

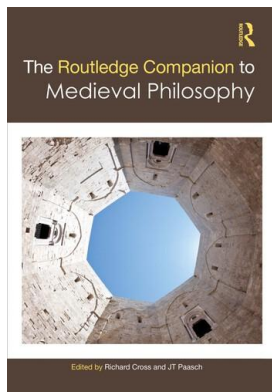
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Individuation

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INDIVIDUATION

Daniel D. Novotný and Jorge J. E. Gracia

Individuation is an ambiguous word that is properly used in many senses. We focus on four that are relevant for medieval philosophy: metaphysical, epistemic, logical, and linguistic. In the metaphysical sense used here, it is a certain non-temporal process whereby a universal becomes an individual, e.g., *man* becomes Socrates. In the epistemic sense used here, it is a certain process whereby a knower discerns an individual, e.g., Plato discerns Socrates. In the logical sense we use, it is a certain process whereby a universal concept becomes an individual concept, e.g., the concept of man becomes the concept of Socrates. In the linguistic sense in the chapter, it is a certain way in which words are effectively used to refer to individuals, e.g., Plato uses “Socrates” to refer to Socrates. These four senses of individuation give rise to four distinct philosophical problems that are often confused and called by the same name: *the problem of individuation*. The metaphysical problem concerns the question of what makes something to be individual, the epistemic problem concerns the question of what makes someone to know something as individual, the logical problem concerns the question of what makes a concept individual, and the linguistic problem concerns the question of what makes a linguistic term pick out an individual. In all four cases, what we seek as an answer to these questions is referred to as the *principle* or (less frequently) the *cause of individuation*.

The problem of individuation is closely related to the problem of universals; it is its converse. Any metaphysical theory that grants some real status to universals has to confront the difficulties of accounting for individuality. The more the realism, the greater the need for, and difficulty in, accounting for individuality. The lesser the realism, the lesser the need for, and difficulty in, accounting for individuality. Indeed, it is common among authors who have a nominalist view of universals to regard individuality as primitive (i.e. unanalyzable) or essential.

Attempts to solve the problem of individuation presuppose an understanding of individuality (i.e. of its intension) and a determination of the beings or kinds of beings to which it applies (i.e. of its extension). Individuality (also referred to as *particularity* or *singularity*) is often understood in terms of various features: *indivisibility* into entities of the same species (e.g. Socrates is indivisible into this or that human); individual or numerical *unity* (e.g. Socrates is one, integrated whole, rather than an aggregate of many, such as a group of humans is, or a part, such as a nose is); *distinction* or difference from other entities (e.g. Socrates is not Plato or anything else); *division* or multiplication within a species (e.g. Socrates and Plato as members of the species *human*, together with other members, divide it); *identity* or sameness through time (e.g. Socrates remains the same man in spite of growing older), *impredicability* (e.g. Socrates, unlike *human*, is not predicable of this or that human); and *incommunicability* or non-instantiability (e.g. Socrates is not communicable to

other entities in the way *human* is communicable to this or that human, i.e. Socrates does not have instances like *human* has). These features (if explicitly distinguished) have often been regarded not as independent of each other, but as related in various ways.

In the Middle Ages, individuality was applied to various beings, their constituents, and kinds: some authors held that substances of whatever kind are individual (God, purely spiritual substances, substances composed of matter and form, and purely material substances), whereas their features (accidents or properties) were not; others held that features are individual, whereas substances are individual only derivatively, in virtue of their features; and still others held that both substances and their features are individual. The views were further divided with respect to the individuality of the constituents of substances, how individuality was conceived, and the status of individuality within individuals.

The different senses of individuality, the different problems indicated, and the different entities to which individuality is applied account for the fact that not everybody who addressed the problem of individuation in the Middle Ages addressed the same problem. It is one thing to account for the individuality of a substance, such as a horse, and another to account for the individuality of an attribute, such as Bucephalus's capability to run or the color of its mane. It is one thing to seek to determine what accounts for non-instantiability (i.e. that Bucephalus is not instantiable into other horses) and another to seek to determine what accounts for multiplicity within a species (i.e. that the species *horse* has many members). And it is one thing to try to identify the conditions on the basis of which something is individual and another to try to identify the conditions on which individuality is discerned. The matter becomes even more complicated when authors were not aware of these distinctions, or when they tried to solve several problems simultaneously and on the basis of the same principles or causes. Indeed, the very use of terms such as *principle* and *cause* in connection with individuation implies important differences as far as what is being sought, insofar as principles are sometimes understood to be internal (e.g. a property or an essence) and causes are sometimes understood as external (e.g. an efficient cause). So the very language in which the problem of individuation is formulated may indicate important differences in the way the problem is understood and in the ways in which it may be solved.

From the very beginning, medieval authors displayed considerable interest in individuation for at least three reasons. One was its relation to the problem of universals which was one of the most frequently discussed and debated philosophical topics in the period. The problem of universals raised the question of the status of universals. Do universals, such as *horse* and *dog*, exist outside the mind, only in the mind, or only as words? For example, does *horse* exist extra-mentally, or does it exist only as the concept of horse we use to think about horses in our minds, or does it exist only as the word "horse" we use to talk about horses? Another reason was the strong implications views about universals had for theology in general and the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in particular. Still another reason was the emphasis that Christianity places on individual persons, their identities, and individual personal responsibility. For these reasons, medieval authors paid considerable attention to individuality and individuation, sometimes in contrast to Greek philosophers, who could at times be generally more concerned with universality and universalization.

At one time or another, medieval authors discussed individuation in all four senses mentioned earlier, sometimes distinguishing some of them and at other times not. Often, they provided solutions to the problem of individuation that they took to be effective in more than one of these four senses. For example, they identified principles of individuation that they thought worked both for metaphysical and epistemic individuation—accounting for both individuals and the knowledge we have of individuals. Likewise, they conceived individuality in all the various ways mentioned, although the particular terminology they used may differ. When all these factors are taken into account, it is clear that the treatment of individuality in the Middle Ages is highly complex and that the variety and richness of opinions is staggering. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that

medieval authors anticipated most, if not all, major positions on individuation that have been subsequently discussed in the history of philosophy, even if the terminology they used does not always coincide with them.

The problem of individuation was introduced to the Middle Ages by Boethius (born c. 480; died 524/5) primarily in two works that were particularly influential: the *Second Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge* and *On the Trinity*. The historical importance of these texts for future developments concerning individuation can hardly be overestimated. They provided the first formulations of the problem of individuation, introduced the terminology in which future discussions of it would be couched, and offered a theory that was generally adopted before the introduction of translations from more ancient sources became available after 1150 and continued to have adherents for a long time after. Commentaries on these two works in particular became the locus of discussions of individuation throughout the Middle Ages.

Boethius did not distinguish clearly between the four ways of formulating the problem of individuation identified earlier, although he seems to speak about all four. This lack of clarity haunted discussions of individuation until the thirteenth century, when some authors did distinguish among some of these formulations and offered different solutions to them. With respect to terminology, Boethius introduced terms such as “incommunicability,” “impredicability,” “individuality,” “particularity,” and “numerical difference,” although he did not clearly distinguish their meanings and in some cases interchanged them. This is the case, for example, with “impredicability” (a primarily logical term) and “incommunicability” (a metaphysical term), which are frequently interchanged. The indiscriminate use of terminology tended to support a lack of distinction between the four dimensions of the problem.

In the *Commentary on the Isagoge*, two views of the individuation of substances appear to be present: an accidental view, in which the individuality of accidents individuates the substance, and a bundle view, in which the uniqueness of the set of accidents considered as a whole is responsible for the individuation of the substance. In *On the Trinity*, no principle of individuation is explicitly given, but the variety of accidents belonging to the substance is identified as the principle of numerical difference, and in the last analysis, if other accidents fail to establish it, it is place. In short, the horse Bucephalus is individual, or numerically different, because of its accidents, such as a certain weight, color of mane, and so on, whether all the accidents are considered together as a unique bundle, or not.

This view understands individuality to be a kind of difference or distinction, it restricts the extension of individuality to substance, and it sees no distinction between the metaphysical problem of individuation and the epistemic problem of individual discernibility. It is an accidental or bundle theory that ultimately identifies the principle of individuation with place if other particular accidents or their bundle fail to function effectively. In modern scholarship, this view is sometimes dubbed the *standard theory of individuality*, for it was widely held in the early Middle Ages, counting among its adherents authors such as John Scotus Eriugena (born c. 810; died c. 877), William of Champeaux (born c. 1070; died 1121), Anselm of Canterbury (born 1033; died 1109), Thierry of Chartres (died ante 1155), and most other thinkers of the time to a greater or lesser degree.

The main opponent of the standard theory was Peter Abelard (born 1079; died 1142). Instead of relying heavily on Boethius's *On the Trinity* as others did, Abelard paid more attention to the *Commentaries on the Isagoge*. In his *Logic for Beginners*, Abelard criticizes the tenets of the standard theory because it is incompatible with Aristotelian substance/accident metaphysics, according to which a substance does not depend on its accidents, but rather vice versa. He anticipated the positions developed in late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries by Walter Burley, John Buridan, and William Ockham who favored a view in which substances do not need a principle of individuation, but are individual essentially. Abelard is primarily interested in the logical or linguistic senses of individuation, in which it is the mode of signification of individual words. “Socrates”

is individual because it signifies discretely the man Socrates, in contrast to “man” which signifies non-discretely every man.

Abelard’s criticisms of the standard theory of individuality were effective to the extent that it may have prevented subsequent authors from holding an accidental theory of substance individuation in the strict sense. However, other historical events were going to introduce changes that also drastically altered the discussion of individuation after 1150. The newly translated works of Eastern and Western Muslim philosophers such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina; born 980; died 1037) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd; born c. 1126; died 1198), and Jewish philosophers such as Maimonides (born 1138; died 1204), as well as of Aristotle himself, changed the conceptual and methodological landscapes of the age and provided scholastics with an hereto unknown framework that was useful for their understanding of individuation. Within this apparatus, an individual material substance, such as a horse, is conceived as a composite of matter, substantial form, and accidents. Those who became familiar with this conceptual framework looked for the principles or causes of individuation among one or more of these constituents.

The position that Avicenna takes with respect to the principle of individuation of material substances is rather complex and not quite clear. On the one hand, he accepts that individuals must have a unique bundle of accidents at every moment of their existence, although the bundle is not always the same throughout their existence. On the other hand, Avicenna is aware of the fact that an individual is not equivalent to this bundle of accidents: there is the substantial form (also referred to as *quiddity*—whatness—or *natura* in Latin) as it exists in reality and there is the designated matter (i.e. *this* matter) and these play roles in individuation too. Moreover, Avicenna alludes to still another element in the constitution of a being, namely, the being of the thing, translated into Latin as its *esse*, or “to be.” This opens yet another possibility for individuation, although Avicenna does not seem to explore it.

Averroes follows Aristotle more closely than Avicenna with regard to individuation. He is less influenced by Neo-Platonism, and he states his position more clearly. For him, the principle of individuation of substances is the substantial form as present in the matter. In Bucephalus, it is the form of horse when present in the matter (i.e. when existing) that individuates *animal*. Unfortunately, this solution seems to be inconsistent with Aristotle’s metaphysics, and Latin scholastics did not waste much time in pointing it out. One reason they often gave was that, according to Aristotle, form was not of itself individual, but common, and therefore could not individuate itself, let alone anything else. The substantial form of Bucephalus is not of itself different from the substantial form of another horse, so it cannot be what makes Bucephalus this individual horse rather than another. The form of humans is what unites them as members of the same species, not what separates them as individuals. Of course, Averroes might want to respond that it is not the form in itself, that is, the universal *horse* or *human* that individuates Bucephalus or Socrates, but the individual substantial form of Bucephalus that individuates Bucephalus and the individual substantial form of Socrates that individuates Socrates. But according to Averroes’s critics, this does not go very far insofar as this line of defense leaves unidentified what individuates the substantial forms of Bucephalus and Socrates.

Maimonides in his esoterically conceived *Guide of the Perplexed* speaks of the individuation of both composite material entities and purely non-material ones. By the individuation of the first, he appears to mean multiplication within a species. To be an individual in this sense is to be a member of a species that is capable of multiplication, such as is the case with the species *horse* and *human*. The principle of individuation for these kinds of beings is matter. Heavenly spheres and other non-material beings are not multiplied within species, as material ones are, but they are still individual in the sense that each of them is one and separate from others. The principle of individuation of these beings, rather than of their multiplication within the species, is their intellectual motive powers. Because human souls lack such motive powers, they do not remain individual after death.

As noted already, these newly translated works of Aristotle into Latin and the commentaries on them by Muslim and Jewish authors changed the dynamics of philosophy in the thirteenth century. New philosophical alternatives became available and prompted a rethinking of the problem of individuation. Traces of the standard theory of individuality are still detectable in the work of authors such as Albert the Great (born c. 1200; died 1280) and Roger Bacon (born 1214/20; died post 1292), although their positions take into account the newer ideas. Their views share some common elements. Both maintain a role for accidents in individuation, but they reject accidents as the principle of individuation when this is understood metaphysically. The function of accidents is, rather, to make us aware of the distinction among individual substances. But there are also important differences between the two authors. For Albert, the principle of individuation of a material substance is matter, but for Roger, both form and matter play a role in it, in that they are co-causes of individuation. Elsewhere, Bacon seems to go farther still, arguing that ultimately it is God that causes individuals to exist as individuals. The change in terminology from principle to cause may explain Bacon's reference to God insofar as for scholastics God is ultimately responsible for the existence of created beings. But that should not necessarily eliminate the role that his originally identified factors, i.e. form and matter, played in individuation.

The distinction between metaphysical and epistemic principles of individuation made by Albert and Bacon is preserved by Bonaventure (born c. 1216; died 1274). He identifies matter and form together as co-principles of individuation of all created beings, including angels; the discreteness and distinction of individuals from each also result from both their matter and form.

Along similar lines, but with his usual clarity, Thomas Aquinas (born 1224/6; died 1274) distinguished the epistemic and metaphysical problems of individuation. Epistemically, the problem is to account for our knowing that something is individual. In his *Exposition on Boethius's On the Trinity*, Aquinas follows Boethius and identifies this as place for material substances. We know something is individual because of its place. Metaphysically, however, the problem becomes that of accounting for both the indivision and the incommunicability of an individual and its distinction from everything else. Aquinas apparently adopts two different positions with respect to the principle of individuation of material substances. On the one hand, he states that the principle is matter related to indeterminate dimensions, on the other that it is designated matter, that is, matter related to determinate dimensions. In the first case, Aquinas seems to be speaking about dimensions in general, or perhaps even dimensionality. In the second case, he seems to be speaking of the particular dimensions that something has. According to the first, a horse is individual because it is material and therefore subject to dimensions, and in the second because its matter has certain dimensions (i.e. occupies a particular place).

The problem with the first position is that indeterminate dimensions do not seem to be able to make a substance incommunicable or to distinguish it from other substances. The problem with the second is that the particular dimensions of material beings change constantly, as Avicenna had noted, and this creates a problem for the identity of the being through time. Still another problem goes back to Abelard, namely, that dimensions belong to the category of quantity and therefore are accidental to the substance, thus generating conflict with the priority that substance is supposed to have over accidents. These difficulties and the attempt to resolve them generated various interpretations of Aquinas's view.

Another difficulty with Aquinas's position is that it does not explain the individuation of purely spiritual substances, such as angels or God, for these substances have neither matter nor quantity. Even if one were to accept that matter and quantity may work in the case of material substances, not only individuating them, in the sense of making them undivided in themselves and distinct from others, but also in the sense of multiplying individuals within species, it does not explain the individuality of angels or God. If we are going to account for the incommunicability of these beings, that is, the fact that they are not like universals, then matter and dimensions, whether the

dimensions are general or particular, do not work. But then what is the principle of individuation for these other substances, and why is the principle of individuation of material substances different from that of spiritual ones? Is it possible to point to a principle that not only works for material substances, but also for purely spiritual ones?

The answer given by some of Aquinas's commentators is that it is the individual's act of existence, that is, *esse*. For Aquinas, this act is not formal in any sense and is really distinct from both matter and form insofar as it is really distinct from essence (*On Being and Essence*, ch. 4). So here we have a principle that may explain the incommunicability of everything: God, purely spiritual substances, composite substances, and material substances. Moreover, one could argue that there would still be room for matter and quantity in the theory insofar as these can be used to account for multiplicity within species of material substances, and for accidents in that these would account for individual discernibility. All this makes considerable sense, but it must be kept in mind that Aquinas does not explicitly defend the view that the principle of individuation, when individuation is understood as incommunicability, is *esse*.

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century, the problem of individuation became one of the most discussed topics in the Middle Ages and came to occupy a central place in the philosophy of the period. Various quodlibeta and entire treatises were written on it, including *On the Principle of Individuation*, attributed to Aquinas. Indeed, although universals continued to be an important topic of discussion, individuation often displaced it. Controversies surrounded not only the individuation of material substances, but perhaps even more so the individuation of spiritual substances. In 1277, the famous censure of 219 theses was issued in which three of the theses concerned matter as *the* principle of individuation. This censure fueled further discussions so much so that while previously universals took center stage and individuation was discussed in their context, for the next 50 years, the order was reversed.

The prominent figures who voiced views of individuation after the condemnation include Henry of Ghent (born c. 1217; died 1293), Godfrey of Fontaines (born ante 1250; died 1306/9), James of Viterbo (born c. 1255; died 1307/8), and others. Most of these thinkers rejected matter as the principle (or even a principle) of individuation, even though, as we shall see there were also those who did not.

For Henry of Ghent, individuation is doubly negative: it involves division from everything else and indivision in itself. The key to both is found in the individuality of separated substances which are individual in virtue of their existence or, more precisely subsistence, in reality. This, in turn, points to the role of God in individuation, since it is his creative act that makes a specific form not divided in itself and divided from everything else. In this way, Henry picks up some strands from Bonaventure and others, while rejecting any suggestion that matter, form, or matter and quantity are as such the principles of individuation. He applies this theory to all beings.

Henry's rejection of matter or matter and quantity as *the* principle of individuation was shared by Godfrey of Fontaines who offered views of individuation in terms of substantial form, although he acknowledged that continuous quantity contributes to individuation by disposing matter to the reception of the form.

James of Viterbo offered an even more syncretic solution to the problem of individuation by drawing on various elements of competing theories. He distinguished between two notions of numerical unity and assigned them two different principles. The first notion of numerical unity is to be understood as "singularity," that is, something being "a this." Its principle in material substances is matter under indeterminate dimensions (i.e. quantity); the role of quantity in individuation follows from the fact that quantity renders matter divisible and this allows for distinction among material substances. The second notion of numerical unity is to be understood as "perfection and completeness." Its principle is form; however, unlike the view of Averroes and others, it is not just substantial form, but the composite of the forms in the substance. This suggests that James

held a kind of bundle view, although not purely accidental, as it was with the standard theory in the early Middle Ages.

Widely different theories concerning individuality of both spiritual and material substances prompted John Duns Scotus (born c. 1266; died 1308) to pay close attention to the problem and to provide us with penetrating analyses and an original solution. Scotus is on the one hand committed to realism so that he gives common natures a robust status in order to safeguard the validity of knowledge, and on the other, he is also committed to the epistemic and ontological primacy of individuals. In light of these commitments, Scotus considers and rejects major theories of individuality (by which he means indivisibility into other things of the same kind and distinction from all other things) that had been proposed by his contemporaries or predecessors. He begins with a refutation of theories that argue that no special cause of individuation is required. The problem with this view is that it misses the fact that a nature (or form) is not individual of itself and, therefore, needs something else to individuate it. The rejection of the no-principle view leads to a further divide: the principle of individuation must be either negative or positive. The view that it is something “doubly negative,” since individuality means *indivisibility* in itself and *distinction* from other things, is no good insofar as it only describes the problem but does not solve it. Hence, we are left with positive principles such as existence, quantity, and matter. Existence and matter do not work because they are as common as form/nature and therefore cannot individuate it. Quantity does not work because quantity is posterior to substance and, therefore, cannot account for an intrinsic feature of substance. So what can be the principle of individuation?

Having eliminated the main principles that had been identified by other authors, Scotus is left with only one unexplored possibility, namely that the principle of individuation is *sui generis*. It is a principle whose function is to turn a quiddity, such as *horseness*, into this (*haec*) quiddity, i.e. this horse. Scotus derived the contrived term *haecceitas*, or thisness and used it occasionally (preferring, however, terms such as “individual difference” or “individual entity”). Strictly speaking, *haecceitas* appears to mean for Scotus the property of being individual rather than the principle responsible for individuality, but we may dispense with this terminological complication and mean by it the principle whose function is to bring to a nature the unity proper to an individual, i.e. to individuate the nature. (Its other function is to bring being or “ultimate reality,” to it, i.e. to actualize the nature.) Importantly for us, *haecceitas* is not quidditative, even though Scotus calls it a formality and compares its function to the function of the specific difference in the logico-metaphysical structure of the Porphyrian tree (it determines what is below it, is diverse from what is adjacent to it, and contracts what is above it).

How is *haecceitas* to be distinguished from the other components of an individual substance, such as the quiddity? For Scotus, the distinction cannot be real insofar as, if so, *haecceitas* would be a reality different from the quiddity and it would be difficult to explain the unity of an individual. And it would not do to say that it is merely conceptually distinct from the quiddity, insofar as this would jeopardize the reality of the individual. Scotus’s solution is to argue that *haecceitas* is “formally” distinct from the nature. This means that, although it cannot even be thought to exist separately from the quiddity, the definitions of the quiddity and *haecceitas* do not include each other. The *haecceitas* (thisness) of a horse (this horse) cannot be thought to exist separately from the horse’s quiddity (horseness), but the definition of the quiddity does not include *haecceitas* and the definition of *haecceitas* does not include the quiddity.

The prominence of Aquinas and Scotus made it difficult to ignore their views in subsequent discussions of individuation. There were plenty of supporters and critics, but even their followers did not always agree with their views, particularly on individuation, rejecting or modifying them to avoid the difficulties that they thought they encountered.

Among authors who followed Aquinas were Hervaeus Natalis (born 1250/60; died 1323) and Giles of Rome (born 1243/7; died 1316), although neither of them adhered strictly to Aquinas’s

position on individuation. Hervaeus argued that the indivision by which something is undivided in itself requires no principle other than the thing itself, although numerical multiplicity within the same species is centrally, but not exclusively, the result of quantity. Giles of Rome, an Augustinian, defended a more sophisticated version of Aquinas's view that identified the matter designated by quantity as the principle of individuation of material substances.

Although Aquinas's views were popular especially among his fellow Dominicans, not all members of the Order followed him on individuation. The famous dissenter Durand of St. Pourçain (born c. 1270; died 1334) argued both against matter *per se* and quantity as the principles of individuation of material substances. Durand defended the older view that material substances require no other principle of individuation than their causes, that is, matter, form, agent, and end.

Diversity of attitudes can be seen also in the early masters influenced by Scotus. For instance, Francis of Meyronnes (born c. 1280; died 1328) accepts Scotus's *haecceity* but is troubled by its alleged formal distinction from nature. Formal distinction occurs only between two quiddities (such as genus and specific difference) but *haecceity* does not have any quidditative content. Hence between *haecceity* and nature, a lesser than the formal distinction must obtain, which he calls "modal." Henry of Harclay (born c. 1270; died 1317) went even further in rejecting Scotus's *haecceitas* and the view that natures have a *sui generis* unity that requires an addition for them to be individual. Instead, he adopted the position that everything is singular by the very fact that it exists extra-mentally.

The views of the authors we have been discussing indicate a move away from identifying a principle of individuation that is either among the principles that already constitute a thing or that is different from the thing itself, as well as an attempt to move toward a principle that works for all beings, not just material substances. This trend continued and culminated in the second quarter of the fourteenth century in views that rejected the need to account for individuation at all and concentrated instead on explaining how a universal (concept) is formed. The major exponents of this kind of position are Peter Auriol (born c. 1280; died 1322), William Ockham (born c. 1285; died 1347), John Buridan (born c. 1295; died 1361), and others.

The problem of individuation does not arise for Auriol and he explicitly points this out. Individuals are individual by themselves and this "brute" fact does not require any explanation. Similarly for Ockham: everything is individual in and of itself and not through anything extrinsic to it. This includes entities that other thinkers viewed as universal, such as natures, mental concepts, and words. Natures are concepts and concepts are individual. Words and concepts are called universal simply because they are used to talk or think about many individuals. In themselves, they are as individual as a horse or the color of its mane. To be individual consists in the following: to be one, to be primarily diverse in the sense that there is nothing in it that is the same in something else, and not to function as a sign for other things. The center of Ockham's philosophy is the individual, but precisely because it is such, the individual is irreducible to anything else and ultimately cannot be explained.

Buridan conceives individuality in terms of indivisibility and distinctness. His position is similar to that of Ockham insofar as he also believes that there is no need to search for a principle of individuation in that things are individual of themselves. The principle or cause of the individuality of the individual is the individual itself. The problem of individuation then must be understood in other ways: as a problem of identity through time (accounting for individuality through time), as an epistemic problem (accounting for individual discernibility), or as a semantic problem (accounting for how a linguistic expression can effectively refer to an individual). In the first two cases, the solution is accidents or extraneous factors. Indeed, if these turn out to be the same at two different times, then no distinction can be made between the substances that have them. In the third, Buridan's account involves a direct relation between singular terms and the individuals to which they refer, which is what happens with proper names and demonstrative expressions.

It would be difficult not to note that views of individuation and its principle in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries follow a similar pattern of development as those we find in the early Middle Ages, going from positions that identify the principle of individuation with various components of substances to views that, first, favor the elimination of any principle of individuation and, second, take a linguistic turn in which language is the key to accounting for individuality. In both cases, the development was halted by external factors. In the twelfth century, it was the introduction of new materials that became available in translation. In the fourteenth century, it was the impact of the Black Death in the medieval academy. Sophisticated discussions of individuation resurfaced again later, in the Renaissance and Baroque eras with Dominicans such as Tommaso de Vio (Cajetan; born 1468; died 1534) and João Poinso (John of St. Thomas; born 1589; died 1644), Franciscans such as Bartolomeo Mastri (born 1602; died 1673) and John Punch (born 1603; died 1661), Jesuits such as Pedro da Fonseca (born 1528; died 1599), Francisco Suárez (born 1548; died 1617), Pedro Hurtado de Mendoza (born 1578; died 1641), and many others. Some of the post-medieval scholastic discussions influenced modern non-scholastic authors and conversely. A systematic survey of these discussions would take us to a different age.

Further Reading

In spite of the extraordinary importance that individuation had in the Middle Ages, the monographs devoted to the exploration of this topic are very few. For individuation in the early Middle Ages, see Gracia (1988). This book contains a detailed explanation of the systematic framework outlined at the beginning of this chapter and has chapters on several authors mentioned as well as some others. For the Later Middle Ages, see Gracia (1994). This book includes articles on 28 medieval authors, many of them discussed in this chapter, written by a group of distinguished contemporary scholars. For the investigation of related epistemic issues of individuation, the main source is still Berubé (1964). In recent years, several specialized articles on particular figures have appeared, but we cannot provide here an exhaustive bibliography. For an exegesis of Aquinas's texts concerning individuation of material substances, including the review of the controversy concerning its interpretation, see Wippel (2000: 351–375). See also Brower (2017). For an explanation of Scotus's *haecceitas* and its reception (including a discussion of Ockham), see Cross (2010).

Apart from specialized articles on particular figures, only a few articles of a more general character have appeared. Among these are King (2000), which deals with the general problem of individuation; Pickavé (2007), which deals with medieval *quodlibeta*, including some of the authors discussed here; and Pini (2012), which deals with the problem of individuation through the prism of a medieval reaction to Aquinas's innovative view that every angel is unique within its species.

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