Section IV — True judgments and statements regarding beings of reason

First what is obvious: negative judgments, or the propositions which express them, may be true.158 Such judgments may be either necessary or contingent. Thus it is necessarily true, and expressive of what is in reality independent of the mind, to say "a man is not a horse",159 "a man is not a lion",160 or "a horse is not a lion".161 Or it is contingently true to say "the man is not white" (if, e.g., he is black).162 With respect to privations, one can be judged really and
truly distinct from another; e.g. it is true to say "darkness is not blindness," or "blindness is not deafness". As I see it, for Suarez such predications would be necessary and, in a first instance, rooted in the reality of the privations involved. If we were further to fictionalize such privations, making them strict beings of reason, it would still seem that these propositions would be necessarily true. They would be of the same kind, for example, as this: "a chimaera is not a goat-stag", which Suarez regards as true and which involves two impossible beings of reason. Or they would not be too different from this: "imaginary space is not something successive", which (allowing for what we have seen above) seems to involve an impossible subject and a possible predicate; or from this: "a golden mountain is not a chimaera", which involves for Suarez a possible subject and an impossible predicate. In all of these cases, whether

esse indivisibilem, actum moralem esse malum, hominem esse caecum et similia ...

DM 3, 1, n. 7 (XXV, p. 105).

163 Cf. "... vel si utrumque sit ens privatium, ut tenebrae et caecitas, quia ita separantur ac distinguuntur inter se, ...

DM 7, 1, n. 2 (XXV, p. 250); ibid. n. 7 (p. 252). The distinction here can easily be expressed in the negative proposition "Darkness is not blindness".

164 Cf. "... caecitas enim et surditas, etiam quatenus apprehenduntur per modum entium, ut diversa apprehenduntur, ...

DM 54, 5, n. 25 (XXVI, p. 1038). Once more, while Suarez has not expressed a proposition here, to do so is easy enough.

165 Cf. DM 54, 3, n. 2, text in note 64 above; also cf. note 84 and 85, above, for the necessity of the negation itself, which here falls between two privations. The point I am making is that one privation "by its very nature" is not another.

166 Cf. notes 75 and 76 above.

167 Once again, the point is that the negation here would fall between two beings of reason in such a way that one "by its very nature" would not be the other; cf. notes 84 and 85 above; for a better understanding of this, see below, Section V, Number 3, last two paragraphs. Also, on the reality of a distinction between two beings of reason, cf. note 110, above.

168 Cf. "... sic enim concipitur chymaeram non esse hyrocervus, et spatium imaginarium non esse quid successivum." DM 54, 5, n. 16 (XXVI, p. 1036).

169 Ibid.

170 Cf. notes 139-144.

171 Cf. "... imaginatio humana, quae interdum fingit quaedam entia, quae revera nusquam sunt, vel etiam esse non possunt, componendo illa ex his entibus quae sub sensum cadunt, ut cum fingit montem aureum, qui non est, licet sit possibilis; eodem tamen modo fingere potest rem impossibilem, ut chymaeram." DM 54, 2, n. 18 (XXVI, p. 1023). Again, there is no explicit proposition here, but its formulation is obvious.

172 Cf. text in note 171, just preceding; also cf. DM 8, 4, n. 7 (XXV, p. 291). There is in this a question about the ultimate status of a golden mountain. Strictly speaking, for Suarez, it is not a pure being of reason. Rather, it should be real and mind-independent (to the degree that any possible is such). Perhaps here is a place where Suarez without stating it is coming close to a distinction among beings of reason as