

## INDIVIDUATION (*Metaphysics VII, q. 13*)

### The basic question

Does a nature need something added to individuate particular instances?

n. 60: ‘What makes this [singular thing] this and not that, i.e. why a nature is this [singular and] incommunicable to another’. ‘Incommunicable to another’ means cannot be repeated (e.g. Socrates vs. man/humanity – it’s appropriate to speak of two human beings but not two Socrateses).

n. 115: the individual ‘is not divisible into many, and is distinguished from all others according to number’.

### The basic answer

nn. 84, 123-4: yes. These paragraphs more or less state Scotus’s view.

### Assumption from Avicenna

‘Equinity is only equinity. Of itself it is neither one nor several, neither universal nor particular.’<sup>1</sup> (cf. n. 64)

‘Although it is never without [particularity, nevertheless . . .] it is not [particular] . . . but is naturally prior to [it]. . . . In accordance with this natural priority, the what-the-thing-is is the *per se* object of the intellect and is *per se*, as such, considered by the metaphysician and expressed by the definition.’<sup>2</sup>

### Structure of the questions

nn. 1-9: arguments to show that nature needs something added (= Scotus’s view)

[nb the interpolated text in p. 188, fnt 3, after n. 9, gives a further view: it’s form that individuates]

nn. 10-11: *sed contra*

n. 12: two views: (i) individuated by something positive other than the nature; (ii) individuated by a negation.

nn. 13-19: Five versions of (i): (a) n. 13: aggregate of accidents; (b) nn. 14-15: quantity; (c) n. 16: matter; (d) n. 17: existence; (e) n. 18: relation to agent.

nn. 19-30: against all five: four general arguments to show that accidents can’t individuate substances.

nn. 31-50: against each view in turn

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<sup>1</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1, n. 31 (Vatican, VII, 402-3; Spade, 63), quoting Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* 5.1.4 (ed. S. van Riet, Avicenna Latinus, 3 vols (Louvain: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1977-83), II, 228, ll. 32-6).

<sup>2</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.1, n. 32 (Vatican, VII, 403; Spade, 63, translation slightly altered).

nn. 52-9: Three versions of (ii), and refutations: (a) nn. 53-4: nature is of itself individual, universal is merely concept, n. 55 against this; (b) nn. 56-7: double negation individuates, n. 58 against this; (c) n. 59: nature individual by way of conceptual addition.

nn. 60-102<sup>3</sup>: preliminary statement of Scotus's view

n. 60: statement of the question (cf supra)

nn. 61-83: the non-numerical unity of the (common) nature

n. 84: so need some further explanation of singularity/individuality

nn. 85-91: responses to the arguments in 1-9 (Scotus takes the args in nn. 1-5 to be on his side, and nn. 6-7, 10-11 to be against him)

nn. 92-102: responses to the arguments in favour of (ic) [= nn. 93-5], (ib) [= nn. 98-100] (he ignores (ia), (ie)), also statement of the interpolated view from n. 9, and a way of understanding it such that it conforms to Scotus's view [= nn. 96-97]

nn. 103-8: six arguments against this view (= n. 84) assuming for the most part (iib) (= nominalism)<sup>4</sup>

nn. 109-14: replies

nn. 115-81: Scotus's view developed

nn. 115-24 the solution developed using the analogy of genus and difference to explain the relation between species and individuator.

nn. 125-30: six arguments against Scotus's view highlighting ways in which the analogy generates problems

nn. 131-81: replies to these arguments

n. 131: general presupposition: common is prior to the singular, and can exist without any singular but not without all of them (cf. n. 136)

nn. 132-40: reply to the third argument

n. 141: reply to the first argument

nn. 142-4: reply to the second argument

nn. 145-50: reply to the fourth argument

n. 151: reply to the fifth argument

n. 152: reply to the sixth argument

nn. 153-7: three arguments against Scotus's view on the supposed grounds that it means that each individual is its own species

nn. 158-62: reply to the first argument

nn. 163-6: reply to the second argument

nn. 167-81: replies to the third argument

### **The metaphysical structure of a particular**

‘Whatever is in this stone is numerically one, either primarily or *per se* or denominatively. Primarily, say, as that through which such a unity belongs to this composite. *Per se*, the stone

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<sup>3</sup> Lines 2-5 of n. 61 are mistranslated: ‘. . . for anything whose proper real unity is less than numerical unity is not of itself one by numerical unity, whether it is not a sufficient cause of such unity or is not of itself a this . . .’. And n. 77 clearly isn't quite right, although it's a possible translation of the Latin: ‘How in the absence of thought is there a greater and lesser unity in something?’

<sup>4</sup> Note: the translation suggests misleadingly that (iib) is Scotus's view and that these objections are against (iib).

itself, of which what is primarily one with this unity is a *per se* part. Only denominatively, what is potential and is perfected by the actual and is so to speak denominatively related to its actuality.’<sup>5</sup>

### **The common nature and non-numerical unity**

Key paragraphs in favour of non-numerical unity:

nn. 1-5, 65-71, 83 (n. 67 corresponds most closely to the kinds of argument that one might find in the modern literature on universals)

n. 63: non-numerical unity belongs to ‘some grade of being’

n. 77: non-numerical unity and the particular – compare this: ‘In the same item that is one in number there is some entity (*aliqua entitas*) from which there follows a unity less than numerical unity is. Such unity is real, and what such unity belongs to is of itself formally one by numerical unity. I grant therefore that this real unity does not belong to anything existing in two individuals, but in one.’<sup>6</sup>

So step one in the overall argument attempts to show that there is something divisible into subjective parts.

### **Division into subjective parts**

Step two: show that particulars are not these kinds of thing. He develops the idea from n. 84 in nn. 118-24

n. 118: there is no way in which Sizzles can be divided into more Sizzleles (he considers separation of form and matter [essential parts], and quantitative division).

Step three: account for this fact.

nn. 119-20: none of solutions (i) and (ii) supra (nn. 12-59)

nn. 121-4: it’s like a specific difference, but for the individual – an individual difference.

### **The universal**

n. 131: Recall Avicenna. The common nature as thought = the universal, a concept predicable of many by the intellect forming the complex ‘ $x$  is  $\phi$ ’. This is the complete universal, not ‘actually in and of many’ but only ‘in proximate potency’.

### **Unitive containment**

n. 132: The idea is that the (individuated) common nature and the individual difference are both necessary to (e.g.) Socrates and vice versa.

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<sup>5</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, p. 1, qq. 5-6, n. 175 (Vatican, VII, 477-8; Spade, 103).

<sup>6</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.5-6, n. 172 (Vatican, VII, 476; Spade, 102).

nn. 136-8 (+ n. 144): But the common nature in Plato is independent of this, so Socrates is inseparable from the nature but not vice versa.

### **Some other fiddly bits**

Scotus thinks that the 'haecceity' is an individual form. In nn. 96, 106-8, 112-13, that's the kind of form he's talking about. In n. 110, talking about 'this animal' is a way of talking about different species of animal, not different particular animals.

nn. 145-50 is about the plurality of forms. I can't make head or tail of n. 148.

This might help:

'Every quidditative entity (whether partial or total) in some genus is of itself indifferent as a quidditative entity to this individual entity and to that one, in such a way that as a quidditative entity it is naturally prior to this individual entity insofar as it is this. As naturally prior, just as it does not belong to it to be this, so the opposite of being this is not incompatible with it from its very notion. And just as a composite does not insofar as it is a nature include its individual entity by which it is formally this, so neither does matter insofar as it is a nature include its individual entity by which it is this matter, nor does form insofar as it is a nature include its individual entity by which it is this form.

Therefore, this individual entity is not matter or form or the composite, inasmuch as each of these is a nature. Rather it is the ultimate reality of the being that is matter or that is form or that is the composite.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Scotus, *Ordinatio* 2.3.1.5-6, nn. 187-8 (Vatican, VII, 483-4; Spade, 106-7, slightly altered).