

## VI. 8. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS

IN THESE SELECTIONS WE SEE SCOTUS STARTING FROM THE AVICENNIAN notion of an essence or nature and proceeding to a theory of how, on the one hand, such a nature gets to be a universal, and, on the other hand, how it gets to be an individual.

VI.8.1. Natures are not of themselves individuated  
(*Ordinatio* II, dist.iii, pt.1, qu.1)

[Scotus treats universality as a "second intention," i.e. it belongs to something only in so far as that something is thought of, i.e. is a "first intention." But the nature which is thought of has a real existence in extra-mental reality where it is "contracted" to various individuals.]

As regards the third distinction we must inquire into the personal distinction in the angels. But in order to get a view of that distinction in them we first have to inquire into the individual distinction in material substances. Different people have said different things about this and as a consequence they have differed on the matter of a plurality of individuals in the same species of angel. So that we may see distinctly what each of the different opinions thinks the question is regarding the distinction or indistinction of material substance, I am going to pose separate questions for each of the different ways of approaching the matter, and first:

Is it on account of itself, i.e. on account of its own nature, that a material substance is individual or singular?

[1] In favor of an affirmative answer: In *Metaphysics* VII<sup>1</sup> the Philosopher shows - against Plato - that "the substance of any thing whatsoever is peculiar to that of which it is the substance and does not belong to anything else," therefore, etc. Therefore a material substance in virtue of its

own nature, everything else left aside, is peculiar to that in which it exists, and this in such a way that in virtue of its own nature it cannot belong to anything else. Therefore, in virtue of its own nature it is individual.

[2] Against this: [2.1] Whatever belongs to something in virtue of its own essential character belongs to it in any instance; therefore, if the nature of stone were of itself *this*, no matter what item the nature of stone is in, that nature would be *this* stone. The consequent here is absurd when we speak of determinate singularity, as we are in this question.

[2.2] Moreover, what of itself possesses one of a pair of opposites will of itself reject the other opposite. Therefore, if a nature were of itself one in number,<sup>2</sup> it would reject numerical multiplicity.

[3] Here it is said that just as a nature of itself is formally a nature so also it is of itself singular, and this in such a way that there is no need to seek a cause of its singularity other than the cause of the nature, as if the nature were a nature before (temporally or naturally)<sup>3</sup> it was a singular and then were contracted to make a singular by something arriving in it.

[3.1] This is shown by an analogy: Just as a nature of itself has true being outside the soul but has being in the soul only in virtue of something else, i.e. in virtue of the soul itself (the reason for this is that true being belongs to it unqualifiedly, but being in the soul is its being qualifiedly),<sup>4</sup> so uni-

versality belongs to a thing only in virtue of its qualified being, namely being in the soul. Singularity, on the other hand, belongs to a thing in virtue of its true being and thus belongs to it of itself and unqualifiedly. Therefore, we should seek a cause for why a nature is universal and we have to propose the intellect as this cause. But we need not seek some cause for why a nature is singular, i.e. a cause, other than the nature of the thing, that acts as an intermediary between it and its singularity. Rather the same causes which cause the unity of the thing also cause its singularity. Therefore, etc.

[4] Against this proposal it is argued as follows:

[4.1] The object insofar as it is the object is naturally prior to the act itself, and, according to you, as prior the object is of itself singular, because this is always the case with a nature when it is not considered as qualified or in respect of the being which it has in the soul. Therefore an intellect that ideates that object under the character of a universal ideates it under a character opposed to its own character, because as it precedes that act it is determined of itself to the opposite of that character, i.e. of that character of a universal.

[4.2] Moreover, what has a real unity, peculiar to it and sufficient for it, but less than a numerical unity, is not of itself one by a numerical unity (i.e. is not of itself *this*). But the nature existing in this stone has a real and sufficient unity peculiar to it, and one less than numerical unity. Therefore etc.

The major is self-evident because nothing is of itself one by a unity greater than the unity sufficient for it. For if its own peculiar unity, which is due to something of itself, were less than numerical unity, numerical unity would not belong to it from its own nature and in virtue of itself. Otherwise just from its own nature alone it would have both a greater and lesser unity. But these when taken as about the same item and in respect of the same item are opposed, because a multiplicity opposed to the greater unity can co-exist without contradiction with the lesser unity, but this multiplicity can-

not co-exist with the greater unity because it rejects it; therefore etc.

Proof of the minor: If there is no real unity of the nature less than singularity and every unity other than the unity of singularity, and which belongs to a specific nature, is less than a real unity, then there will be no real unity less than numerical unity. The consequent is false as I will prove in five or six ways. Therefore etc.

[4.2.1] The first way runs as follows: According to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* X,<sup>5</sup> "In every genus there is one primary item which is the standard and measure." This unity of the primary measure is real, because the Philosopher shows<sup>6</sup> that the primary character of a measure belongs to one item, and explains through ranking how in every genus that to which the character of measuring belongs is one. But this unity belongs to something insofar as that item is primary in its genus; therefore it is real, because the items that are measured are real and they are really measured, but a real being cannot be really measured by a being of thought.<sup>7</sup> Therefore this unity is real.

Further, the unity is not numerical because there is no singular in a genus which is the measure of all the items in that genus. For, according to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* III<sup>8</sup> "in individuals of the same species it is not the case that this one is prior and that one posterior."

Although the Commentator explains<sup>9</sup> the notion of something prior that constitutes something posterior, this makes no difference to the minor premises, because The Philosopher there intends to give as the reason why Plato posited a separated character for a species but not in the case of a genus, that there is in species an essential ranking on account of which the posterior can be reduced to the prior; and therefore, according to him it is not necessary to posit the idea of a genus through participation in which the species are what they are, but rather only the idea of a species to which all the other species are reduced. On the other hand, according

5 Ch.1, 1052b18.

6 *Ibid.*, 19-24.

7 See glossary entry for 'being of thought.'

8 Ch.3, 999a12-13.

9 Averroes, Comment 11 on *Meta.* III.

1 Ch.13, 1038b10-11. See selection VI.2.5.

2 See selections VI.1.1-3, for the notion of something 'one in number.'

3 See glossary entry for 'order of nature.'

4 See glossary entry for 'qualified/unqualified.'

to Plato and according to The Philosopher who relates this, in individuals there is no such ranking whether or not one constitutes another. Therefore etc. Thus it is the Philosopher's intention here to agree with Plato that among individuals of the same species there is no essential ranking. Therefore no individual is through itself a measure of the items in its own species; consequently no numerical or individual unity [is such a measure].

[4.2.2] Further I show in a second way that the same consequent is false, because, according to that Philosopher in *Physics* VII,<sup>10</sup> comparison takes place within an indivisible species because in that case there is a single nature, but not in a genus because a genus does not have that sort of unity.

This difference of unities is not due to thought, because the concept of the genus is one in number in the same way as the concept of the species is; otherwise, no concept would be said *in quid*<sup>11</sup> of several species (and thus no concept would be a genus), but rather just as many concepts would be said of species as there are concepts of species, and so in each predication the same item would be predicated of itself. Likewise the unity of the concept or of the non-concept is irrelevant there to the intention of the Philosopher, i.e. to the question of whether there is comparison or not. Consequently, the Philosopher means there that the specific nature is one by the unity of the specific nature, but he does not mean that it is one by a numerical unity, because comparison does not occur in the case of numerical unity. Therefore, etc.

[4.2.3] Further, in a third way, according to The Philosopher in *Metaphysics* V, (the chapter about relation),<sup>12</sup> same, similar and equal are based on one in such a way that, although similarity has for its basis a thing in some qualitative genus, the relation is real only if it has a real basis and a real proximate character of being based. Therefore, the unity which is required of the basis of the relation of similarity is real; but it is not a numerical unity, because nothing one and the same is similar or equal to itself.

[4.2.4] Further, in a fourth way, for a single real

opposition there are two real primary terms; but contrariety is a real opposition. This is clear because one really corrupts or destroys the other even when every operation of the intellect has been excluded; this occurs only because they are contraries. Therefore each primary term of this opposition is real and one by some real unity; but not by a numerical unity, because then exclusively *this* white would be the primary contrary to *this* black, or exclusively *that* white to *that* black, which is absurd because then there would be just as many primary contraries as there are contrary individuals. Therefore etc.

[4.2.5] Further, in a fifth way, for a single action of a sense there is an object that is one in virtue of some real unity; but not a numerical unity. Therefore, there is some other real unity than numerical unity.

Proof of the minor premiss: A power that apprehends an object in this way, i.e. insofar as it is one by this unity, apprehends it insofar as it is distinct from anything which is not one by this unity. But a sense does not apprehend an object insofar as it is distinct from anything which is not one by that numerical unity. This is clear because no sense discerns that this ray of sunlight numerically differs from some other ray, and yet they are diverse on account of the sun's motion. If all common sensibles, for example diversity of location or situation, were eliminated, and if through divine power two quantities were put in existence at the same time and these were completely similar and equal in whiteness, sight would not discern that there were two whites there. Yet if it apprehended one or the other of them insofar as that item were one by a numerical unity, it would apprehend that item insofar as it is one item *distinct* by a numerical unity.

On this point it can also be argued that the primary object of a sense is one in itself by some real unity, because just as an object of this power, insofar as it is an object, precedes the intellect, so also in respect of its real unity it precedes every action of the intellect.

But this argument is not as conclusive as the pre-

<sup>10</sup> Ch. 4, 245a3-8.

<sup>11</sup> See glossary entry for '*in quid*'.

<sup>12</sup> Ch. 15, 1021a9-12.

<sup>13</sup> See glossary entry for 'basis of a relation.'

ceding, for one can propose that some primary object, as it is adequate to a faculty, is something common, abstracted from all particular objects, and thus it has only the unity of commonness to those several particular objects. At any rate, this proposal does not seem to deny that the single object of a single act of sensing necessarily has a real unity that is less than numerical unity.

[4.2.6] Further, in a sixth way, if every real unity is numerical, then every real diversity is numerical. But the consequent is false, because every numerical diversity, insofar as it is numerical, is equal, and thus all things would be equally distinct. Then it follows that the intellect would no more be able to abstract something common from Socrates and Plato than from Socrates and a line, and every universal would be a pure fabrication of the intellect.

The first consequence [that if every real unity is numerical, then every real diversity is numerical] is shown in two ways: First, one and several, same and diverse, are opposites (see *Metaphysics* X, ch.5).<sup>14</sup> But one of a pair of opposites is said just as often as the other one is said (see *Topics* 1).<sup>15</sup> Therefore, to any unity corresponds its own peculiar diversity.

Secondly, each of the terms of any diversity is in itself one, and it is diverse from the other term in the very same way by which it is one in itself, so that the unity of one term seems to be through itself the reason for the diversity of the other term.

This conclusion is defended in another way. If in this thing there is only a real numerical unity, then any entity there is in that thing is of itself one in number. Therefore this and that are primarily diverse in virtue of every entity in them, because they are diverse items that in no way agree in some one item.

It is also defended in this way: Numerical diversity is for this singular not to be that singular, given the entity of both terms. But such unity necessarily belongs to either term.

[4.2.7] Further: Even if no intellect existed, fire would generate<sup>16</sup> fire and destroy water, and there

would be some real unity between the generator and the generated in virtue of a form on account of which there would be univocal generation.<sup>17</sup> For the intellect that considers it does not make the generation be univocal; rather it apprehends it to be univocal.

[5] To the question, then, I concede the conclusions of those arguments, and I say that a material substance is not on account of its own nature *this* of itself, because, as the first argument proves [4.1], if it were, the intellect would not be able to ideate it under an aspect opposed [to *this*] without ideating its object under an aspect of ideation that conflicts with the character of such an object.

Also, as the second argument [4.2] with all its proofs deduces, there is some real unity in things, apart from all operations of the intellect, which is less than numerical unity or the unity proper to a singular, and this unity belongs to the nature in virtue of itself. In virtue of this unity that is peculiar to the nature as it is a nature, the nature is indifferent to the unity of singularity; therefore, it is not of itself one by that unity, i.e. by the unity of singularity.

How to understand this can in some way be seen from the remark of Avicenna in *Metaphysics* V, ch.1<sup>18</sup> where he maintains that "horseness is just horseness; it is not of itself either one or many, either universal or particular." I read this as meaning: It is not of itself one by a numerical unity nor many by a plurality opposed to that unity; neither is it actually universal, i.e. in the way that something is universal when it is an object of the intellect, nor is it of itself particular. For although it is never really apart from some of these, of itself, nevertheless, it is not any of them, but rather is naturally prior to them all.

In virtue of its natural priority it is what something is and by itself an object of the intellect, and by itself as such it is studied by the metaphysician and is expressed through a definition. Propositions that are true in the first mode are true by reason of

<sup>14</sup> Actually ch.3, 1054b22-23.

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps *Topics* II, 7, 1136a34.

<sup>16</sup> See glossary entry for 'natural generation.'

<sup>17</sup> See glossary entry for 'univocal production.'

<sup>18</sup> *Philosophia Prima* (sive *Metaphysica*), vol.2, p.228. (See selection VI.7.1.)

a quiddity<sup>19</sup> taken in this way, because nothing is said *per se* in the first mode<sup>20</sup> of a quiddity unless it is essentially included in it, insofar as it is abstracted from all those items which are naturally posterior to it.

But not only is the nature itself of itself indifferent to being in the intellect and in the particular, and consequently to being universal and particular or singular, but also when it has being in the intellect it does not have universality primarily in virtue of itself. For although it is ideated under universality as under a mode of ideating it, still universality is not part of its primary concept, because it is not a metaphysician's concept but a logician's, for, according to him [Avicenna], the logician studies second intentions<sup>21</sup> that are applied to first intentions. Therefore, the primary ideation is of the nature as not ideated along with some mode, neither a mode which belongs to it in the intellect nor one which belongs to it outside the intellect, even though universality is the mode of ideating that ideated item; but it is not a mode that is itself ideated.

And just as the nature is not of itself universal in virtue of that being, but rather universality happens to that nature in virtue of the first character of it in virtue of which it is an object, so also in things outside where the nature exists with singularity the nature is not of itself determined to that singularity; rather it is naturally prior to the character that it contracts it to that singularity, and insofar as it is naturally prior to that contracting factor it is not repellent to it to be without that contracting factor. And just as the object in the intellect in virtue of that entity of it and universality has true intelligible being, so also in reality the nature has in virtue of that entity true real being outside the soul, — also in virtue of that entity it has a unity proportional to itself which is indifferent to singularity in such a way that it does not of itself conflict with that unity which is given with any unity of singularity.

This is what I mean by saying that the nature has a real unity that is less than numerical unity. And although it does not of itself have it in such a way that it is within the definition of the nature (since "horseness is just horseness," according to Avicenna in *Metaphysics* V),<sup>22</sup> still that unity is an attribute peculiar to the nature in virtue of its primary entity, and consequently it is not of itself *this* either intrinsically or in virtue of the entity peculiar to it that is necessarily included in the nature itself in virtue of its primary entity.

[6] But against this there seem to be two objections:

[6.1] One arises because this view seems to propose that a universal is something real in things, which runs counter to what the Commentator [Averroes] says in *De Anima* I, comment 8: "The intellect produces universality in things in such a way that it exists only through the intellect." Thus it is just a being of thought. For that nature, as it exists in this stone and yet is naturally prior to the singularity of the stone, is, according to what was said, indifferent to this singular and to that one.

[6.2] Further, Damascene<sup>23</sup> says in chapter 8 [of *De Fide Orthodoxa*]: "We have to realize that it is one thing to consider something as it is in reality, another to consider it as it is in reason and thought. Therefore, and more specifically, in all creatures the separation of substrates is considered to be in reality (for Peter and Paul are considered to be separate in reality), but commonness and linkage [of predicate to subject] are considered by reason and thought as in the intellect alone (for we apprehend by the intellect that Peter and Paul are of a single nature and have one common nature); "For these substrates are not in each other; rather each is set apart on its own, i.e. is separated as a thing." Later he says: "But the reverse is the case in the holy and super-substantial Trinity, for there, a single common item is considered to be in reality," "while later the division is considered to be in thought."

### [7. Replies]

[7.1] To the first objection [6.1] I say that the actual universal is what has an indifferent unity in virtue of which it is the same in its proximate power, since, according to the philosopher in *Posterior Analytics* I,<sup>24</sup> "the universal is what is one in many and of many." For nothing, no matter what unity it has, is such in reality that in virtue of that precise unity it has a proximate potential in respect of every *suppositum* for a predication that says *this* is *this*. This is because, although there is something that exists in reality which does not reject being in a singularity other than the one in which it is, still it cannot be truly said of any item beneath it that it is it. This is possible only for an object which is the same in number and actually before the intellect. Certainly this, as an object of the intellect, has even a numerical unity of an object, and in virtue of this it is the same item predicable of every singular by saying that *this* is *this*.

From this it is clear how to refute the remark that the agent intellect produces universality in things by the fact that of every item which is what something is and exists in the imagination it can be said that it does not reject being in something else, and by the fact that the intellect strips bare this item existing in the imagination. For no matter where it exists before it has objective being<sup>25</sup> in the intellect, whether in reality or in the imagination, whether it has certain existence or existence inferred by argument (and so such a nature is not by means of some light, but rather always of itself, something which does not reject being in something else), still it is not such that being said of anything belongs to it by a proximate potential, rather it is such by a proximate potential only when it exists in the possible intellect.<sup>27</sup>

Therefore, there is in reality a common item which is not of itself *this*, and consequently it of itself does not reject being *not-this*. But such a common item is not actually universal, because it lacks that indifference in virtue of which the complete universal is universal, i.e. in virtue of which as

the same item by some identity it is predicable of any individual in such a way that any one of them is it.

[7.2] To the second objection from Damascene [6.2] I say that there is not in creatures a common item that is really one in the way in God there is a common item that is really one. For in God the common item is singular and individual, since the divine nature itself of itself is *this*, and it is obvious that no universal in creatures is really one in that way. To propose otherwise would be to propose that some individual created nature was predicated of many individuals by a predication that says *this* is *this*, just as we say that the Father is God and the Son is the same God.

Nevertheless, there is in creatures something common that is one by a real unity but a unity less than numerical unity. Certainly this common item is not so common that it is predicable of many, although it is so common that it does not reject being in something other than that in which it is.

Thus it is clear in two ways how the authority [i.e. Damascene] is not against me. First, because he talks of the unity of singularity in God, and in this sense not only the created universal is not one but neither in creatures is the common item one.

Secondly, because he speaks of a common predicable, not just of the common item that is in fact determined [to an individual] even though it does not reject being in something else. Such a common item can be posited as real only in creatures.

[8] From what has been said it is clear how to reply to the principal argument [1]: The Philosopher refutes the fiction he credits to Plato, namely that this human being who exists *per se* and who is posited as an Idea is through itself universal to every human being, because "every substance that exists *per se* is peculiar to that of which it is [the substance]," i.e. either it is of itself peculiar or it is made peculiar by something that contracts it, and once the contracting factor is given it cannot belong to something else, although it does not of itself reject belonging to something else.

19 See glossary entry for 'quiddity.'

20 See glossary entry for 'essential-in-the-first-mode.'

21 See glossary entry for 'intention.'

22 See fn. 18.

23 St. John Damascene, who in the 8th century led the Christian community in Damascus when it was already under Moslem rule.

24 See glossary entry for 'suppositum.'

25 Ch. 4, 73b26-33.

26 See glossary entry for 'esse obiectivum.'

27 See glossary entry for 'passive or possible intellect.'

This gloss is also true when we use 'substance'<sup>28</sup> in the sense in which it means a nature. Then it follows that an Idea will not be the substance of Socrates because it is not the nature of Socrates, because it is neither of itself peculiar to Socrates nor made peculiar to Socrates so that it is only in him — rather according to him [Plato] it is also in something else.

But if 'substance' is taken for primary substance, then it is true that any substance is of itself peculiar to that of which it is [the substance]; and then it follows much more that the Idea, which he claims is a substance that exists *per se*, cannot in that sense be the substance of Socrates or of Plato. But the first alternative suffices for what we have said.

[9] In response to the defense of the opinion [3]: It is clear that commonness and singularity do not relate to a nature in the way being in the intellect and true being outside the soul do, because commonness belongs to the nature as outside the intellect, as does singularity. Commonness belongs to the nature of itself, while singularity belongs to the nature through something in reality that contracts it. But universality does not belong to the thing of itself.

Therefore I allow that we do need to seek a cause of universality, but we do not need to seek a cause of commonness other than the nature itself. And given there is commonness in the nature itself in virtue of its own entity and unity, we necessarily need to seek a cause of the singularity, which adds something further to the nature to which it belongs.

VI.8.2. What makes a Substance individual (from *Ordinatio* II, dist.3, qu.6)

[Here Scotus explains as best he can the sort of entity which he believes "contracts" the common nature to an individual. He treats it as analogous to a specific difference. The whole theory is attacked by Ockham in selection VI.9.1.]

[1] Therefore in answer to the question I say that yes [a material substance is individual on account

of some positive entity that of itself determines a nature to singularity].

[1.1] For this I add the following argument: Just as unity in general is itself a consequence of entity in general, so any sort of unity is of itself a consequence of some entity. Therefore unqualified unity, such as is the unity of the individual which we have often described above as that which rejects division into several subjective parts<sup>29</sup> and which rejects not being *this*, i.e. a signed item, if it exists in beings (which everyone supposes), is of itself a consequence of some *per se* entity. But it is not a consequence of the *per se* entity of the nature, because that has its own *per se* real unity, just as was proven in the resolution of the first question. Therefore, it is a consequence of some other entity that determines that [nature], and this [other entity] with the entity of the nature produces something that is one *per se*, for the whole possessing this unity is complete of itself.

[1.2] Again, every difference of differences<sup>30</sup> ultimately leads back to something primarily different (otherwise there would be no point at which we stop finding differences). But individuals are different in the strict sense because they are different beings with something the same. Therefore their differences lead back to some items which are primarily different. Moreover, these primarily diverse items are not the nature in this and the nature in that, because that by which items agree formally is not the same as that by which they differ really, although what is really distinct can be the same as what really agrees. For being distinct is quite different from being that by which something is primarily differentiated, and consequently likewise for unity. Therefore besides the nature in this and in that there are some items that are primarily different by which this and that differ (one of them in this and another in that). These cannot be negations — see the second question; nor can they be accidents — see the fourth question. Therefore they will be some positive entities that of themselves determine the nature.

[2] Against the first argument [1.1] it is objected that if there is some real unity less than numerical unity, it belongs to something that is either in numerically the same item or is in something else. Not to something in numerically the same item, because whatever is in numerically the same item is one in number; not to something in two items because in them there is nothing that is really one, since that feature is exclusive to the case of the divine *supposita* (as we explained in discussing above what John Damascene said).<sup>31</sup>

[3] I answer: Just as was said on this subject in the resolution of the first question, the nature is naturally prior to *this* nature and its own distinctive unity, consequent on the nature as a nature, is naturally prior to its unity as *this* nature, and it is under this character that there is metaphysical consideration of the nature, a definition is assigned to it and we have *per se* in the first way.<sup>32</sup> Propositions. Therefore in the same item that is one in number there is some entity on which is consequent a unity that is less than numerical unity, and it is real. That to which such a unity belongs is not formally of itself one item by a numerical unity. I allow, then, that a real unity does not belong to something that exists in two individuals but rather [to something that exists] in one.

[4] And when you object: "Whatever is in numerically the same individual is numerically the same," [4.1] I answer first by citing an analogous and clearer case: This argument is invalid: Whatever is in a single species<sup>33</sup> is one in species. Therefore, color in whiteness is one in species. Therefore, color does not have a unity less than the unity of a species. For, just as we said elsewhere (namely in book I, the question about attributes,<sup>34</sup> before the resolution of the principle argument about attributes, by way of resolving the first point of doubt) that something can be called alive denominatively,<sup>35</sup> as a body is, or *per se* in the first way, as a human

being is (also in this way a surface is called white denominatively while a white surface is called white *per se* in the first way, because the subject includes the predicate), so I say that a potential which is restricted by an actual item, is informed by that actual item, and through that is informed by the unity consequent on that actuality or that act is one by that actual item's own unity, but it is one this way denominatively. It is not, however, this way one of itself, not in the first way, nor through an essential part. Therefore, color in whiteness is one in species, but it is not one of itself, not *per se*, nor primarily, but rather only denominatively. The specific difference, however, is primarily one because it primarily rejects being divided into items that are many in species. Whiteness is one in species *per se*, but not primarily, because it is one in species by something intrinsic to itself, i.e. by the difference. Thus I allow that whatever is in this stone is one in number either primarily, or *per se*, or denominatively. Primarily [one in number], perhaps, is that by which such a unity belongs to this composite. *Per se* [one in number] is this stone, of which that is a part which is primarily one by this unity. Only denominatively [one in number] is that potential which is perfected by this actual item and which sort of denominatively relates to its actuality and unity.

[4.2] Further by explaining this resolution: What this entity is in virtue of which the perfect unity exists can be explained by analogy with the entity from which we get the specific difference.<sup>36</sup> Certainly the specific difference, or the entity from which we get the specific difference can be related to that which is beneath it, or to that which is above it, or to that which is on its own level.

[4.2.1] In the first way [i.e. as related to what is beneath it], the specific difference and the specific entity reject being divided into items essentially many in species or nature, and in virtue of it the whole of which that entity is a *per se* part rejects such division. Likewise in the case we propose, this

31 See previous selection [7.2].

32 See glossary entry for 'essential-in-the-first-mode.'

33 See glossary entry for 'species/genus.'

34 *Ord.* I, d.8, n.214 (Balic IV, p.271).

35 See glossary entry for 'denominative term.'

36 See glossary entry for 'specific difference.'

28 See glossary entry for 'substance.'

29 I.e., 'paris' which it could be predicated of in the way 'animal' is predicated of 'rabbit,' 'goose,' 'cow,' etc.

30 See selection VI.3.1., pp. 3ff.

individual entity primarily rejects being divided into any subjective parts whatsoever, and in virtue of it the whole of which that entity is a part rejects such division. The only difference between these cases lies in this, that the unity of the specific nature is less than that unity [of the individual], and for that reason the former unity does not exclude every division into subjective parts but only that division which is of essential parts. The latter unity, however, excludes all division. This sufficiently confirms what we proposed, for, given that any unity less than that unity [of the individual] has its own entity on which it is of itself consequent, it seems unlikely that this most perfect unity would not have its own entity on which it is consequent.

[4.2.2] When we relate the specific nature to what is above it, I say that the reality from which we get the specific difference is actual in relation to the reality from which we get the genus or generic character. This is the case in such a way that the one reality is not formally the other; otherwise, in the definition there would be redundancy because the genus alone (or the difference alone) would suffice for the definition, since it would indicate the whole entity of the defined.

Nevertheless, sometimes the restricting item is different from the form from which we get the generic character, namely, when the species adds some thing over and above the nature of the genus. Sometimes, however, it is not another thing but only another formality or another formal concept of the same thing. On account of this some specific differences have concepts that are not unqualifiedly simple, for example those we get from the final abstraction of the form. (In dist. 3 of book I we spoke of this distinction among specific differences, how some specific differences include being and some do not.)

The reality of the individual is similar to the specific reality in this respect: it is a sort of act that determines the reality of the species, which is a sort of possible and potential item. But it is dissimilar in this respect: we never get it from an added form; rather we get it exclusively from the final reality of

the form. Also it is dissimilar in this respect: the specific reality establishes the composite of which it is a part in quidditative being, because it is a quidditative entity; this reality of the individual, however, is primarily diverse from all quidditative entity.

This is shown by the fact that when we apprehend any quidditative entity (speaking now of limited quidditative entity), we find it is common to many and it does not reject being said of many items each of which is it. Therefore, this entity, which of itself is an entity different from a quiddity or a quidditative entity, cannot establish the whole of which it is a part in quidditative being, but rather in some other sort of being.

Also since in the works of the Philosopher quiddity is frequently called 'form' (This is clear in *Metaphysics* V, the chapter on 'cause',<sup>37</sup> as well as in many other places; also in *Metaphysics* VII, the chapter on parts of a definition,<sup>38</sup> he says, "in any items where there is no matter the what-it-is is the same as that of which it is [the what-it-is]. As we will explain, he speaks here of matter and form.) and in his works 'material' means whatever has a restricted quiddity (Also Boethius in his little book *On the Trinity*<sup>39</sup> claims that no form can be the subject of an accident, because a form is said *in quid* of anything else. Also if humanity is a subject, this belongs to it not insofar as it is a form. Certainly humanity is not the form of one or the other part of the composite, i.e. of the form or of the matter; rather it is the form of the whole composite that has a restricted quiddity or in which there is a restricted quiddity.)—given this, every specific reality establishes [the whole of which it is a part] in formal being since in quidditative being, and the reality of the individual establishes [the whole of which it is a part] exclusively in material being, i.e. in restricted being. From this follows the logical distinction that the one is essentially formal, the other material, because the latter establishes [the whole of which it is a part] in the character of a subject while the former establishes [the whole of which it is a part] exclusively in the character of a predicate, and a formal predicate has the character of a form while a subject has the character of matter.

37 Ch. 2, 1013a.26-28.

38 Ch. 11, 1037a.32-b.5.

39 Ch. 2, (PL 64, 1250).

[4.2.3] Thirdly, when we relate the specific difference to what is on the same level as it, i.e. to another specific difference, we find that although sometimes it can be non-primarily diverse from another, as is the entity which we get from the form, still the ultimate specific difference is primarily diverse from another, i.e. the one which has an unqualifiedly simple concept [is primarily diverse]. In this regard I say that the individual difference resembles the specific difference of the ultimate sort, because every individual entity is primarily diverse from any other.

From this it is clear how to answer the following objection: This [individual] entity and that [individual] entity are either of the same sort or not. If they are, then some entity can be abstracted from them, and this will be specific. Then of this entity we will have to ask what restricts it to this entity and that entity. If we say it is restricted of itself, then with equal reason we could have stopped with the nature of a stone; if we say it is restricted by something else, then we have an infinite regress. If they are of different sorts, then also the item they are a constituent of will be of different sorts and thus will not be individuals of the same species.

I answer: Ultimate specific differences are primarily diverse, and therefore from them nothing that is *per se* one item can be abstracted. But from this it does not follow that the items they are a constituent of are primarily diverse and not of some one type. For that some items are equally differentiated can be understood in two ways: either that they are equally incompatible, i.e. that they cannot belong to the same thing, or that they equally lack agreement in anything. In the first sense it is true that differentiated items are just as diverse as the very items that differentiate them, for the differentiating items cannot be incompatible without the differentiated items being incompatible. In the second sense it is universally impossible [for the differentiated items to be just as diverse as the items that differentiate them] because the differentiated items not only include the differentiating items but something else as well which is a sort of potential in respect of the distinguishing items, and yet the distinguishing items in it have nothing in common.

As regards individual entities I answer, just as for

the primarily diverse differences, that they are primarily diverse, i.e. they have nothing the same in common, and yet it is not necessary for the differentiated items to be unqualifiedly differentiated. Still, just as those [individual] entities are incompatible, so also are the individuals having those entities.

[5] And if you ask me what is this individual entity from which we get the individual — is it matter or form or a composite?

I answer: Every partial or total quidditative entity, belonging to a genus is of itself indifferent as a quidditative entity to this entity and to that, in such a way that as a quidditative entity it is naturally prior to that entity as it is *this*. And since it is naturally prior, just as being *this* does not belong to it so it does not in virtue of its own character reject its opposite. Also, just as a composite does not insofar as it is a nature include its own entity by which it is formally *this*, so neither does the matter insofar as it is a nature include its own entity by which it is *this* matter, nor does the form insofar as it is a nature include its own. Therefore, this entity is neither matter nor form nor the composite insofar as any of these is a nature. Rather it is the ultimate reality of the being which is the matter or which is the form or which is the composite. In just the way that any common but determinable item, however much it is a single thing, can still be distinguished into several formally distinct<sup>40</sup> realities of which one is not formally the other, so here the one is formally the entity of the singular and the other is formally the entity of the nature. Neither can these two realities be a thing and a thing, as can the reality from which we take the genus and the both of which is taken the difference and from in the same item (whether in a part of it or the whole of it) there are always formally distinct realities belonging to the same thing.

VL8.3. Is a Universal something in things? (from *Quaestiones Subtilissimae super Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, lib. VII, qu. 18)

[In this question Scotus defends the real existence

40 Formal distinction is explained by Scotus in selection V.4.1.

of a "common" nature, i.e. something which is not of itself one in number, but through various "individual realities" is "contracted" to individuals.]

Is a *universa*<sup>41</sup> something in things?

[1] This question can be treated first by arguing against the position of Plato, who, according to Aristotle,<sup>42</sup> posited Ideas on account of the formal entity of things..., and on account of scientific knowledge, since it is only about necessary items while singulars are corruptible; and also on account of generation,<sup>43</sup> since more is needed than the particular generator.

If this view proposes that an idea is some substance apart from motion and from accidental accidents,<sup>44</sup> which has nothing in itself except the separated specific nature complete to the extent that it can be complete, and which perhaps has in itself attributes of the species (otherwise nothing would be known about it), this view cannot be validly disproved, because such a singular having such a nature does not seem to be rejected by the notion of unqualified entity.

And neither does Aristotle unqualifiedly disprove it. Rather in so far as it is viewed as incorruptible he argues against it at the end of book X.<sup>45</sup> But here in book VII he argues not its impossibility but its lack of necessity. For here he argues against Ideas as posited by philosophers without necessity. There is no necessity in the reasons for positing Ideas; therefore, they should simply not be posited. That it is not necessary on account of entity or knowledge he argues in [Ch 6 of] *Metaphysics* VII, which begins: "Moreover is that which is a what..."

But if someone further proposes that this idea is formally universal in such a way that it is predicated as identical with this corruptible item by a predication which says this is this, immediately the same contradiction arises, because numerically the same item is the quiddity<sup>46</sup> of many different items and

yet is outside them (for otherwise it would not be incorruptible).

[2] Setting aside this approach we can treat the question by following the view Aristotle takes in speaking of the universal. We find here two opposed opinions:

[2.1] The first is that the universal is in things. There are three arguments for this:

[2.1.1] The first of these is that the universal is that which is naturally suited to be said of many. But a thing naturally suited to be said of many is so of itself. If it were not, that suitability would be contrary to it and could not be conferred on it, at least not by the intellect, for then the intellect could give Socrates such a suitability.

[2.1.2] Moreover, the universal, about which we are speaking, is predicated of a thing, for example of a singular, by a predication that says this is this, for example, 'Socrates is a human.' But it is impossible for something to be predicated of a thing and not be in things.

[2.1.3] Also, a "what" taken completely absolutely<sup>47</sup> is a true thing, because it is a principle and a cause, as we see in *Metaphysics* VII, the last chapter [Ch.17]. But when taken absolutely it is a universal. Proof: What is taken absolutely is expressed by a definition; but definitions are only of universals.

[2.2] The way this is posited is as follows: As was said in the question on individuation, in a thing with the grade of limitation by which it is *this* singular, there is also a nature limited by that grade. This nature is not only intelligible without that grade but is also prior in the thing; and as such it does not reject being in something else, because as prior in this way it is not as a result limited to *this*. Therefore, as prior in this way it is universal.

[2.3] Against this view there are three ways of arguing.

[2.3.1] First, as follows: The universal is a numerically single object of the intellect and is under-

stood by numerically one act of understanding. This occurs in such a way that the intellect in attributing it to different singulars attributes numerically the same object conceived many times as a predicate of different subjects by saying this is this. But it seems to be impossible that something which is in things is numerically the same intelligible item and is attributed as such to different items.

This reasoning is bolstered because even *this* nature as prior to its limiting grade, if it were understood, would be correctly attributed to only one item. For *this* concept is not correctly attributed to another singular, but rather there is another concept of another nature which is in the other [singular].

[2.3.2] Secondly, an attribute<sup>48</sup> of a subject belongs to whatever its subject belongs to under the character by which it is the subject [of that attribute]. Therefore, if human belongs to Socrates under that thought by which human is truly universal, Socrates is truly universal. This reasoning does not involve the fallacy of accident since the middle term stays the same.

[2.3.3] Thirdly, it would follow that the senses would have as their *per se* objects universals. For, as was said in the question on the intellectual apprehension of the singular, although nature does not cause motion unless it is *this* nature, it does not cause motion in as much as it is *this* nature. Also it follows that if every universal is of itself actually in things, it is completely superfluous to propose an agent intellect.<sup>49</sup>

[2.4] Against the way of positing this view: It follows that there would be as many universals as singulars, because any nature in any individual has this assigned character of a universal; and there is no nature other than those of individuals, as the first argument above showed. Thus any nature is a universal and there is none [other than those of individuals].

Also in the predication of a universal of a singu-

lar the same item would be predicated of itself.

[2.5] The other opinion is that the universal is only in the intellect. In support of this: the authority of the Commentator in *De Anima* I:<sup>50</sup> The intellect makes the universality in things, otherwise the agent intellect would not seem to be necessary. This point is bolstered by the fact that the agent intellect is not a productive power, and therefore does not cause anything outside the intellect. Also Boethius, speaking about unity and 'one':<sup>51</sup> "Everything which is one in number." In support of this there is the argument that "the universal is one in many and of many" (*Posterior Analytics* I).<sup>52</sup> It includes essentially, then, a relationship with *supposita*,<sup>53</sup> as a predicable is related to a subjectible. But such a relationship is not in the things, but only in an intellect relating them.

For this view and the mode of proposing it we have the authority of Avicenna in *Metaphysics* V, ch.2,<sup>54</sup> where he intends that the intelligible form is singular in relation to the soul and forms in different intellects are different. But the same form is universal in respect of individuals outside the mind.

[2.6] Against this opinion:

[2.6.1] The object naturally precedes the act. Therefore, the universal naturally precedes the ideation when it is ideated. But it is actually in the intellect only by an ideation. This is bolstered by the fact that if the object, as object and as prior to the ideation, were not universal, it could not be related by the intellect to the many items outside the mind.<sup>55</sup>

To these points it can be said that although the object is prior by nature to the act, still this need not be in the object necessarily, especially when it is a matter not of the mode of the known but of a mode under which it is known, and especially if the object exists only at the same time as the act, as Avicenna claims of the universal.

But, contrary to this, it would follow that if no one were thinking there would not be an actual uni-

48 See glossary entry for 'attribute.'

49 See glossary entry for 'agent or active intellect.'

50 Averroes, *comm.* 18, AOAC Supp-II, 161F.

51 See selection VI.4.1.

52 Ch.1 71a7.

53 See glossary entry for 'suppositum.'

54 See selection VI.7.1.

55 The following 2 paragraphs are out of place in the Wadding/Vives edition.

41 See glossary for a definition of the term.

42 *Meta*.I.6 987b1-11, 9 991b3-9; XIII.4 1078b12-17.

43 See glossary entry for 'natural generation.'

44 See glossary entry for 'accident.'

45 Cf. 1059a10-14.

46 See glossary entry for 'quiddity.'

47 See glossary entry for 'absolute.'

versal, and thus habitual<sup>56</sup> scientific knowledge would not be of an actually universal object.

Furthermore, in so far as the object is prior to the act it is not ideated under this mode; therefore, it is ideated either under no mode or under the opposite mode, for since it is an object it determines some mode for itself.

[2.6.2] Moreover, the subject of scientific knowledge, in so far as it is a subject, precedes the ideation. But as such it is universal, because as a subject it is primarily such in its relationship to its own distinctive attribute; and if it is this primarily, then [that attribute is said] of everything [that falls under that subject], and thus there can be scientific knowledge of it.

This is bolstered as follows: Just as a first principle, which is a universal proposition, can be conceived as prior to the complex act, so its term outside the mind under that character by which it is its term, can be conceived as prior to the incomplete act of ideation. But the term within the first principle is universal, because it can be taken universally. [2.6.3] Thirdly, universality would be a condition of what is a being in the intellect, just as *truth* is. Thus the former would weaken the sense of 'being' just as the latter does. Thus some scientific knowledge would no more be of the universal than of the true.

[2.6.4] Against the mode of proposing this view: This intelligible form is subjectively<sup>57</sup> in the soul and really in it; if the universal is in the intellect, it will seem to be there as an object known in the knower. These modes of being are different; therefore, etc. And thus the arguments already given disprove this opinion.

[3] Concerning the solution of this question:

[3.1] First we must distinguish the senses of 'universal', for it is taken or can be taken in three ways: It can be taken for a second intention<sup>58</sup> which is a certain relation of thought in the predicable directed to that of which it is predicable. The noun 'universal' signifies this relation concretely just as 'universality' does abstractly.

<sup>56</sup> See glossary entry for 'habit.'

<sup>57</sup> I.e., in it as in a subject, as opposed to being in it objectively, i.e., as the object of some psychological act or state.

<sup>58</sup> See glossary entry for 'intention.'

<sup>59</sup> See glossary entry for 'first/second actuality.'

it is there when it is there as immediately motivating to an ideation. In the second sense, when it is actually ideated. According to Avicenna's position, these are simultaneous, although the first is prior in nature. For although he does not propose that an intelligible species<sup>60</sup> by which an object is present in the first sense remains in the intellect even while the intellect is not actually ideating, still the present object as a motivator is prior in nature to the actual ideation. For the first precedes the ideation as its cause; the second follows or accompanies it.

To someone else who denies the intelligible species it is not clear how these two beings can be distinct, since according to him an object in the intellect has no being except by way of an act of ideation. Thus it does not have the first sort of being at all, and in no way does it move the intellect. Nevertheless, [Avicenna] holds the contrary of this.

There is a third approach that is common and which says that the first being precedes temporally and naturally the second and stays on without it in the way those propose who maintain that the intelligible species remains without the act. For it seems absurd to deny to the intellect (in as much as it is a created intellect) the retention after the act of its peculiar object, when this capacity is found in the senses. And although the intellect is joined to phantasms,<sup>61</sup> I ask what is the intrinsic perfection of the intellect? For in so far as it is an intellect it accidentally happens to it that it is joined to phantasms; and although it would be less perfect if not joined to phantasms, still it would not, to be sure, be a different type of power. Therefore, just as a separated intellect is intrinsically retentive, so also ours, although less so.

[4.2] To the question as posed in this section I say that the universal spoken of in the third sense is not necessarily in the intellect in the second way, i.e. it is not as though such a being belonged to it necessarily. This the arguments [2.6] against the second opinion prove. But necessarily it is in the intellect in

the first way, i.e. universality would not belong to it if this did not accompany the object. This is proved by the first argument [2.3.1] against the first position. But what is the cause of this indeterminacy by which the object when it has this first being in the intellect is completely universal?

I answer that not just the thing [is the cause], for in it there is not that much indeterminacy, as the first argument proves. And not the possible intellect<sup>62</sup> either, for it does not more indeterminately receive than the object is productive.

In every nature (as Aristotle argues in *De Anima* III,<sup>63</sup> text commentary 17 & 18),<sup>64</sup> given something which is made into everything, there is something which makes everything. I.e., generally in all of nature to any passive power there corresponds an active power; and if it is not extrinsic, then it is intrinsic in the same nature. Therefore, since we experience that there is some intellect in us which is made universal (i.e. to which belongs something through which the object is present as a universal), there must be something active. And this is not outside the mind (as has been argued); therefore, it is within.

Therefore, the agent intellect in conjunction with a nature which is in some way indeterminate of itself is the whole effective cause of the object in the possible intellect in respect of its first being. And this is the case as regards the complete indeterminateness of the universal. And just as there is no reason why what is warm makes things warm other than the existence of an appropriate power, likewise there is no other cause why the agent intellect in conjunction with the nature makes the object exist in this way. Therefore, a nature has a remote potency toward the determination of singularity and toward the indetermination of a universal. And just as it is joined to singularity by its producer, so it is joined to universality by the thing as an agent in conjunction with an agent intellect. It is in this way that Avicenna is correctly interpreted when he says (*Metaphysics* V, ch.1)<sup>65</sup> that a nature of itself is

<sup>60</sup> See glossary entry for 'species.'

<sup>61</sup> See glossary entry for 'phantasm.'

<sup>62</sup> See glossary entry for 'passive or possible intellect.'

<sup>63</sup> Ch.5 430a10-14.

<sup>64</sup> I.e., Averroes's commentary.

<sup>65</sup> *Philosophia Prima (sive Metaphysica)* II, 228. See selection VI.7.1.

neither universal nor particular, but only a nature. It is this second form of indeterminacy which the third argument [2.1.3] along with its supporting arguments proves, not the indeterminacy of a universal, because this lesser indeterminacy saves similarity, contrariety, etc. And in this way we speak of a 'what.' This indeterminacy is privative; the other greater one is a contrary universality.

[4.3] As for the second part of the question: Is it in things? I answer that being in the intellect in the first way or the second is only to have a relation of thought<sup>66</sup> to the intellect. But that which is in things does in fact have this relation; therefore, that which is universal is in things.

This is bolstered as follows: Otherwise in knowing something about universals we would not know

anything about things but only about our concepts. Neither would our opinion change from true to false on account of a change in the existence of a thing. Thus a universal can be in things in such a way that it is the same nature which is determinate by being in existence through a grade of singularity and which is indeterminate by being in the intellect, i.e. by having a relation to the intellect of known to knower. And just as these two beings occur together accidentally in the same nature and each can be without the other, so also the determinacy and indeterminacy we spoke of. And from this we see that it is not necessary that what is universal be in things, although it can, but it is necessary that it be in the intellect.

## VI.9. WILLIAM OF OCKHAM

THESE SELECTIONS SHOW THE BASIC FEATURES OF OCKHAM'S "nominalism," i.e. the approach he shared with Gadlandus and Abelard in which universality belongs to something only in virtue of its having a certain sort of signification. Having cleared away Scotus's view that there are in extra-mental reality "common natures," Ockham proceeds to treat universals as signs which exist in the mind as acts of thinking of things. Spoken and written signs get their signification by being subordinated to the mental signs, which, in Ockham's view, compose a mental language grounding overt language. In this way Ockham counters the tendency among some scholastics to treat logic as a kind of ontology rather than a science of meanings.

### VI.9.1. Universals and Distinction (from *Ordinatio* I, dist.ii, qu.3)

[In the following selection Ockham argues against the sort of posit of universals which Duns Scotus makes; Ockham also conducts a searching examination of Scotus's way with the making of distinctions. He finds that even given Scotus's formal distinction the view that there is in every individual a common nature contracted to the individual by an individuating difference is incoherent.]

... I ask: Is something which is universal and universal really outside the soul and in reality distinct from the individual although not really distinct? ...

To this question it is said [by Duns Scotus] that in things outside the soul the nature is really the same with the difference that contracts it to a determinate individual, but it is distinct formally. Of itself it is neither universal nor particular, but in things it is incompletely universal while it is completely universal in virtue of its existence in the intellect. ...

[Ockham argues against Scotus's view in two ways. The first amounts to an attack on the "formal distinction" and is found in selection V.5.1. What follows is his second mode of argument.]

In a second way we can argue against the aforesaid opinion that it is not true even given that there is such a distinction.

[1] First as follows: Whenever one of a pair of opposites really belongs to something in such a way that that something is really characterized by it, whether it belongs to it of itself or through something else, as long as this state of affairs persists unchanged, the other opposite will not really belong to it, but rather will be absolutely denied of it. But according to you every thing outside the soul is really singular and one in number, although some items are of themselves singular and some only by something added. Therefore, no thing outside the soul is really common or one by a unity opposed to the unity of singularity. Therefore, there is not really any unity besides the unity of singularity.

[1.1] If someone says that these two unities are not really opposed, and in the same way singularity and community are not really opposed, [we say] against this reply: If they are not really opposed to each other, then there is no opposition from which it can be concluded that on the side of reality they cannot belong primarily to the same item. Therefore, it cannot be sufficiently concluded that the same item, which is the same in all ways, is not one both by that unity and by this, and that the same item, the same in all ways, is both singular and common.

Further, whenever consequens reject each other the antecedents also reject each other. But the following consequences hold: A is common or one by a lesser unity; therefore, a multiplicity opposed to the greater unity, i.e. numerical multiplicity, can co-

<sup>66</sup> See glossary entry for "relation of thought."