

Duns Scotus: Ordinatio II d. 3 p. 1 q. 3*

**[Whether a material substance is individual or the account
of individuating another through its actual existence]**

[59] Thirdly, I ask, without any [principal] arguments, whether material substance is individual, or the account of individuating another, through its actual existence.

[The Position of Others]

[60] It is claimed that [material substance is individual, or the account of individuating another, through its actual existence], since according to *Met.* 7.13 [1039^a3–7], “act determines and distinguishes”; hence the ultimate distinction is through the ultimate act; the ultimate act of individuals is with regard to being-of-existence (*esse existentiae*), since anything other than it is understood in potency to it—[therefore, material substance is individuated by its actual existence.]

[Disproof of the Position]

[61] Against the [position stated in n. 60]: first of all, what is not of itself either distinct or determinate cannot be the primary [cause] distinguishing or determining another; but the being-of-existence, in the way in which it is distinguished from the being-of-essence (*esse essentiae*), is not from itself either distinct or determinate. The being-of-existence has no proper differentiae other than the differentiae of the being-of-essence, for [it it did] it would then be necessary to posit a proper ordering of existences other than the ordering of essences. The [being-of-existence] is precisely determined by the determination of the [being-of-essence]; therefore, it does not determine something else.

[62] From these remarks, [the position in n. 60] could be argued against in another way: that which presupposes determination and distinction from another is not the account of distinguishing or determining it; but existence, as determinate and distinct, presupposes the order and distinction of essences; therefore, [existence is not the account of distinguishing or determining the essence].

* Translated from *Iohanni Duns Scoti opera omnia* tom. VII, studio et cura Commissionis Scotisticae (ad fidem codicum edita), praeside P. Carolo Balić, Civitatis Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1973, 418–421.

[63] If it were objected that [existence] presupposes every distinction other than that which pertains to individuals, but causes that [distinction] that is (as it were) characteristic of individuals, well, against this [I say that] in a categorial ordering there are all the things that pertain *per se* to that ordering, putting aside anything that does not pertain to that ordering, for, according to the Philosopher in *Post. an.* 1.20 [82^a20–24], “there is a stopping-point in any given category, above and below.” Hence just as the highest in a genus is found precisely by considering it under the account *essence*, so too the intermediate genera and species and differentiae are found in this way; and the lowest, *i. e.* the singular, is also found there, with actual existence completely put aside—which is obvious, since this man does not formally include actual existence any more than man.

[64] Furthermore, there is the same question about existence—by what and whence it is contracted such that it is a *this*—as about the nature, for if the specific nature is the same in many individuals, it has an existence of the same account in them, and just as it was proved in [*Ord.* 2 d. 3 p. 1 q. 1 nn. 29–30] that the nature is not of itself a *this*, so too it can be asked through what the existence is a *this* (since it is not of itself a *this*), and thus giving the [response] “[it is] existence by which a nature is a *this*” is not sufficient.

[Reply to the Argument for the Position]

[65] Given this, regarding the argument [stated in n. 60] for the position I say that an act distinguishes in the way in which it is an act: an accidental act distinguishes accidentally, just as an essential act distinguishes essentially. Thus I say that the ultimate distinction in the categorial ordering is the individual distinction, and [individual distinction] is through the ultimate act pertaining *per se* to the categorial ordering. But actual existence does not pertain *per se* to [the categorial ordering]. Moreover, actual existence is the ultimate act, but posterior to the entire categorial ordering. Hence I concede that [actual existence] distinguishes ultimately, but by a distinction that is outside the entire *per se* categorial ordering. This distinction is, as it were, accidental in a certain way: even though it is not truly accidental, still, it comes after the entire ordering according to quidditative being (*esse quidditativum*). Therefore, it distinguishes in the way in which it is an act, and it ultimately distinguishes in [the way in] which it is an ultimate act.

[End of the Question]