

REVIEWS

Franciscus Bargieł: Jan Morawski SJ (1633–1700) Philosophy

We would like to begin a series of translations of outstanding articles [published previously in FP], mainly by Jesuit philosophers. Our first choice is a paper by Franciszek Bargieł, an eminent scholar of Jesuit philosophy who taught and lectured in philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus in Kraków/Cracow for many years. This article, published in the journal “Forum Philosophicum,” vol. 2, 1997 (245–54), was originally written and published in Latin and has been translated from that language.

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Franciszek Bargieł SJ, born on 25 November 1918, was a Polish Jesuit priest and philosopher. Father Bargieł was ordained a priest in 1946 and he studied philosophy at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. From 1949 to 1965 Bargieł was a lecturer in metaphysics at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus in Kraków, and for one year he was also the Dean of the Faculty. His lectures were given in Latin and he published a textbook for students entitled “Ontology.” From the 1970s Bargieł focused on pastoral work and research, especially in the field of Jesuit philosophy. In 1989, Bargieł received his doctorate with a dissertation entitled „The Problem of Atheism and the Immortality of the Soul in the Works of George Gengell SJ (1657–1727).”

In the final years before his death he was engaged in research on the most famous work of Polish Jesuit philosophy, „Logica” by Marcin Śmiglecki. He was also interested in another prominent Jesuit philosopher of the 17th century, Jan Morawski, to whom this article is dedicated.

Franciszek Bargieł SJ died in Kraków in 2009, leaving behind a rich legacy of scholarship and service to the Catholic Church and the people of Poland.

Franciscus Bargiel SJ

JAN MORAWSKI SJ (1633-1700) PHILOSOPHY

In 1980, I wrote a publicly accessible dissertation in Polish titled “The Philosophy of Jan Morawski SJ (1633-1700).”¹ A brief summary of my dissertation is now being made available in Latin in the journal “Forum Philosophicum.”

THE JUSTIFICATION OF OUR UNDERTAKING

Jan Morawski undoubtedly played an important part in promoting culture in Poland in the 17th century through his activities and writings. He made a significant contribution to the fields of philosophy and theology as a professor for many years and was the author of many widely disseminated texts in Latin and Polish. Some of these works were even published multiple times throughout the following century.

The philosophical work Morawski left behind is not of great magnitude: it is contained within a single volume of 300 pages. However, it is believed to have caused a great stir in the minds of his contemporaries. This book was well received by the officially appointed reviewers of the Roman censors and was therefore accepted for publication within the Society of Jesus. His doctrinal authority was endorsed by repeated editions—at least four—in his homeland and in Lyons, France, even after he stopped teaching philosophy.²

1. LIFE AND SCIENTIFIC CAREER

Jan Morawski was born into a noble family in northern Poland in 1633. He completed a three-year philosophy course at a young age at Lublin SJ College, and at 18 years old he joined the Society of Jesus in Kraków. After completing his novitiate, he taught grammar for two years at Kalisz SJ College while also furthering his own philosophical studies. Due to the Swedish military incursion into Poland, he was forced to flee his homeland and studied theology at Roman SJ College from 1655 to 1659. While there,

1. Franciszek Bargiel SJ, *Filozofia Jana Morawskiego SJ (1633-1700)*, in: *Studia z historii filozofii*. Ed. by R. Darowski SJ, Kraków 1980, 116–45.

2. From the *Polish Biographical Dictionary* [Polski Słownik Biograficzny], vol. XXI, Kraków 1976, 719–21 (B. Natonski); *Philosophy and social thought of the 17th century*, Warsaw 1979, part II, 271–380, where a biographical synthesis of Jan Morawski is found, as well as two excerpts from his philosophical tract: the prologue and the 1st question from the 4th disputation—concerning causes; A. Aduszkiewicz, *Rectitude et adaequatio—the concept of Jan Morawski S.J.’s philosophy [...]. J. M. philosophical conception*, “Archive of the History of Philosophy and Social Thought,” vol. 38, 1993, 65–74.

he learned from Martin de Esparza Artieda and possibly adopted his teaching approach and ideas.³

Upon returning to Poland, Jan Morawski taught philosophy (ethics, logic, physics, metaphysics, and mathematics) at Kalisz Jesuit College from 1659 to 1664. During this time, he wrote a summary of his philosophical views, which he later published as “The Principles of Total Philosophy Explained through Questions of Being in General Based on the Lectures of Father J. Morawski SJ.”

From 1664 to 1678, Jan Morawski taught various aspects of theology, with a focus on dogmatic theology, at Poznań Jesuit College. He mainly based his teachings on St. Thomas Aquinas’ “Summa theologiae” and published commentaries on it, which were in the form of manuscripts for the use of the Marian Society of which he was the spiritual caretaker. Additionally, he wrote other ascetic-devotional writings to support this work. Between 1678 and 1696, he devoted himself to administration, serving as College Rector or Head of Studies in Poznań and Kraków. These tasks demonstrate his significant authority in his own Province of the Society of Jesus, which elected him as its delegate to the 13th General Congregation in 1687.

This biographical overview highlights the diverse nature of Jan Morawski’s activities and roles, in which his teaching and writing activities, in Latin and Polish, were prominent.

2. MAIN WORKS

1. *The Principles of the Total Philosophy [...], on the Entity in General [...]*, in Poznań, 1666, 1682, 1687, and in Lyon, 1688.
2. *Gymnasium of Christian Piety*, published in Poznań in 1669; 20 editions published by the mid-18th century. It is a manual of ascetic-devotional life, primarily for members of the Marian Society.
3. *Questions on the Incarnate Word and His Marvelous Mother the Virgin*, published in Lesna in 1671.
4. *Questions on the One and Triune God to be Discussed in the College of Poznań in 1674*, published in Kalisz; problems discussed in meetings of the Marian Society.
5. *Selected Theological Questions on the Whole Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas*, published in Kalisz in 1681. Numerous references are

3. Martinus de Esparza Artieda SJ (1606–1689), a Spaniard, was a professor of theology at the universities of Salamanca, Valladolid, and in the Roman College. He is the author of the work *Quaestiones disputatae de Deo uno et trino*, 1657, 1668.

- given for the fourth and fifth texts in the philosophical text (first number).
6. *The Holy Roman Church Defended Against Heretic Calumnies Newly Raised*, published in Poznań in 1693; controversial questions discussed among Christians.
 7. *Spiritual Theology*, published in Poznań in 1695; an ascetic manual written in Polish.
 8. *Holy Saints Adorned with Devout Meditations*, published in Poznań in 1696; points for meditations.
 9. *The Way of the Saints Before God*, or in Latin: *The Precious Death of the Saints in the Presence of God*, published in Poznań in 1698.
 10. *The Pulpit of the Spirit, or Ten Days of Spiritual Exercises*, published in Poznań in 1700; a manual of spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, edited after the author's death.

3. THE PHILOSOPHICAL TEXT - ITS CONTENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

Jan Morawski's philosophical work was important and frequently reprinted during his lifetime, testifying to its significance. It was considered useful and could serve as a useful reference even after the author had ceased to give philosophical lectures. Its publication in France significantly extended the author's authority and expanded his influence beyond the borders of Poland. The book is made up of introductory pages, a dedication of the work, the authority to publish it and an index of questions. The doctrinal text is divided into five disputations of varying sizes, with each containing two, three, four, or five questions. A brief summary of the arguments is as follows:

The first disputation deals with real beings, beings of reason, and possible things, as well as the distinction between essence and existence.

The second disputation focuses on non-being or negations in four questions, including the reality of negations and their relationship to real being and temporal privations of certain perfections.

The third disputation consists of five questions that explore the properties of being, as well as various distinctions and precisions. The author's speculative predilection is particularly evident in this section.

The fourth disputation addresses the topics of causality in both genus and species, including internal and external causation, causality of matter and form, efficient, final, exemplary, and mutual causes, as well as the relationship between cause and effect.

The fifth and final disputation consists of two questions, discussing the division of being into substance and accidents and its categorization into

material, corporeal, and spiritual being. This section also includes a brief discussion of spirit.

4. THE MOST ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AND EXPLAINED DOCTRINE

According to the author, the common being possesses the simplest and highest notion of all, a self-evident concept that can only be declared a posteriori through experience, and cannot be defined a priori. All common definitions of being in scholastic philosophy are rejected, except for that of Antonius Perez,⁴ according to whom being is called “the object of intentional potency.” Both Jan Morawski and the Roman master Martin de Esparza also subscribe to this definition. Morawski advocates for the Suarezian concept of the non-mutual or unequal distinction between the three properties of being: one, true, and good. This precision is considered adequate for being in its own right, but inadequate for common being.

In the comprehensive discussion of being, the author argues that there are no proper mental fictions or chimeras that are completely unreal on the part of a thing. These are objects of cognition to the extent that they give objective truth and, therefore, some reality. The mental being is a real being, but is erroneously known by the mind, not in the act of conceptualization, but in a judgment about some reality that is not correctly assessed by the mind. The question of possible being coincides with the question of the reality of essence itself, taken in itself and separate from existence. The author places the possibility of such essence in divine omnipotence as its efficient cause, against the common view that acknowledges the reality of possible essence prior to its actualization. The author believes that pure possibilities are only external denominations derived from divine power, as Suarez and Esparza also argue.

Similarly, impossibilities and futures are founded in divine omnipotence, which is identified with them. The scholastic dispute about the relationship between essence and existence is solved through distinction. The author acknowledges a real distinction between the possible essence, identified with God, and its existence in the order of things. However, in actually existing being, the author only recognizes the mental distinction (the Suarezian one).

Negations pronounced about things argue for their reality. For cognition, negations presuppose and reveal objects that exist beyond themselves.

4. Antonius Perez SJ (1599–1649), a Spaniard, was a professor of philosophy and theology at the University of Salamanca and in the Roman College. He is the author of the works: *Conclusiones theologicae de Deo Trino et Uno*, 1648; *In Primam Partem Divi Thomae Tractatus quinque*, 1656.

Therefore, negation is identified with an real existing being that conflicts with that negation. Thus, eternal negations, endowed with eternal truth, must be based in God. However, temporal negations and privations must be based on the opposition that exists within created things themselves.

In the third and most extensive debate, there is abundant detail about the properties of entities and their opposing notions, particularly those that are opposed to unity, and various distinctions. Much attention is devoted to the question of unity, especially regarding universal unity or universal concepts, which are one thing that relates to many things and can be present in or predicated of many things. Such concepts arise from mental abstraction, so they are not and cannot be in reality, apart from the thing itself. The reality of several types of distinctions is primarily defended, including modal distinctions and their modalities, which are constituted by the constituent elements of a composite entity such as matter and form, act and potential. In addition to accidental modality, substantial modality are also accepted.

In the section on causality and the causes of being, the concept of cause is explained, along with its connection to the effect and the various types of causality. A cause is defined as a principle that communicates its own being to another and is necessarily connected to its possible effects. Internal causality is distinguished from external causality based on their relationship to the effect, with internal causes constituting the effect through a unifying influence, while external causes act and influence from the outside. The efficient, final, and ideal or exemplary causes interact not separately but jointly in a common influence, participating in it. The origin of one effect from multiple efficient causes that work together is rejected as metaphysically contradictory.

Similarly, the reproduction of itself and something material by two or more forms is rejected. The final short discussion explains the division of beings into four opposing categories: substance and accident, spirit and material or physical entity. The author does not follow the common view that defines these categories as being in itself or in another. Instead, the author conceives substance as a being endowed with its own proper perfection, not ordered to be perfected by something else, and the accident as being capable of perfecting something different from itself. The other two types of beings, spirituality and materiality, are opposed to each other based on their respective relationships to physical extension or space, with spirit excluding it and matter involving it.

5. ORIGINALITY AND SPECIFICITY OF THE PARTICULAR STATEMENTS

Cognition does not create its object but adds itself to it along with the external designation of that object as being or having been known. Any scientific statement implicitly asserts the existence and essence of God as an absolutely necessary Being and immutable Truth, since necessary scientific assertions can only be based on God as an Absolutely Necessary Being. Being in itself is the most common, since universals are most knowable. Physical and metaphysical being taken together constitute the same reality. The perfection of any entity is measured by its lack of existence and its approach to God. The constituent of an entity is not identical to its part. The part implies imperfection and incompleteness, while the constituent does not, as in the example of the Person of the Divine Word in the hypostatic union. Divine omnipotence is the first reason and idea of all things, as the power of the agent is the complete reason for any event. By divine power, prime matter can exist without any form, meaning that prime matter is virtually nothing.

God cannot do absurd things, yet this does not diminish His power and is in fact the pinnacle of His power. Possibility, impossibility, and the power of God are actually the same, differing only rationally. The properties of being are reflections of the Divine Persons: unity of the Father, goodness of the Son, and truth of the Holy Spirit. The negation of negation is something positive. A person's uprightness and rectitude consist in the rectitude of their will, not in the status of their intelligence. Evil can arise not only from the absence of good, but also from its excess, as in the case of a body part that is out of proportion.

6. AUTHOR AND HIS PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENT

a) Nature and Qualification of the Book

As suggested by the title itself, the text does not present a specific philosophical discipline, such as ontology, and cannot be referred to as a manual. Instead, it constitutes a synthesis of philosophy as a whole, primarily metaphysics, in which the most fundamental notions and principles are contained. These notions and principles pertain not only to ontology but also to logic, natural theology, and even scholastic (dogmatic) theology based on divine revelation. In the text, therefore, there is no accurate delimitation between the philosophical and theological modes of understanding. On the contrary, these two types of knowledge complement each other in order to achieve truth more easily. In terms of formal structure, the text can be said to be well-ordered and easy to understand. It explains questions in a stable

order and is equipped with marginal notes that briefly summarize the current argument, making the Latin language used in the book relatively easy for those who are familiar with it.

b) Specification of teachings contained in the text

Jan Morawski's philosophy certainly belongs to the scholastic field and is of Aristotelian-Thomistic origin. However, it is not exclusively so (i.e., Thomas-Aristotelian), but rather is thoroughly developed by Morawski. Morawski's philosophy seems to have a unique kind of scholastic, historical-critical, and eclectic-reconciling structure. It attempts to overcome and transcend various ideas introduced into scholastic philosophy over time, namely by its three particular forms-schools: Thomism, Scotism, and Suarezianism, as well as other branches, so as to form a more general scholastic incorporation of all these schools.

How does Morawski strive to achieve this? He refers to and critically examines and evaluates various authorities from different schools, periods, and nations, primarily from the Society of Jesus from various regions: Spain, Portugal, Italy, Britain, Ireland, Belgium, and elsewhere. However, he does not accept their teachings unreflectively. Rather, he independently examines and distinguishes their teachings, only adopting and preserving what appears to be proven and persuasive after a sincere pursuit of truth. These authorities, such as Thomas Aquinas, Suarez, and Aristotle himself, are not authorities of true name, whose words would have to be believed necessarily. Instead, they are simple seekers of truth whose opinions can be mistaken due to human frailty. Therefore, their writings and sayings must also be investigated, so that only such elements of doctrine are selected that are proven and persuasive and useful for obtaining a fuller understanding of truth. Morawski's doctrine is a synthesis of true name, as it combines several philosophical disciplines, schools, and opinions of many authors used in current questions to make them sufficiently clear and probable. It is not closed within any one system but is open to all doctrines worthy of acceptance, leading to a fuller understanding of truth. The value and international reputation of the French edition of Morawski's philosophical text, as well as his scientific opinions accepted by foreigners, such as Esparza, prove this.

c) The formal and methodological sphere of the doctrine

In presenting his doctrine, Morawski can be described as a Thomist, following Thomas's way of revealing his mind to readers or listeners by proceeding through three stages. First, he puts forward objections or arguments

against the thesis being defended; secondly, he gives his own solution to the question in the proposed thesis along with its proof, and thirdly, he responds to the difficulties posed or that can be posed against the defense of the thesis. This method is observed in the “Summa Theologica” of St. Thomas Aquinas. For clarity and ease, each argument is preceded by a preface or a brief introduction, indicating the order of the questions investigated in the argument and their mutual connection, so that the following main text can be more easily understood. In demonstrating theses, Morawski employs the deductive-syllogistic (speculative) method appropriate for scholastic philosophy, along with the inductive method used in recent sciences. However, there is a greater preponderance of the former. While he is “speculative” in explaining and proving questions, he also recognizes to some extent the importance of experience (induction and experiment) in verifying abstract intuitions.

d) Morawski as a scholastic philosopher

As a follower of the scholastic tradition, Morawski cannot be considered entirely “original” in the strict sense of the word, meaning an exclusive author of his own thoroughly self-elaborated doctrine. However, he can be credited with some broader philosophical “originality” for several reasons: for example, in his conception of Scholastic philosophy, his attitude towards its various forms and schools, in many of the ideas and theses he supports in his philosophy, which are not always in line with other Scholastics and even with commonly accepted views, and in his bold opposition to even the greatest Scholastic authorities, and perhaps in other aspects as well. He was not an absolute follower of one school only, but sought to find the seeds of truth in all things and draw upon them to form his own mind and doctrine that would be most convincing to himself and others. In his philosophical doctrine, elements of all branches of scholastic philosophy coexist peacefully: Thomistic, Scotistic, Ockhamistic, Suarezian, and others drawn from elsewhere that he deemed appropriate and suitable for attaining truth as fully and completely as possible, which was his only concern.

His philosophy also has a historical-critical character. He examines questions in their historical evolution in human thought, taking into account various opinions that have been expressed about them and chooses one to prove while refuting the rest, regardless of their origin and background. As a result, there are frequent references to the written sources of the philosophical tradition, that is, to authorities, among whom Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Suarez stand out in his citations, and from the latter of whom he perhaps drew more ideas than from other authors. Hence, in a certain

sense and to a certain degree, he can be called “Suarezian,” or at least counted among the supporters of Suarezianism. Morawski was also highly educated in philosophical literature, both in his home country and abroad, and drew on works from various eras and almost all the nations prevailing in Europe, including his own. From what has been said so far, Morawski seems worthy of historical-scientific recognition even today.⁵

Translated from Latin by Jacek Surzyn

5. Fr. Roman Darowski SJ, who greatly assisted me in preparing this article, has my grateful appreciation.