces eminently all the possible perfections of creatures. Intensive infinity, on the other hand, is the infinity of an act, precisely in so far as it is an act.

The infinity which we predicate of God must be that of esse itself, not merely of quantity or some quality. It must be categorieatic. It must be infinity negative sumpta. And while God is extensively infinite, He must also be shown to be intensively infinite. Nor is this postulate a prejudicing of the question; as will be seen, Suarez himself demands that such be the infinity of God.
CHAPTER I

INFINITY IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

To examine the position of all the philosophers who preceded Suarez would hardly be in place in such a paper as this. It will be sufficient to present the notions of several men who may be considered as having special influence on the Scholastic Philosophy which Suarez professed.

The true concept of the nature of God and His infinity seems to be peculiar to Christians, that is, to Christian philosophers, who first perceived God to be subsistent being. Beginning with Plato we find that the pagans never arrived at the concept of a Being who could say of himself: "I am who am." If the question could be put to Plato, it seems certain that he would reply that there is one supreme being, but it is not at all certain that this supreme being would be, in his mind, the only divine being. In the Timaeus he tells us of a god who is the father and cause of the universe, who brought order into disorder. This in itself implies certain orderless matter which does not have its

1 Plato, Timaeus, Loeb Classical Library, Putnam's Sons, New York, 1929, 28 C.
existence from the supreme being. He goes on, moreover, to
tell us that there are other, sidereal gods which the first
god produced. Such a first cause as this, whatever Plato
may have thought about it, can hardly possess an infinity
of being. However, we are hardly justified in saying that
this deity is the god which Plato would have professed in
the final analysis, since the question as to just what Plato
wanted his god to be is hotly disputed even by eminent scholars.
But even though it is not certain what the god of Plato ac-
tually is, nor whether he ever actually affirmed or denied
infinity of the supreme being, it does seem certain that he
could never have rightly held a god who was truly infinite
in the realm of being, since "...for Plato, there is no sense
of the word being reserved exclusively for God." Since he
did not hold that all beings come from One Being alone, that
is, since he did not hold that creation was necessary, he
could not have held real infinity.

Having said what Plato could not have held it would be
well to endeavor to give what he did hold, but, owing to the
allegorical way of speaking that he used and to the variant

2 Ibid. 41 A-C.
3 E. Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, Scribner's
Sons, New York, 1936, 47-49.
4 Ibid. 48.
opinions that seem to run through his works, this is not easy. Perhaps, if we trust Aristotle to have understood his predecessor, we get a gleam of his thought by considering what Aristotle has to say about it. We are told in the Physics that Plato, along with the Pythagoreans, "regarded the unlimited, or undetermined, as existing in itself, and not as being a condition incident to something else, but having its own independent substantive existence." This would indicate that he was at least on the right track, but what Aristotle further tells us only brings us back to a confused notion. For he says that Plato found the unlimited both in sense objects and in the Ideas. Aristotle apparently thinks that Plato made no discrimination between the lack of determination in material objects, and infinity in spiritual beings. If this is true it would seem that he not only could not have proven an infinite god, but didn't even have the proper concept of infinity.

While Aristotle's language is clearer, and free from allegory, so that it is easier to determine what he meant to say, still he does not seem to have gone beyond Plato in conceiving the notion of God. He did come to the conclusion

5 Aristotle, Physics, Loeb Classical Library, Putnam's Sons, New York, 1929, III, iv, 203 A.
6 Ibid., 203 A.
that there had to be some immutable substance, some unmoved mover. This substance had to be infinite because "it causes motion for an infinite time, and nothing finite has an infinite potentiality."  However, he went on to reason to the existence of at least fifty-five such substances, so that for no one of them could he rightly claim real infinity. In spite of the tremendous advances which he made over his predecessors he seems to have remained "profoundly impregnated with polytheism." This is certainly reason enough for saying that he could not prove an infinite god in the proper sense. In addition to this, however, he seems, like Plato, never to have had a correct concept of infinity. "The fact is," he says, "that the unlimited is really the exact opposite of its usual description; for it is not that beyond which there is nothing, but that of which there is always more beyond."

Plotinus, in the third century after Christ, expressly declared that the One was infinite, because the One not only could in no way be measured, but also was the source of inexhaustible and inconceivable energy. However, he too was

8 Ibid. 1074 A.
10 Aristotle, Physics, III, vi, 207 A.
inclined to speak in metaphors, and so we do not know just what he understood by infinity. His emanation of all things from the One, since it seem to be a necessary diffusion of the One, does not seem compatible with true infinity. Such an emanation, moreover, does not seem to leave creatures contingent, and without a contingent world it hardly seems possible to have a God who is perfectly and absolutely being.

Augustine, although he took much from the Platonists, went beyond them to arrive at the real understanding of infinity. Just how he would prove the infinity of God the author has not been able to discover, but his proper understanding of it seems evident. He says that we must not attribute any mode to God lest we seem to limit Him. However, we must not conceive Him as indetermined, since He is the cause of all determination in beings. This would seem equivalent to making Him unlimited, not merely in potency, but in act, and in the act of esse. Augustine goes on to say that we must not attribute any particular mode to God, for this might seem to say that He had received the perfection from without. But if we say that He is the absolute mode, sumnum modum, then Augustine agrees that we are getting

13 A. Pegis, St. Thomas and the Greeks, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1939, 81.
Finally in the thirteenth century came Thomas Aquinas who truly perceived the meaning of infinity, and who gave numerous proofs to demonstrate the infinity of God. The two most important proofs are those based on God's being *esse subsistens* and having the power of creation. God does not receive His being but simply has it from His Essence; He is *esse subsistens*. Since an act is limited only by potency, this pure act of being is unlimited, infinite. It is in no way a passive potency, and so is not syncategorematic infinity, nor infinity *privative sumpta*. It is not quantity or quality, but simply *esse*, containing all perfections eminently. God, moreover, created the world and all beings other than Himself. He produced them from no passive potency, but simply willed and they were. Before creation these beings were nothing, they were infinitely distant from their *esse*, "*infinita distans ab actu.*" To span such an infinite gap an infinite power is required. "*Oportet factoris virtutem esse infinitam.*" And since the power of God is one and the same as His essence, and His essence is one with His

16 T. Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Marietti, Taurini, 1894, Lib. 1, c.43.
existence, He is being without limit.

Last of all in our historical sketch we treat Duns Scotus, Doctor Subtilis, who certainly does not belie his name in his exposition of the infinity of God. His method of approach in proving the point is briefly presented by Gilson.

For Duns Scotus, in fact, it is altogether one and the same thing to prove the existence of God and to prove the existence of an infinite being... Duns Scotus starts, in fact, from the idea of being in order to prove that we must necessarily admit a first being; from the fact that it is first he deduces that it is uncausable; from the fact that it is uncausable he deduces that this first being exists necessarily. Passing on to the properties... he shows that it is efficient cause, endowed with intelligence and will, that its intelligence embraces the infinite, and that since this intelligence is identical with its essence, its essence also envelops the infinite.17

Though we grant to Scotus that there is a first, uncaused, necessary, intelligent being there still remains a question: how do we know that the Divine Intellect embraces the infinite? His answer is: "Intelligibilia sunt infinita in potentia respectu intellectus creati, satis patet; et in intellectu increato sunt simul omnia intellecta actu, quae

17 E. Gilson, op. cit. 56-7.
successive intelligibilia." But is it so evident that there are infinite possibles to be known? Scotus replies: "...quodlibet ponendum est possibile, cuius non appear impossibilitas..." and "infinitas non repugnat enti."

To criticize briefly: the argument seems to involve an illegitimate transit from the logical to the real.

Scotus gives another argument from the human will, but he himself strews videtur so freely through the proof that it seems not altogether convincing even to him.

Voluntas nostra omni finito aliquid majus potest appetere et amare..., et quod plus est, videtur inclinatio naturalis ad summe amandum bonum infinitum... Videtur..., si infinitum repugnaret bono, quod nullo modo voluntas quietatur in bono sub ratione infiniti, nec in illud facile tenderet."

This argument, too, as it appears, relies on the supposition of the existence of the infinite. It would be interesting to push the analysis of this supposition farther, but for the present we will relinquish it, to touch on it again in the body of the paper.

19 Duns Scotus, 478-9, also Marechal, 152.
20 Duns Scotus, 477, also Marechal, 150.
CHAPTER II
DEFINITION OF INFINITY ACCORDING TO SUAREZ

That being is omniperfect who possesses in an equal or higher manner the perfections of all other beings. If a being is omniperfect, it is also extensively infinite; but it is not necessarily intensively infinite. It is true that God who is omniperfect is also intensively infinite, but it is not true that the concept of omniperfection includes the note of intensive infinity.

Suarez, as we shall see, understood both omniperfection and intensive infinity; but at times he seems to confuse the two, to make them identical. Why did he do this? The answer will be more evident, when we have seen how he explained the two concepts and how one of his proofs for the infinity of God proceeds.

The infinity of God was for Suarez the intensive infinity we described in the Introduction. First of all it is taken from an analogy with quantity. "... ad modum corporum et per proportionem ad illa apprehendimus et explicamus reliqua omnia." We see bodies with definite extension and

weight. Some are smaller and lighter than others, and so we perceive them to be limited. This notion of more and less taken from quantity is applied to other perfections and even to being. "Simili ergo analogia utimur ad declarandam perfectionem entitativam et virtutem activarum rerum." ² One being has more perfections than another, or has the same specific perfection in a higher grade. "Apprehendimus enim in rebus quamdam veluti latitudinem perfectionis entis in quo sunt vari gradus..."³ And in this way we understand creatures to be limited. "Et unumquodque ens intelligimus esse finitum vel limitatum per quemdam proprium perfectionis gradum."⁴ From this concept of limitation we rise to the concept of an unlimited being. "Et hoc ens vocamus infinitum simpliciter, non in quantitate molis, sed in excellentia perfectionis."⁵ It is precisely in His esse that He is infinite. "Nos dicere possumus, nihil aliud esse Deo infinitum esse, quam esse ipsum ens."⁶

The infinity of God was for Suarez infinity negative sumpta, not had in virtue of a privation of a due perfection.⁷

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2 Ibid. n.18.
3 Ibid. n.18.
4 Ibid. n.18.
5 Ibid. n.18.
6 Ibid. n.18.
7 Ibid. n.19.
It was the infinity of act, not potency; categorematic, not syncategorematic. "Neque potest virtus illa esse infinita syncategorematicae, quia simul et actu habet existentem totam suam virtutem et perfectionem." This is confirmed all the more by his proofs, which we will consider later. He is definitely out to prove that God is a pure, unlimited act in the realm of being.

In other texts, however, he seems to confuse infinity with omniperfection. "Unde in ea etiam continetur illa infinitas quae intelligitur in continentia omnis perfectionis possibilis vel cogitabilis." If this were the only indication of his confusing the two notions, it might be easily explained away, by saying that he simply meant to identify omniperfection and extensive infinity. But this is not the case. In the first proof he gives for infinity it is clear that he is confusing intensive infinity with omniperfection.

The proof says in brief: God is infinite because His infinity is the same as His omniperfection.

Imo hinc fit etiam consequens ut omnes rationes quibus supra probavimus perfectionem primi entis, aequo probent infinitatem eius, quia et modus perfectionis

8 Ibid. D.XX, Sec. 2, n.4.
Before beginning this proof he states explicitly that he intends to prove infinity as he has previously explained it, and not merely under one aspect.

In the section immediately preceding the treatment of infinity he explains and proves God's omniperfection. God's perfection consists in this, that He lacks no perfection that is due to Him and that He has all perfection there is to be had. "Atque hoc modo illud ens dicitur perfectum cui omnis perfectio ita debita est, ac necessario inest, ut nulla ei omnino deesse possit, nec privative nec negative, et utroque sensu dicitur esse de essentia Dei, esse simpliciter perfectum" God can lack no due perfection, "quia sicut Deus ex se est, ita ex se habet totam perfectionem sibi debitam." He also has all possible perfections, "quia ostensum est nihil esse posse praeter ipsum, nisi ab ipso." And whatever has God as cause must in some way be in God, that is, virtually and eminently.

10 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XXX, Sec.2, n.21.
11 Ibid. D.XXX, Sec.1, n.1.
12 Ibid. n.2.
13 Ibid. n.4.
Later we will have more cause to investigate how Suarez proves that all beings other than God proceed from God as their cause, while God himself is, was, and always will be a necessary being. For the present we will take for granted that this is proven, and simply question the fact of God's being infinite as a consequence of being omniperfect. As far as the author can determine, Suarez argues not from the fact that God can lack no due perfection, but from the fact that He has all possible perfections.

Haec infinitas in nullo alio consistit, nisi in hoc quod perfectio primi entis, nec est ita praeçisa ac definita ad unum genus perfectionum, quae nos in creaturis distinguî videmus, ut illud solum includat, et non cetera omnia, eo eminentissimo modo qui ad summam perfectionem pertinere potest; neque etiam in singulis perfectionum generibus ita est limitata ad certum aliquum gradum definitum qui in participato ente intelligi possit, quin habeat perfectionem ilam nobiliori et excellentiori modo quam possit a creatura participari, etiam si magis et magis in infinitum participetur.  

This seems to me to say no more than that God has in an eminent manner every creature perfection. It says that He is not limited to any one genus of participated perfection, but this is not the same as saying that He is absolutely

14 Ibid. D.XXX, Sec. 2, n.21.
unlimited. He is referring to the perfections of those creatures which we know on this earth, and to the perfections of angels, provided there be such. The supposition is that these possible perfections are infinite. But how do we know that they are infinite? Certainly from experience we do not know this, since we know only finite perfections, and would seem to know only that the number and variety of possible beings is indefinite. The possibles nay well exceed the capacity of our intellects as to their extent, but this does not prove that they are infinite. I do not see how we can postulate that the possibles are infinite until we prove that their cause is infinite, but this is precisely what remains to be proved.

Had the argument been based on the fact that God can be without no perfection that is His due, there would still be a difficulty. For it would still be necessary to prove that God actually should be infinite, before concluding that He cannot lack infinity.

I think we can see now why Suarez seems to confuse the two notions. He would, I believe, see that the concept of omniperfection does not necessarily include the note of infinity. But, since he supposed the possibles to be infinite, he thought that a proof of omniperfection automatically gave
infinity, and so constantly identified the two when he treated them at the same time.

This one proof has been considered apart from the others first of all because it serves very well to bring out what Suarez understood by infinity. Secondly it seems to miss the point; to suppose what it was intended to prove; and so hardly deserves lengthy consideration.
CHAPTER III

INFINITY OF GOD PROVED FROM

THE NOTION OF ENS A SE

"Unde a priori ostenditur infinitas virtutis ex infinitate essentiae, et a posteriori, infinitas essentiae ex infinitate virtutis." Thus Suarez points out the twofold method of approach he will use. There is no vicious circle involved in the statement, as might appear at first glance. He means that from the nature, or the essence of God, to which he has reasoned in a previous disputation, he will show that God must be infinite, that is, that an ens a se must be absolutely unlimited. Secondly, from one of the effects of the Divine Power, namely creation, which he believes to have been proven, he will demonstrate that the cause must be infinite.

That the foundation for proving God's infinity is His aseity, His being esse subsistens, Suarez repeats again and again. "Dicere possumus nihil aliud esse Deo esse infinitum quam esse ipsum ens, seu esse per essentiam."2 "Hoc ipso quod est suum esse per essentiam...includit hanc perfectionem quae

1 Ibid. D.XXX, Sec.2, n.1.
2 Ibid. D.XXVII, Sec.1, n.18.
est esse simpliciter infinitum."^3 But why is an ens a se, a necessary being, infinite? Aristotle, Plato, and other Greeks held necessary beings, that is, each held that there were several necessary beings, and thus evidently did not consider infinity as immediately consequent on necessity.

Suarez gives two proofs to demonstrate that ens a se is necessarily infinite, one of which he explains as a posteriori, the other as a priori. As a matter of fact they coincide in an important point to make one proof. The second proof is more properly an a priori demonstration of the validity of the Minor of the first syllogism. Put briefly the argument goes something like this. Participated, or limited, being is limited for one of three reasons, -perhaps for all three reasons. Either the efficient cause limits by deciding to give so much and no more, or the being is received into a passive, real potency, or it is of itself, by virtue of its essence, intrinsically limited. God, however, Who has been proven ens a se can be limited in none of these ways, and so is infinite.

Potest probari..., quia esse per essentiam non habet unde limitetur; esse enim participatum limitari potest aut ex voluntate dantis tantam perfectionem et non majorem, aut ex

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^3 Ibid. D.XXX, Sec. 2, n.20.
We can readily concede that a being which is uncaused and has being by virtue of its essence is neither limited by an efficient cause, nor by being received into a passive potency; and we can concede that God is such a being. But how do we know that there is no intrinsic limitation in such a being? The answer to this question is the core of the proof. Suarez has several answers ready for us, which seem capable of division into two general classes, which he would again call a priori and a posteriori.

The a posteriori arguments are given in answer to an objection which Suarez thinks someone may propose.

Dices, sicut primum ens ex se est, ita ex se, et sine alia causa esse posse limitatum ad certum genus vel gradum perfectionis. Respondetur hoc repugnare enti necessario ab intrinseco et ex se habenti esse. Quod quidem a posteriori et ab incommodis probari potest...

Prior to this objection Suarez has given no reason why ens a se cannot be intrinsecally limited, but has simply stated

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4 Ibid. Sec.2, n.22.
5 Ibid. n.22.
that it cannot. The reply to this objection, then, is the first proof. But we sense a difficulty before we even come to the proof, for the objection is not really one against infinity. It is that too, but it is primarily an objection against omniperfection. As a result, this objection may be well answered, but in such a way that we still will not have infinity proven, but only omniperfection.

Here again Suarez does fail to perceive the difference between proving infinity and omniperfection. He gives three reasons why God cannot be limited to one genus or one grade of the perfections we know in creatures. Each demonstrates only that God is omniperfect. "Quodcumque ens habens limitatam perfectionem, et quasi partem entis, potest a primo ente manare." Given that this is true, all that follows is that God has all the perfections of all possible creatures in an eminent way. For the statement says merely that there is one Supreme Being who alone is the source of whatever else is, or can be; and it still remains to be proven that the possibles actually are infinite. Moreover, Suarez himself holds that the infinity of the possibles is syncategorematic. "In re non possunt esse nisi syncategorematicae infinita."  

6 Ibid. D.XXX, Sec. 2, n. 22.
7 F. Suarez, De Incarnatione, apud L. Vives, Paris, 1877, D. XXVI, Sec. 4, n. 12.
It would seem impossible, then, even though he should give a demonstration for the infinity of the possibles, to argue to categoricmatic infinity for their cause.

His second reason for denying the possibility of intrinsic limitation is that a being limited to one type or grade of perfection would not be completely perfect. "Tale ens non esset summe perfectum." And since it has already been demonstrated that there must be a first being who possesses all perfection, it follows that this being must be without limitation in perfection. But just what limitation in perfection must be denied? A being who is proven to be the cause of every single existing, or possible perfection certainly cannot be limited to any one perfection or to any group, but must possess them all; but it does not follow that he is simply infinite until it has been proven that the possible perfections and beings are infinite.

The third reason which Suarez lists as a posteriori seems more properly called a priori, but it labors under the same difficulty as the other two. He argues that if the first being, that is, a necessary being were limited in the way the objection limited it, there would be no repugnance in having

8 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XXX, Sec. 2, n. 22.
innumerable necessary beings. Actually, however, there cannot be but one necessary being, (his reasoning for one necessary being will be considered in the next chapter), and so that one being must be unlimited.

We recall that the objection was aimed against omnipotence. The third reason is a reply to that objection. For if there is a necessary being who does not possess all the perfections that we actually know to be possible, then there must be at least one other necessary being who can cause the perfections not contained by the first. And if there can be more than one, there would seem to be no reason why there should not be several.

But does this reasoning demonstrate that the first being must be absolutely infinite? Judging from the context, we can say that Suarez does not intend to prove any more than omnipotence, that is, he intends to prove omnipotence, and takes it for granted that he thus proves infinity. For he places it on a par with other two reasons already considered, making no explicit statement that it has further implications than the other two. Furthermore, since he does frequently identify the two notions in his proofs, there is no conclusive reason

9 Ibid. n.22.
for thinking that he does otherwise in this place.

There remains another consideration. Perhaps, even though Suarez does not explicitly say so, this reason is in itself sufficient to demonstrate more than omniperfection. This will bear considerable investigation. First of all, we can certainly say that contingent, finite beings of their very nature allow the possibility of numerous individuals of the same species. It is also evident that a being which is infinite in its very esse must be one and only one. The contingent beings permit multiplication because they have an external cause which can produce the same specific essences with different individuating notes. It is true that the very essence of the finite beings is responsible for the intrinsic possibility of this multiplication, but it is a possibility that would never be realized without an extrinsic cause. An infinite being, on the other hand, since it has from its very essence all being that can possibly be had, permits neither the intrinsic possibility, nor has an external cause which might produce the various individuals.

Suppose now that there should be a necessary, but finite, being. Such a being could not be individuated by an external cause, for in supposing it to be necessary we exclude the possibility of a cause. But there remains the question of
intrinsic possibility of multiplication, and thus the investigation is considerably narrowed. The question is resolved to this. Does the intrinsic impossibility of multiplication in a necessary being equal infinity? It is not clear that Suarez may answer this question in the affirmative. He attempted to prove the unicity of a necessary being by showing that any multiplication, either in number or species, would have to be had from something added to the necessity, but that this differentiating note can be had neither from something, that is, some cause, outside the essence, nor from the essence itself. If an external cause gave the differentiation, the being would not be necessary. If it came from the necessity of the being, each necessary being would have the same note, the same differentiation, which is equivalent to saying that there would really be but one necessary being. From this consideration it appears that a necessary being admits of no multiplication, precisely because it is necessary, but it does not appear evident that intensive infinity follows unicity. To prove this we have to prove that infinity follows necessity, but this is what Suarez has not yet clearly demonstrated.

10 The proofs for unicity, together with an evaluation, are considered at length in Ch. IV, beginning on page 48.
To sum up our analysis of this third argument against the possibility of intrinsic limitation, we say that, on the supposition that there is only one necessary being, such a being cannot be limited to possessing only some of the perfections which are possible, but that it is not clearly established that this being must be absolutely unlimited.

To prove this absolute infinity Suarez next gives his a priori proof.

A priori autem solum potest probari per non repugnantiam, vel negationem omnis causae, vel rationis, ob quam necessitas essendi ut sic, potius limitetur ad hoc genus perfectionis quam ad alium, et ad hunc gradum quam ad meliorem.11

Before we proceed to the further reasoning that substantiates this argument we find a difficulty in what is said. Here again he seems to be proving omniperfection rather than intensive infinity. A necessary being, he states, cannot be limited to one genus of perfection, nor to one grade of perfection. It cannot be limited to any one perfection. It cannot be limited to any grade of perfection we know in creatures, but must possess the creature perfection in a higher degree. God's perfection, however, may be greater, melior, than that of creatures, but does that make it infinite? Before passing judgement, however, we must consider his further

11 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XXX, Sec. 2, n.23.
reasoning in this matter.

We have already conceded that the necessary being cannot be limited by an external cause. When Suarez further attempts to show that there can be no intrinsic reason for limitation, he seems to do little more than repeat his former arguments which he termed *a posteriori*.

...*in omni genere perfectionis possibilis necessarium fuit ut talis perfectio haberet in aliquo ente intrinsecam necessitatem essendi; alias non haberet unde initium sumeret, aut ad alia entia dimanaret, et idem est de quocumque gradu possibili entitativae perfectionis.*

What more does this say than that every possible perfection must have as its source the one, necessary being? There remains the supposition, as yet not proven, that the possibles are infinite. There remains also the difficulty which comes from his considering the possibles as only syncategorematically infinite. But we still reserve our judgement in order to consider another argument immediately following the preceding.

Ergo ipsa ratio entis ut sic, postulat ut secundum totam suam latitudinem perfectionis possibilem, aut vere ex-cognitabilem, habeat in aliquo ente necessitatem essendi vel formaliter, vel eminenter; non potest habere hanc necessitatem quasi divisam et partitam in plura entia necessaria, ut supra

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12 Ibid. n.23.
probatum est; ergo necesse est ut
illam habeat quasi congregate totam
in uno ente per se necessario, et
hoc ipsum est illud ens esse infinitum. 13

According to this argument, whatever there is of being must
be had unparticipated by the first being, and this first
being by virtue of all that it possesses is infinite.

But how do we know that being, or esse, is of itself
infinite? From the arguments we have considered it appears
that Suarez thought being to be infinite because it could be
participated ad infinitum. But do we know that it can be
participated ad infinitum? The possibility of infinite par­
ticipation must be proven either from the nature of the un­
participated, or from the infinity of participated beings.
Suarez argues mostly from the fact that the possible, par­
ticipated beings are infinite, but, as we have said so fre­
quently, we do not know that the possibles are infinite until
we know that their cause is infinite. Suarez really gives no
argument for the infinity of the unparticipated, considered
in itself, but only assertions. In brief, he proves the im­
possibility of intrinsic limitation for ens a se either by
saying that we know of no limitation, "per negationem
limitationis", or by showing that ens a se cannot be limited

13 Ibid. n. 23.
to any one created perfection, or even to the same grade of perfection that creatures have. He, himself, does not seem to feel certain that his proofs will satisfy, for he adds to his a priori proof: "Et revera est haec sufficiens demonstratio, nisi quis velit voluntarie pertinax esse."¹⁴

In this criticism our chief point has been that Suarez has not demonstrated that a pure act of esse, which has no cause, is without intrinsic limitation. All his proofs, we have said, show only that this act of esse does not have the limitations which creatures have. It must now be added that he denies the principle which St. Thomas uses to prove the infinity of esse subsistens, but does not substitute a new principle. He begins the section in which he gives his proofs for infinity by presenting and rejecting the proof of St. Thomas. This proof of Thomas was given briefly in a preceding chapter. Suarez rejects it thus.

Ego vero existimo rationem non esse efficacem, si in hoc fundetur, quod essentia non potest esse finita, nisi sit potentia vere ac proprie receptiva ipsius esse, et e converso, esse non posse esse finitum, nisi sit vere receptum in essentia, tamquam in potentia proprie passiva et receptiva... Ut ergo esse sit finitum satis est ut sit receptum ab alio

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¹⁴ Ibid. n.23.
in tanta et tanta perfectionis mensura, etiamsi proprie non sit receptum in aliqua potentia passiva.\[16\]

Note carefully the last sentence. A limited, or finite act is an imperfect act. If God can produce an act which, without being received into a potency, can still be limited in the very respect in which it is an act, then that act must have its own intrinsic principle of limitation. For God can produce only those beings which are intrinsically possible. But if an act can, precisely in so far as it is act, have an intrinsic limitation, Suarez has no clear right to postulate that a non-received act is infinite until he adduces some further proof for this.

That Suarez should hold such a position is to be expected from his stand on act and potency in general. Certainly he makes use of these concepts; but he does not use them in the strict sense that Thomists employ. Act and potency are not considered by him as principles of being; they are considered as applying in the strict sense only in the order of essences. Moreover, even in the order of essences potency is considered not merely as a capacity for perfection, but over and above this as being in itself an imperfect act.

A thorough examination of his whole position on act and

16 F. Suarez, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, D.XXX, Sec.2, n.19.
potency would be out of place here. Such a consideration of his notions would have to be very lengthy, since he does not gather them together in any one place to lay down definite principles. The few statements made about his doctrine, however, can be justified. That he does not consider essence to be related to esse as potency to act is evident from his whole disputation concerning the distinction between essence and existence. If he identifies them, as he clearly does, there can be no question of their being distinct principles; there can be no composition save in the essence itself which is one and the same as the esse. "...Dicendum est compositionem ex esse et essentia, analogice tantum compositionem appellari quia non est compositio realis." For Suarez an essence really distinct from its esse would not be a real being.

"Repugnat enim entitatem constitui in esse entitatis per aliquid a se condistinctum." This opinion, moreover, is corroborated by a close follower of Suarez, Descroqs. "The composition of act and potency in the proper sense...belongs uniquely to the order of essence." Maquart, throughout his Elementa Philosophiae, treats the doctrine of Suarez, and

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17 Ibid., D. XXXI, Sec. 8, n. 7.
18 Ibid., Sec. 6, n.2.
19 P. Descroqs, op cit. II, 566. La composition d'acte et de puissance au sens propre...appartient uniquement à l'ordre de l'essence.
explicitly insists that for Suarez subjective potency is an imperfect act. This latter is beyond doubt true in the case of prime matter, which Suarez conceives as having its own entitative act. "Dicendum est ergo primo, materiam non vocari puram potentiam respectu omnis actus metaphysici, id est, quia nullum actum metaphysicum includit; hoc enim verum esse non potest."

Now, if essence and existence are not to be considered as real potency and act, certainly the principle of limitation of act by potency will not apply to them. If essence and existence are identical, then to say that existence is limited by essence is simply to say that existence limits itself. And since all the beings we know from experience are limited, some special reason must be found to show that a non-received existence is infinite.

In the particular case of the limitation of esse which we have been considering, the position of Suarez evidently follows on his manner of conceiving ens, and its components, essence and existence. While he strongly denies that ens is actually univocal, - for that would involve pantheism -, his

20 F. Maquart, Elementa Philosophiae, A. Blot (editor), Paris, 1938, III b, 60.
21 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XIII, Sec.5, n.9.
concept seems to be univocal, since it represents all beings only in so far as they are similar, prescinding entirely from their differences.

Sic ergo explicata hac precisione rationis in conceptu objectivo, non est difficile ostendere reperiri in conceptu objectivo entisquia per conceptum formalem entis, neque Deus neque substantia creata, neque accidens representatur, secundum modum quo in re sunt; neque prout inter se differunt; sed solum prout aliquo modo inter se conveniunt, ac similia sunt.  

Ex his infero primo, in hoc conceptu entis objectivo, et sic praeciso non includi actu modos intrinsecos substantiae vel aliorum membrorum quae dividunt ens.  

Such a concept of being contains its inferiors only potentially. It is obtained by total abstraction, that is by abstracting a superior notion from one of its inferiors, in the way genus is taken from a species. It is not a determined but an indetermined concept.

As the concept of being is potential and obtained by total abstraction, so is the concept of essence. A concept thus prescinded is not a sufficient basis for arguing to a real distinction in beings, and, as we know, Suarez explicitly

22 Ibid. D. II, Sec. 2, n. 16.  
23 Ibid. n.20.  
24 Ibid. n.21.  
26 Ibid. II, 88.
denies this real distinction. Moreover, essence, which merely prescinds from existence, contains it potentially, and is identified with it in the real order, can be a distinct, limiting principle only in the logical order. In the real order the essence is the limited being.

Suarez himself does not speak in so many words of esse being conceived by total abstraction, but this follows logically from his identification of essence and existence. If essence and existence are one, then a concept of esse is had by abstracting from its various inferiors. Such a concept may represent esse as unlimited, but this absence of limit is really an absence of determination. Esse, thus prescinded from all the determinations with which it is identified in the real order, can be but an indetermined something, an abstraction of the second intention. Descoqs, moreover, insists that such a concept of esse is in accord with the mind of Suarez. He says that when we conceive esse as being in itself unlimited we are concerned not with an absence of imperfection, but with an absence of determination. We have a being which can exist only in the mind.

On such a foundation Suarez logically rejects the

27 P. Descoqs, op. cit., II, 837.
Thomistic proof. But ought he not substitute something in its place? His arguments up to now have not been conclusive for the existence of an infinite God. One more proof remains, however, and this will be considered in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

INFINITY OF GOD PROVED FROM CREATION

This final proof is based on two principles: that God created the universe, and that creation requires an infinite power. "Unum principium est, Deum habere vim ad creandum... Aliud principium est, ad creandum requiri virtutem simpliciter infinitam." This is certainly a valid approach, an argument from an effect to the nature of its cause. We have already seen that it is one of the proofs used by St. Thomas. What must be investigated is whether or not Suarez succeeds in clearly proving these two principles which he enunciates.

To prove that God produced the world and all beings save Himself from nothing, Suarez uses induction and deduction. He seems to place his greatest confidence in the inductive argument, which consists in a consideration of all beings material and spiritual. He first considers the heavenly bodies, then earthly bodies, and finally spiritual substances.

The heavenly bodies, stars, moon, and sun, must have been created because they cannot have being from themselves.

1 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XXX, Sec.2, n.15.
This is proven by various considerations. First of all the planets cannot have existence by virtue of their essence, because there are more noble creatures which do not exist of themselves, but depend on God for their very being. "Quia res multo nobiliores coelis non sunt absque efficientia, ut patet maxime de homine." For Suarez it is unthinkable that lesser beings should have perfections which higher beings do not have, especially if it is the case of the highest possible perfection, esse a se. How he demonstrates that man is dependent for his being will be considered a little farther on. Secondly, the heavenly bodies cannot move themselves, but require an external mover. "Item quia coeli adeo sunt imperfecti, ut indigeat motu ad complementum suarum actionum, et praeterea extrinseco motore qui illos moveat: eo quod ex se motum illum habere non possint; ergo multo minus verisimile est ex se habere esse." Thirdly, there is the fact that the heavenly bodies do not constitute a little world of their own, but are very much a part of the universe, having effect on earthly bodies, as, for example, the moon on the tides. In the time of Suarez, of course, this influence of the heavenly bodies was considered to be even greater. The point, however,

2 Ibid. Sec. 1, n.15.
3 Ibid. n. 15.
is that since these bodies are so bound up in the workings of the creatures of earth they must have been made by the same cause who produced the earth, and never have had existence of themselves.

Item videmus coelos in omnibus suis virtutibus, aspectibus, et motibus, ita esse constitutos, sicut expediebat ad conservationem inferiorum rerum, et earum generationes et corruptiones; ergo est evidens argumentum non esse a se sed conditos fuisse a communi omnium auctore."4

In answer to this last reasoning, however, it might be objected that perhaps the heavenly bodies had existence of themselves and were simply fitted into the workings of the universe by some supreme being who took it upon himself to bring order into disorder. Suarez would probably reply, as he does to a similar objection, that this being who took it upon himself to order the whole universe must be the ultimate final cause of the whole. The ultimate final cause, however, must also be the first efficient cause, and so this being who orders must be the one who gives being in the first place. "Quia non potest universum gubernari nisi ab eo cuius consilio et potentia conditum fuit."5

This reply of Suarez, however, does not seem cogent

4 Ibid. n.15.
5 Ibid. D. XXIX, Sec. 2, n. 9.
enough to meet the objection. He argues that the heavenly bodies must be contingent, because God is their final cause and, therefore, their efficient cause. But would God have to be the final cause if these heavenly bodies were necessary, as the objection supposes? It seems necessary to prove the contingency of these beings before postulating God as their final cause. The mere fact that He orders them is not enough to justify calling Him the final cause. We know, for example, from human experience that a person may take existing beings and join them into an ordered whole without becoming thereby the final cause of either the whole or its parts. Suarez seems here to suppose that which is yet to be proven, and thus not to answer the objection. However, since it will appear later that even though we grant to Suarez a proof for the creation of all things we know of, he still cannot deduce infinity from this, there is no need of delaying longer on this.

Suarez next endeavors to prove that earthly bodies cannot have existence of themselves. All earthly bodies exist as single individuals, and all the individuals that we know today are contingent. From this Suarez deduces that the first of these species of individuals was brought into being by some external cause, and did not have being of itself. For, if the first individual of each species had had being of itself
and given being to the consequent members, there would be a contradiction; the first member would be both contingent, as a member of a contingent species, and necessary, as existing of itself. Therefore, all members of all existing species that we know are contingent, have their being from some superior cause.

...quia omnes species rerum, quae illa sunt, in suis individuis sint; ergo in nulla specie illarum rerum potest esse aliquod individuum non factum, seu ex se habens esse: nam haec esset magna differentia, et maxime essentiale inter tale individuum et alia, et consequenter non essent eiusdem speciei.6

We see that this whole argument comes to this: corporeal substances must be contingent because we are immediately aware of their generations and corruptions, that is, of their not having being of their own right.

However, as has already been noted, the ancient Greek Philosophers, while realizing that the composite beings of this earth must have had some cause, thought, nonetheless, that the matter out of which these beings were formed was of itself necessary. Suarez notes this as an objection to his argument.

Rogo rursus, an materia ipsa facta sit,

6 Ibid., D. XX, Sec. 1, n. 16.
Suarez immediately affirms, however, that this is "alienum ab omni rationi naturali, praeter dicta in priori assertione et praeter ea quae communia sunt omnibus entibus creatis."

And then he shows why prime matter cannot be necessary, but must also be the result of creation. First of all, of all things which in any way rejoice in the title, "being", prime matter is the most imperfect, and, as such, certainly cannot have a perfection which superior beings lack.

Secondly he places a disjunction. If prime matter is necessary and coaeternal with God, in the beginning it either had no substantial form, or had one of itself. It could not have existed without any form because it is ordered by its very nature to union with a form. Without a form it would

7 Ibid. n.17.
8 Ibid. n.18.
9 Ibid. n.18.
have been in a preternatural state.

Primum dici non potest quia repugnat naturae materiae, nam licet non implicet contradictionem, tamen est alienum a naturali ordine rerum, et ideo verisimile non est materiam habere suam entitatem ex se, et tamen habere eam in statu praeternaturali, et absque ulla formali perfectione, et consequenter absque usu vel utilitate. 10

On the other hand prime matter could not have existed with a substantial form which it had necessarily, because this would mean not only that prime matter was necessary, but even some corporeal substance was necessary. The form, which prime matter would have had from its very necessity, would be a necessary form, one which could not be separated from the matter, and as a consequence substantial change would be impossible.

Si aut habuit formam aliquam ex se; ergo jam non sola materia, sed quaedam substantia integra est ex se habens esse. Ex quo ulterior fit, tota illa substantia esse simpliciter necessaria, et tam non posse esse quam ipsam materiam primam, quia quod est inde pendens ab alio in suo esse, non potest illud amittere. 11

It can be objected that the disjunction which Suarez placed at the beginning of the preceding argument was not

10 Ibid. n.18.
11 Ibid. n.18.
complete. Perhaps prime matter always existed with a form, but not a necessary form. Perhaps from all eternity God supplied it with some form whereby it might have a natural existence. Suarez was prepared for this objection. "Sed hoc etiam dici non potest, tum quia involvit repugnantium... tum etiam quia alias illa forma ex necessitate naturae manaret a Deo." The repugnance would consist in matter's having esse of itself, and yet not having all that is required for esse. It would still be necessary, because if God supplied it freely there would be no reason for its being eternal. "Est autem contra rationem naturalem dicere Deum agere extra se necessitate naturae." Furthermore, since God conserves by the same act by which He produces, the form, and consequently the substance, would still be necessary, and substantial change would be impossible. "Et praeterea sequitur qua necessitate agit Deus illam formam, eadem conservare illam: et consequenter materiam ex necessitate semper esse sub illa forma."

Having given these arguments Suarez feels that his case for the creation of material beings is strong enough, and he turns to a consideration of spiritual beings, the rational soul and angels. The only argument which can prove the

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12 Ibid. n.19.
13 Ibid. n.19.
14 Ibid. n.19.
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12 Ibid. n.19.  
13 Ibid. n.19.  
14 Ibid. n.19.
creation of angels, on the supposition that there are angels, is the argument which proves that there can be only one ens a se. This argument can also be applied to the rational soul and to all material beings, but before investigating it we will consider another proof for the creation of the rational soul, which is more similar to the arguments for the creation of material beings. (We recall that some of the arguments just given depend on this proof that the soul does not have being of itself.)

Man, as composed of matter and form, body and soul, is certainly contingent. For we have immediate evidence of his generation and corruption, birth and death. But, granted that the matter of which he is composed is contingent, what about the form? Since the rational form is not educed from matter, perhaps it has a preexistent state of being, is in itself necessary. Suarez is not at all willing to admit that the soul has existence prior to its union with the body.

"Essent error non solum in fide sed etiam contra rationem naturalem." But even if it had, it still would owe its whole being to God, would be produced by creation. For the soul by its very nature is ordered to union with the body, so that its separated existence is not natural; and it is not

15 Ibid. n. 21.
possible that a being should have its esse from its very essence, and yet not have it in a natural manner. The soul, therefore, which is not educed from matter and does not have existence from itself can owe its being only to the creative act of God.

Nam etiamsi animae essent ante corpora, non tamen essent a se, et sine efficiente: quia praeter alias rationes tactas, cum anima sit naturalis forma corporis, si esse necessario esset, ex aeternitate existet informando corpus: nam res quae esse habet esse non potest habere illud in praeternaturali statu... Igitur sive anima informare incipiatur cum corpore, sive ante illud, necessarium est habere causam efficientem, et consequenter fieri per creationem. 16

Before passing on to the argument which demonstrates that there can be only one ens a se a few words of comment are due to the preceding arguments. First of all, it is to be noted that all the arguments for creation thus far considered prove only that the beings we know must have come about through the creative act of God. They do not prove that all possible beings, save God alone, must be either be created or never come into existence. Secondly we recall that none of the arguments proceed from the very nature of being itself, as do the arguments of St. Thomas. That the arguments do not

16 Ibid. Sec. 1, n. 21.
proceed from the very notion of being, or *esse*, is to be expected in virtue of what has already been seen concerning the Suarezian concept of *esse*. Furthermore, as a consequence of this method of arguing, there will be some difficulty in establishing the God of creation as infinite in the very realm of being.

In opposition to the preceding proofs the final proof, based on the nature of *ens a se*, does intend to prove that all possible beings, save God alone, must be produced by God from nothing. Briefly, it says that there is one uncaused cause, and only one; and that, therefore, whatever else is must look back to this being as source and cause.

When he is treating creation Suarez states this proof in a few words. "Verumtamen de illis (rebus immaterialibus) nullum fieri potest speciale argumentum praeter illud universal sumptum ex hoc principio quod repugnat dari plura entia improducta." To get a full treatment of this proof we must go to his disputation on the existence of God.

His first step is to prove that there is one *ens a se*. After having rejected the principle "Quidquid movetur...", he gives another principle which is metaphysical and which will

be the basis of his proof. "Omne quod fit ab alio fit: sive creetur sive generetur, sive quacumque ratione fiat." This principle is too evident to require more than a brief explanation. However, before proceeding to this explanation, a few words about the difference between the Suarezian principle and the Thomistic "Quidquid movetur" seem in order. In expression they seem to come to the same thing, since the "fit" of Suarez and the "movetur" of Thomas seem to express the same idea. Suarez himself explains in what he wanted his principle to differ from that of Thomas. That being which is moved is supposed to already exist, while that which becomes is not supposed to have already had existence. The being which already exists before acquiring a new perfection may have had that perfection virtually, and thus been able to move itself. But a being which is non-existent cannot possess its perfection virtually, and so requires an efficient cause. In view of this reasoning Suarez rejected the principle of Thomas, as not applying to all cases, and substituted one of his own.

The principle of Suarez can be briefly explained. When a creature passes from the realm of non-being to that of being,

18 Ibid., D. XXXIX, Sec. 1, n. 20.
19 Ibid., n. 20.
it itself can certainly not be the cause of the transit, for that would mean that at the same time it both was and was not; in short, it would be its own cause.

Quod principium ex eo demonstratur, quod nihil potest efficere se. Nam res quae fit per effectionem acquirit esse: res autem quae facit vel producit supponitur habere esse, et ideo claram repugnantiam involvit quod idem faciat seipsum: prius enim quam res fit, non potest esse in actu formali vel virtuali ad faciendum se.20

With this principle established the proof is fairly simple. In syllogistic form it is:

Every being which exists is either made, or not made.
But, there cannot be, in the production of being, either an infinite series of causes, or causes which act upon one another as members of a circle.
Therefore, there must be some unmade, or uncreated being.

Part of the Minor, perhaps, needs further explanation. The causes which cooperate to produce being would act on one another in a circular process, if cause A were to produce B, B were to produce C, and then C, in some strange manner, were to cause the being of A. That this should happen is evidently impossible. As Suarez points out, this would really be equivalent to having a being cause itself.

20 Ibid., n. 20.
Hunc ergo circulum dicimus esse impossibilem, et aeque repugnantem illi principio, omne quod producitur ab alio producitur... Nam si res una fit ab alia a se facta mediate saltem, et quasi in virtute efficit se ipsam.

Neither can there be an infinite series of causes which are per se subordinate. For, unless the series of causes leads to some uncaused being, there is really no explanation of the final effect.

Impossibilem est totam collectionem entium vel causarum efficientium esse dependentem in suo esse et operari: ergo necesse est esse in illis aliquid independens: ergo non potest in illo progressu in infinitum procedi.

If each member of the series is dependent, the series as a whole must be dependent; if the series is dependent there must be something outside of it which sustains it and explains the causality. "Nam... omne quod dependet ab alio dependet."

And yet the supposition is that there is no being outside the dependent series which explains the being and action of the series. Therefore, either there is some independent, uncaused being, or there is only contradiction.

Sic ergo impossibile est totam collectionem entium esse factam, aut totam collectionem causarum esse dependentem in agendo, propria dependentia, quia posterior causa pendet a priori.

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21 Ibid., n.23.
22 Ibid., n.26.
23 Ibid., n.26.
24 Ibid., n.26.
But granted there is an uncaused being, this is not yet God, much less an infinite God. Suarez clearly realizes this and proceed to the demonstration, first of one necessary being who produced the visible universe, and secondly of one being who excludes the possibility of any other, who is unicus.

One creator of the visible world is deduced from the order in the universe. One being alone must be ruling the world to give it the orderly motion it has, the cooperation of animate and inanimate, rational and irrational beings. Moreover, this supreme being could not order the world so well unless he had produced it in the first place. "Quia non potest universum gubernari nisi ab eo cuius consilio et potentia conditum fuit." 25

He follows up with various arguments to show why there could not be several necessary beings who cooperated to produce the world, and who now rule it in peaceful agreement. 26 The arguments are suasive, but not exactly metaphysical and doubt-destroying. Therefore it seems best to pass over these considerations and go on to the metaphysical demonstration of Deus Unicus.

25 Ibid., D. XXIX, Sec. 2, n. 9.
26 Ibid., n. 21-29.
After having rejected arguments of Soncinas and Thomas for the unicity of God Suarez proceeds to his own solution. This proof has already been briefly presented in a previous chapter. A necessary being does not permit either numerical or specific multiplication, because any differentiating note or specific difference would have to come from the being's necessity, and hence should be the same for each being. Now a more thorough explanation is in place.

First of all it is impossible that a necessary being should be multiplied numerically, that there should be many individuals of the same species. In such multiplication the differentiating notes, that which makes the individual distinct from other members of the species, must be outside the essence; for otherwise there would be no multiplication.

Quia ubicumque ratio communis est multiplicabilis secundum diversas naturas singulares, esto non sit necesse singularitatem in re ipsa distinguui a natura communi, oportet tamen ut aliquo modo sit extra essentiam talis naturae, nam si esset illi essentialis, revera talis natura non esset multiplicabilis.

But a necessary being can have no notes or constituents which are not essential to it. "In ente autem improducto impossibile

27 cf. Ch. III, p.27.
28 F. Suarez, Disputationes Metaphysicae, D. XXIX, Sec. 3, n. 21.
est ut singularitas sit extra essentiam naturae eius?"29 The reason is that the esse of a necessary being flows from its essence, and there is no real esse other than a singular esse. "Sed esse non est nisi rei singularis, ut singularis est. Ergo necesse est ut singularitas talis naturae sit etiam de essentia eius, et consequenter ut talis natura non sit communicabilis."30 Whatever a necessary being has must come from its essence, and the essence, or the necessity, cannot be in potency to various differentiating notes, since this would require an outside cause to bring about the different members of the species. Thus, at least, Suarez argues for the impossibility of numerical multiplication.

Secondly Suarez argues that there cannot be several necessary beings which fall under one genus but differ by virtue of a specific difference.

Quia sicut in conceptu essentiali illius naturae, quae ex se necessario est, includitur singularitas, etiam includitur tota essentia talis naturae singularis; ergo impossibile est, quod haec essentia entis necessarii sit alia et alia... Non potest constitui in tali vel tali rationi essentiali, per aliquum additum.31

If there were several necessary beings differing specifically,

29 Ibid., n. 21.
30 Ibid., n. 21.
31 Ibid., n. 22.
there would have to be some note by which they differed. They could not differ in so far as necessary, because their necessity is what is common to each. The specific difference would have to be something added to the necessity. No external cause could effect the difference, since they are themselves the sole cause of their being. Neither could the specific difference come from the necessity, since in every case the difference would have to be the same, and thus there would remain but one being.

This argument of Suarez, however, for the impossibility of several necessary beings differing specifically, is not satisfactory. Suarez insists that from the necessity of such beings there could come but one specific difference, and that there could, therefore, be but one necessary being. This supposes, however, that the concept of necessity is univocal while it seems rather to be analogous. For all that we know it may be of the essence of a necessary being to be multiplied. The concept of a necessary being may contain various individuating notes actu, implicite.

Moreover, these arguments of Suarez for the unicity of a necessary being are not consonant with his own principle of individuation. Spiritual beings for him are individuated by their very entity, not by anything else. "... constat in
Accordingly he holds that angels of the same species may be multiplied numerically by their distinct entities without any notes added to the essence. It would seem to follow from this that there could be several necessary beings differing not essentially, nor in virtue of something added to the essence, but only by their different entities. Specific multiplication would also seem possible in this position. For Thomists angels differ specifically, and the difference can be explained by means of the real composition of essence and existence. Suarez, however, has no real composition of essence and existence in the entity of angels which he can use to explain specific differences; for him there is nothing but the entity to explain the difference. To follow this position logically he ought to hold that there can be several necessary beings differing specifically by virtue of their very entities, without any appeal to added notes.

In the light of this criticism it cannot be said that Suarez has proven that there can be but one necessary being. He has rejected potency as the individuating factor, and has

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32 Ibid., D. V, Sec. 6, n. 17.
thus placed a serious obstacle in his path to proving the unicity of a necessary being. If he cannot demonstrate that there is but one necessary being, he can hardly go on to prove that there is a necessary being who is infinite. However, by supposing for the time that he has proven this unicity, it is possible to go on and see how he endeavors to show that this one necessary being is infinite.

At the beginning of this chapter two principles were given which present in brief the proof for infinity from the fact of creation. We have considered one of them, that God has the power to create. There remains the second, that creation requires an infinite power. Suarez endeavors to prove this latter in two ways: first, by a consideration of all the objects of creation taken collectively; secondly, by an appeal to the creation of even one being.

He proposes the first proof in various ways. God produced all the different grades of being, and in each grade various species. And all this was done by God alone without the help of a material cause, or of an assisting secondary cause. The conclusion is that God can produce whatever is possible, that is, whatever is not intrinsically repugnant.

33 Ibid., D. XXX, Sec. 2, n. 16.
In producing all beings God caused the first esse which any of them had; nothing of being was presupposed in the objects of His causal activity. Consequently being, or esse, is the adequate object of the power of God, and His power extends to everything that can participate being.  

The productive power of God, moreover, is never exhausted. No matter how many beings He creates, He can always create more; no matter how perfect a being He creates, He can always create a more perfect one.  

These three considerations can be brought together, and one conclusion drawn. They all say the same thing. The power of God extends to all possible beings and perfections, which beings and perfections are infinite in number and variety. The conclusion: therefore, God is infinite.  

But here again is the difficulty so frequently referred to in the examination of the other proofs for infinity. What justification is there for postulating that the objects of God's power are infinite in number and perfection, until we know that God is infinite? Suarez, at least, gives no proof for the infinity of the possibles, and so, in proportion as

34 Ibid., n. 16.  
35 Ibid., n. 16.
he depends on the infinite possibles, he fails to establish clearly the infinity of God. To forestall objections it must be noted that from the infinity of the possibles Suarez intends to prove that God is categorically infinite, not merely syncategorematically infinite. "Neque potest virtus illa esse infinita syncategorematice, quia simul et actu habet existentem totam suam virtutem et perfectionem." If it be recalled again that Suarez considers the possibles only syncategorematically infinite, his position is rendered more difficult.

There is, however, one instance in which Suarez makes no appeal to the infinity of possible perfections. The creation of even one being, he says, requires an infinite power.

Et hoc etiam modo existimo satis probari posse talem potentiam non modo ut se extendit ad omne creabile, sed etiam ut determinata ad creandum quodlibet ens, esse infinitam.

Why does the creation of even one being require an infinite power? St. Thomas argued that the farther reduced from act a being was, the greater was the power required to bring it into being. For example, greater power is required to heat

36 Ibid., D. XX, Sec. 2, n. 4.
37 Ibid., n. 6.
water than air because the potency of the water is farther away from the act of heat than is the potency of air. If, then, a being was infinitely distant from act, - and such is the case of non-being, or nothing, which has no passive potency whatsoever, - an infinite active power was required to produce the being. But this reasoning did not satisfy Suarez. First of all he did not believe that non-being was infinitely distant from being, but only indefinitely distant. Furthermore, he did not see why an infinite power was required to produce a being from no passive potency.

...quia independentia actionis a subjecto non videtur esse tanti momenti, nec tantam indicare perfectionem, ut requirat in agente virtutem infinitam simpliciter. Cur etenim? Nam concursus materiae quid finitum est. Cur ergo suppleri non poterit per virtutem agentis superioris ordinis et perfectioris, esto infinita non sit?

How, then, did he conclude that an infinite power was required to create even one being? His explanation was that an efficient cause which produced a being without any assistance from either pre-existing matter, or from any superior cause, was necessarily infinite.

Alio item modo potest intelligi potentia creandi, quae habet vim se sola, et absque dependentia vel concursu alterius

38 T. Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, Lib. I, c. 43.
40 Ibid., n. 8.
aliqueste independentia infinitam requirit perfectionem.\footnote{Ibid., n. 4.}

His position comes to this. Creation ultimately requires an infinite power, but not every cause which creates is of necessity infinite. God may use an instrument, in which case the instrument will not be infinite.

But why does the first cause of creation have to be infinite when it acts entirely independently of any superior cause? To this question the author could find no answer either in the text of Suarez, or in the commentaries on Suarez. Suarez promises to give an answer in his treatment of the concursus of God with all secondary causes, in Disputation XXII; but if it is there, it is presented obscurely. No explicit mention is made.

And so on the one point where Suarez might be expected to give a clear demonstration of the infinity of God we are left without an answer that satisfies. What is actually said in this final proof, aside from the supposition that the unicity of a necessary being has been demonstrated, cannot be objected to, but neither can it be said to prove conclusively until further evidence is discovered.
CONCLUSION

This paper has considered all the arguments that Suarez presents for the infinity of God. They were found to fall into two general classes, one from the notion of \textit{ens a se}, one from the fact of creation. When Suarez reasoned from the notion of the Supreme Being he either arrived only at the omnipotence of God, that is, the extensive infinity, or failed to sufficiently substantiate his arguments. He rejected the Thomistic limitation of act by potency alone, and failed to substitute arguments that would prove God to have no intrinsic limitation.

The argument from creation also failed to prove God's intensive infinity. First of all Suarez did not clearly demonstrate that there can be but one necessary being, and thus was unable to prove conclusively the fact of creation. Moreover, even on the supposition that creation was a proven fact, his arguments for infinity fell short of the mark. On the other hand, he again rejected Thomistic arguments and failed to substitute satisfactory reasoning of his own.

In conclusion it must be noted that this paper emphasized primarily the fact that the proofs of Suarez are inconclusive
as they stand. Whether or not such proofs are completely beyond the scope of Suarezian philosophy remains an open question, but in the light of the evidence produced it does seem impossible to deduce the infinity of God from Suarezian principles. Moreover, it is highly improbable that a scholar as great as Suarez would have failed to find these arguments, if they were actually contained in his principles.
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