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SCHOLASTIC SOURCES  
OF GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ'S TREATISE  
*DISPUTATIO METAPHYSICA DE PRINCIPIO INDIVIDUI*

The subject of the present article is Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's early opusculum *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui* and what follows is an attempt of an analysis of that work. The *Disputatio* was written in 1663, under the supervision of Jacob Thomasius,<sup>1</sup> as a thesis finishing Leibniz's philosophical studies at the University of Leipzig. In the Carl Immanuel Gerhardt edition of Leibniz's works, this opusculum is introduced by a title page giving the circumstances of the composition of this work.<sup>2</sup> On the merits of his thesis Leibniz was granted on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1663 the title of Bachelor of Philosophy.

In the analysis that follows I will pay particular attention to the scholastic inspirations present in the discussed work.

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<sup>1</sup> In some editions of Leibniz's works, such as *Opera Omnia* (Geneva: Apud Fratres de Tournes, 1768), can be found an introduction *Origo controversiae de principio individuationis*, written by Jacob Thomasius to the Leibniz's *Disputatio*. Thomasius issued his introductions to the disputes in 1681. See M. Jacobi Thomasiae *Praefationes sub auspiciis disputationum suarum in Academia Lipsiensi recitatae, Argumenti varii* (Lipsiae: Apud Johannem Fuhrmannum & Matthaecum Ritterum, 1681).

<sup>2</sup> In what follows I quote the Carl Immanuel Gerhardt edition of the *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui*, in *Die philosophischen Schriften von Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, ed. Carl Immanuel Gerhardt, t. IV (Berlin: Weidmann, 1880), 15–26; in my quotes I give an abbreviation of the title of the work (DMPI) followed by a paragraph number; I preserve the spelling of the quoted edition.

The problem of individuation had had a very long tradition of discussion and controversy before the epoch of Leibniz. The sources of the problem are already to be found in Ancient Philosophy and its discussion of the ontological problem of the relationship between plurality and unity; however, the question of individuation was singled out for separate treatment and defined in its own proper terms in Medieval Philosophy, and precisely at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. As Jorge J.E. Gracia states, as late as the period between 1225 and 1275, the problem of individuation remained of secondary importance, it was treated only in relation to other topics, no treatises exclusively devoted to the question of individuation were written in that period. Nevertheless, individuation and the principles of it were an object of interest for Albert the Great, Roger Bacon, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent and each of these philosophers accepted a different solution to the controversy over the principle of individuality. At the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (more exactly in the period 1275–1350) the problem of individuation became not only important in itself, but central, which means that a definite solution of the problem of individuation was regarded as fundamental for solving other problems, played a primary role in the logical organization of a philosophical system and was the source of new problems to be discussed.<sup>3</sup>

Gradually works started to appear that were exclusively devoted to the discussion of the question of individuation: separate extensive treatises on the principle of individuation and separate questions, for an example of the former one may cite the *De principio individuationis*, for a long time wrongly ascribed to Thomas Aquinas.<sup>4</sup> John Duns Scotus was the master who gave an essential role to the complex of problems related to individuation. In his works, above all in his *Questions on the Books of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, he analysed and carried out a critique of a wide spectrum of philosophical positions on the principle of individuation: besides discussing and rejecting the nominalist position, he critically discussed individuation by a set of accidents, by quantity as such, matter alone, matter designated by quantity, substantial form, act of existence, efficient cause, double negation,

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<sup>3</sup> On the different stages of development of these philosophical questions see Jorge J.E. GRACIA, "The Centrality of the Individual in the Philosophy of the Fourteenth Century," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 8 (1991), 3: 239–241.

<sup>4</sup> See Joseph OWENS, "Thomas Aquinas," in *Individuation in Scholasticism. The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, 1150-1650*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 175.

cognizing intellect. All these positions had already been adopted and maintained by some authors before Scotus, this fact shows the versatility and richness of the debates then going on on this subject. The typical contexts for the debates on individuation were, in theology, angelology and in particular the commentary of an appropriate *locus* in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, where the question was raised as to whether there was only one or more than one individual in a species of angels, and, in philosophy, the problem of real existence of universals, encountered in commenting the appropriate passages of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (Book VII).

The first comprehensive and systematic treatise on metaphysics produced by Western Scholasticism that was not a commentary on some authoritative text was Francis Suárez's *Disputationes Metaphysicae* (1597).<sup>5</sup> In this work the problem of individuation is treated in detail and extensively (in particular *Disputatio V*, entitled *De unitate individuali eiusque principio* comprises more than 150 pages of text). Compared to this volume, Leibniz's *Disputatio* is a very modest effort. Nevertheless, Leibniz's bachelor's thesis is of interest for at least three reasons: it reflects the author's connection with the legacy of the scholastic tradition, enables an insight into the way the philosophical education was carried out in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and, last but not least, it throws a light on the opening stage of Leibniz's philosophical development, in particular inviting the question whether in this early work ideas are contained, to which he would remain faithful in the mature period of his creative work in philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Jorge J.E. GRACIA, "Suárez Francisco," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 884; Stuart BROWN, "Renaissance philosophy outside Italy," in *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. IV, *The Renaissance and Seventeenth-century Rationalism*, ed. George Henry Radcliffe Parkinson (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 65–97.

<sup>6</sup> There is disagreement among Leibniz scholars as to the importance of this early *Disputatio* with respect to his later philosophy. Much significance is attributed to the *Disputatio* by Laurence B. MCCULLOUGH, *Leibniz on Individuals and Individuation. The Persistence of Premodern Ideas in Modern Philosophy* (Dordrecht, Boston, London: Kluwer, 1996), considerably less by Stefano DI BELLA, *The Science of the Individual: Leibniz's Ontology of Individual Substance* (Dordrecht, Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer, 2005), and Roger ARIEW, "Leibniz's Metaphysical Disputation on the Principle of Individuation: A Scholastic Exercise," in *VII. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongreß. Nihil sine ratione. Mensch, Natur und Technik im Wirken von G. W. Leibniz. Schirmherrschaft: Der Regierende Bürgermeister von Berlin. Berlin, 10.–14. September 2001, Vorträge Teil 1–3* (Berlin 2001 & Nachtragsband, Hannover 2002), 33–40. Ariew highlights the dependence of Leibniz's theses in the *Disputatio* from Thomasius's views contained in the latter's *Origo controversiae de principio individuationis* and lays the stress on the character of Leibniz's essay as a school exercise. It is worth noting, by the way, that in Thomasius's *Intro-*

The structure of the *Disputatio* is as follows: it opens with an invocation to God, who is referred to as the prime Act and the source of other acts (§ 1), then Leibniz explains how we ought to conceive of individuality and principle of individuation (*status quaestionis* — § 2), next a number of different theories of individuation are presented (§ 3), followed by the presentation of his own solution to the problem: the principle of individuation is the whole entity: *tota entitas* (§ 4–10), finally he criticizes and rejects the conceptions he disagrees with (§ 11–26). The work, although written in the technical language of scholastic metaphysics, is no commentary on another work and is not set in any larger theological or philosophical context. In that respect it is more like the style of writing of Francis Suárez than medieval scholastic thinkers. Nonetheless, Leibniz is familiar with the earlier scholastic tradition and he refers directly to his predecessors citing them by name, although he probably knew the views of the classical medieval authors not directly from their own works but from later summaries and compendia interpreting their ideas.

#### *STATUS QUAESTIONIS*

At the beginning of the *Disputatio* the author presents some methodological introductory observations. Since we are concerned with answering the question: “what is the principle of individuation?,” the first thing to do is reflect on the content of the notions of “principle” and “individual” (*individuum*), for the problem of individuation can be investigated both in its logical aspect—namely that of predication—and in the metaphysical perspective, as a problem concerning the real order of being. The term “individual” (*individuum*) can, in its turn, be understood in a very large sense, as designating any individual of any sort, or in a narrower sense, as designating only created individual entities, or in a still more restricted meaning, as referring

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*duction* appears the term *monadica individua* that was not used in the Middle Ages in the context of the debate on individuation, although the term *monadicus* was present in Medieval Latin. Laurence B. McCullough believes that Leibniz may have had Thomasius’s *Introduction* in the memory when he decided to use the term “monad” in his mature metaphysics, all the more so as in Thomasius the term *monadica individua* was meant to refer to immaterial individual substances which are individual all by themselves (that is without needing any additional principle of individuation). See L.B. MCCULLOUGH, *Leibniz on Individuals and Individuation*, 138. Another traditions hold that the term “monad” was borrowed from Neoplatonists (Giordano Bruno), Cabalists (Francis Mercury van Helmont) or Platonists (Henry More or Ralph Cudworth). See Stuart BROWN and N.J. FOX, *Historical Dictionary of Leibniz’s Philosophy* (Lanham, Md., Toronto, Oxford: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2006), 152.

only to individual substances or even exclusively to material substances. The term “principle” is also used equivocally; it can designate a principle of knowledge or a principle of being; and among the principles of being, one can distinguish internal and external principles.<sup>7</sup> Thus, in his early work Leibniz clearly distinguishes the aspect of metaphysical analyses of being from the aspect of merely logical analyses (of meanings). This distinction inscribes Leibniz firmly in the tradition of philosophy derived from ancient Greece and revived in scholasticism. This philosophy drew a clear distinction between these two aspects (sc. metaphysical [real] and logical [conceptual]) of the object of investigation, and unequivocally adopted the standpoint according to which the problem of the principle of individuation is a metaphysical problem.

The adoption of a metaphysical perspective also places Leibniz among the opponents of the analyses of individuation in a purely epistemological aspect; he affirms that what he is interested in is a real principle (which he also calls physical) that forms the (objective) basis of the formal concept of the individual as such, or individuality conceived as a numerical difference. He restricts the scope of his search for the principle of individuation to created individual substances.<sup>8</sup>

In this way Leibniz intends to omit a (epistemological) search for the (epistemic) conditions of the recognition of an individual as an individual, or the conditions for identifying an individual as such. Nevertheless, he recognizes that there is a link between the metaphysical and the epistemological contexts of the problem, since he states that the sought after metaphysical principle of individuality has to be the basis for the formal concept of “individual” which we have in our minds. Thus, the problem of the metaphysical principles of individuation comes down to the question of metaphysical constitutive, internal elements of an individual entity, namely those elements, which make that entity individual. It should be noted that further on in the text Leibniz reserves the use of the term “metaphysical principle” for what

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<sup>7</sup> “Acturi igitur sumus de Principio Individui, ubi et Principium et Individuum varie accipitur. Et quod Individuum attinet, quemadmodum universale, sic ipsum quoque vel Logicum est in ordine ad praedicationem, vel Metaphysicum in ordine ad rem. Atque sic rursum aut prout in re est, aut prout in conceptu, seu ut alii exprimunt formaliter aut fundamentaliter: Et formaliter vel de individuo omni vel creato tantum vel substantia tantum, vel substantia materiali. Principii quoque vox notat tum cognoscendi principum, tum essendi. Essendi internum et externum.” DMPI § 2.

<sup>8</sup> “Quare ut haec colligam, agemus de aliquo reali, et, ut loquuntur principio Physico, quod rationis individui formalis seu individuationis, seu differentiae numericae in intellectu sit fundamentum, idque in individuis praecipue creatis substantialibus.” DMPI § 2.

the Scotist tradition termed *haecceitas*, whereas to such a constitutive principle as e.g. existence, he applies the description “physical principle.”<sup>9</sup>

Within the text we undertake to discuss, Leibniz construes individuality as a difference and he identifies it precisely as a numerical difference. In the tradition of scholastic philosophy there existed a rich legacy of most diverse conceptions of individuality: it had been defined as a difference, an identity, exceptionality, indivisibility construed as unity of being, incommunicability. In the chapter of his work called *status quaestionis* Leibniz refers to individuality as a difference of a kind, but further on in his text he invokes the concept of “numerical unity” which is synonymous with “individuality:” “by the very same feature a being is something, it is also numerically one.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Leibniz appears to be committed to a twofold conception of individuality; he conceives of individuality as a difference—to be individual means to differ from other individuals—and also as a unity—to be individual means to possess unity, to be just one thing.

This view of individuality, especially the conception of individuality as an individual difference, is in accordance with what Leibniz maintained later in his *New Essays on Human Understanding* where he affirms that the principle of individuation reduces to the principle of differentiation; “If two individuals were perfectly alike and equal to each other, and (to say it with one word) indistinguishable by themselves, there would be no principle of individuation, even more—I daresay—there would be no individual distinction or distinct individuals.”<sup>11</sup>

Leibniz would also remain faithful to his early views in that he would always hold for primary and fundamental the internal principles of individuation rather than external ones, such as time and place. These would at best be regarded as epistemic criteria for identification of an individual, and would not be metaphysical and constitutive principles. It is only an internal principle that is the very existence of an individual that posits a given being in a particular moment of time and in an unshareable place.<sup>12</sup> Further on in the *New Essays* he shows that being numerically the same and being one individual depends not on an arrangement of parts but on a permanent principle of life, which he called the monad.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the content of the concept

<sup>9</sup> DMPI § 3.

<sup>10</sup> “Per quod quid est, per id unum numero est.” DMPI § 5.

<sup>11</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm LEIBNIZ, *Nowe rozważania dotyczące rozumu ludzkiego*, trans. Izydora Dąmbska (Warszawa: PWN, 1955), 287–288.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, 286–287.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, 289.

“individuality” as employed by Leibniz in the mature period of his creative life also appears to be reducible to difference and indivisibility, which agrees with what he wrote in his essay produced as a young scholar.<sup>14</sup>

Leibniz very fittingly divides the standpoints on the principle of individuation into two classes. There are conceptions according to which there is only one kind of principle of individuation for every category of individuals, material or immaterial. Leibniz is right in attributing this position to Duns Scotus, for whom the *haecceitas* is a universal principle that extends to all kinds of created beings. There are also theories that attribute different principles to different sorts of beings; this position Leibniz finds in St. Thomas Aquinas, where he distinguishes one principle of individuation for material beings, which is designate matter, and another principle for immaterial beings (the angels), which is their very entity.<sup>15</sup>

In his youthful work Leibniz sets out to find a general principle of individuation that would apply to every created individual, material and immaterial alike. He enumerates four possible solutions to this problem: either the principle of individuation is identical with the whole individual entity, or not the whole entity, but a part of it. In this second kind of solution another two possibilities arise: the principle of individuation may be either a negation (some negative feature) or something positive. And if the principle of individuation is some positive constitutive element of an individual, then it can be a physical part (the existence delimiting an essence) or else a metaphysical part—the *haecceitas* determining the species of an individual.<sup>16</sup> The quoted fourfold division is a graphic illustration of the fact that the terminology and the conceptual categories employed by the young Leibniz are borrowed from scholastic discussions of this problem.

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<sup>14</sup> See Laurence B. MCCULLOUGH, “Leibniz’s Principle of Individuation in His *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui* of 1663,” in *Individuation and Identity in Early Modern Philosophy. Descartes to Kant*, ed. Kenneth F. Barber and Jorge J.E. Gracia (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 204–205.

<sup>15</sup> “Sunt autem duo genera opinionum; alii hypotheses habuere ad omnia individua applicabiles, ut Scotus; alii secus ut Thomas, qui in corporibus materiam signatam, in Angelis eorum entitatem principium posuit.” DMPI § 3.

<sup>16</sup> “Nos quoniam hic abstrahemus a substantia materiali et immateriali, speciales opiniones alio tempore consideraturi, nunc generales tantum excutiemus. Quas praecipue quatuor numerare licet. Aut enim Principium Individuationis ponitur entitas tota, aut non tota. Non totam aut negatio exprimit, aut aliquid positivum. Positivum hoc aut pars physica est essentiam terminans, Existentia; aut metaphysica speciem terminans, Haecceitas.” DMPI § 3.

Leibniz begins his discussion of the problem by defining his own position: every individual being is individuated by its entity as a whole<sup>17</sup> and he adds the statement that by what (principle) a thing is, by the same means this thing is numerically one.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it is clear that every thing is numerically one owing to its entity, for it is owing to its entity that every thing is.

The critical discussion of the conceptions of others is part and parcel of Leibniz's argumentation for his own solution of the problem, so now I proceed to a presentation the positions criticised by Leibniz and then, against the backdrop of the rejected solutions, I will expound his own view.

#### NEGATION, EXISTENCE, *HAECCEITAS*

As a firm proponent of the conception according to which individuality is something positive, Leibniz directs the edge of his criticism against the approach that identifies the principle of individuality with something negative (absence or lack of some element rather than presence of a feature). He writes: "I fail to see who might support this position except perhaps some confused nominalist."<sup>19</sup> Leibniz relates this view following a summary by John of Bassoles († 1347), a XIV century Scotist philosopher, who, in writing his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, remained a faithful disciple of John Duns Scotus.<sup>20</sup> Bassolius' texts were one of the chief sources for Leibniz on the problem of individuation, and he willingly quotes them. This is the reason why there is much likeness between the critical arguments used by Scotus and directed against the conception of double negation and the arguments advanced by Leibniz himself. However, Scotus' critical discussion is much more developed.

The reported negative factor fulfilling the role of the individuating principle was actually conceived as consisting of two negations: the negation of divisibility of an individual (into more individuals of the same nature) and the negation of identity (of this given individual with another individual).

<sup>17</sup> "Pono igitur: omne individuum sua tota Entitate individuatur." DMPI § 4.

<sup>18</sup> "Per quod quid est, per id unum numero est." DMPI § 5.

<sup>19</sup> DMPI § 11.

<sup>20</sup> The doctrine of John of Bassoles remains practically unknown. See Eienne GILSON, *Historia filozofii chrześcijańskiej w wiekach średnich*, trans. Sylwester Zalewski (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1987), 417, 714. In the tradition he has a reputation of a Scotist that was very highly regarded by John Duns himself, who reportedly used to say that Bassoles alone was enough by way of audience during a lecture. See. Kenelm H. DIGBY, *Mores Catholici, or Ages of Faith*, Vol. VIII (London: C. Dolman, 1846), 599.

What is meant by the former negation is best illustrated by invoking the classical conception of the natural hierarchy of species and genera and the scheme illustrating this conception, known as “Porphyry’s tree.” It goes without saying that Leibniz acquired the conception of hierarchically ordered genera and species together with the legacy of scholastic speculative thought which he imbibed during his university studies.

According to this conception, higher genera by addition of appropriate divisive differences are determined into lower genera, which are species with respect to the higher generic concepts. Thus a hierarchy of genera and species is formed, that descends from the highest genus (*genus generalissimum*), through the intermediate genera/species to the lowest species (*species specialissima*) in the hierarchy that cannot be divided into even lower species and thus is not a genus itself.<sup>21</sup> This lowest species thus contains in its scope no subdividing species, it only contains particulars of which it is predicated, and in other words, it can be divided into particulars of the same specific nature as itself. These particulars, however, can no longer be divided into other particulars of the same nature and so they are called individual, which means indivisible. What makes them individual (indivisible) is precisely the impossibility to further descend to lower units of the same nature. It is this impossibility that is the first negation referred to in the double negation theory of individuation: the negation of divisibility.<sup>22</sup> Leibniz refers here to the classical scheme handed down by Porphyry in his *Isagoge*, usually cited as Porphyry’s tree; this illustrates in the descending order the progressive determination of the highest genus of substance to the most particular species, the species of man, and further on, below the lowest species, to human individuals. The degrees of the descent from the most general genus to individual particulars in Porphyry’s tree are as follows: substance, body (that is corporeal substance), animated body (ensouled body), animal, man, and an individual human being (Socrates, Plato).<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the lowest species (*infima species*) is the end of particularising determination of the genera and particular beings form the end of all particularising determination. The concept of the first negation used in reference to the principle of individuation refers precisely to this: the exclusion of the

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<sup>21</sup> PETER OF SPAIN, *Traktaty logiczne*, II 8, trans. Tadeusz Włodarczyk (Warszawa: PWN, 1969), 30.

<sup>22</sup> “Quicquid autem sit de autore, sententia ita concipi potest, ut a summo genere per differentias determinato ad subalterna, inde infimam speciem descendas; ibi vero ulterius nequeas, et negatio ulterioris descensus sit intrinsecum formale individui.” DMPI § 11.

<sup>23</sup> PETER OF SPAIN, *Traktaty logiczne*, II 9, 31.

possibility of further (subdividing) determination. An individual particular is formally made individual by the negation of the possibility of any further determination by means of differences. Since any such determination implies a division of the determined concept, this negation can also be called a negation of division,<sup>24</sup> for the particular is no longer divisible (into units of the same nature as itself), in contrast to genera (which are divisible into species) and species (which are divisible into individual particulars). The second negation referred to in the double negation theory ought to be understood as a negation of identity of a given individual with other individuals, as no individual is the same as another individual.<sup>25</sup>

Both negations (the one of divisibility and the one of identity) constitute jointly the principle of individuation according to the theory under discussion. This theory attracts Leibniz's uncompromising criticism. He thinks a true nominalist could not really uphold it, as its underlying assumption is primacy of the universal with respect to the individual.<sup>26</sup> True, there are no ontological assumptions in Porphyry's scheme as to the nature of genera and species; it is perfectly possible simply to conceive of them as ways of predication (and not real essences). Nevertheless, the double negation theory made Leibniz suspicious of a danger of Platonism lurking behind its assumptions: to him to think of an individual as defined by negation was to make it a negatively determined universal; this appeared as a major inconvenience of the double negation conception of individuation.

There are more objections that Leibniz formulated against this position: since to him an individual is something positive throughout, it cannot be constituted by anything negative (by the absence of something rather than the presence of something); further, no negation can produce individual accidents; further, any negation presupposes something positive that is negated, otherwise it will be empty and meaningless; consequently, the definition of an individual by negation alone is impossible and absurd. Suppose that Socrates is a negation of Plato and Plato a negation of Socrates, then both will be purely negative and will contain nothing positive to provide a minimum foothold for negation itself to rest upon.<sup>27</sup> The overall conclusion is obvious,

<sup>24</sup> "Porro prior, negatio divisionis, est quasi generalis individui." DMPI § 11.

<sup>25</sup> "[...] altera vero negatio identitatis cum alio faciet hoc individuum ab alio vere distinctum." DMPI § 11.

<sup>26</sup> "Vix tamen potuit esse toto Nominalis, qui hoc defendit, nam illi praesupponendum, universale magis esse Ens quam singulare." DMPI § 11.

<sup>27</sup> "[...] quomodo Ens positivum constitui potest a negativo? Praeterea Negatio non potest producere accidentia individualia; deinde: omnis negatio est alicujus positivi, alioqui erit solum

by no means can negation, no matter how it is conceived, be the *principium individuationis*.

Can we identify any scholastic source for the theory of double negation as the principle of individuation? As we indicated above, Leibniz relates this conception following the information provided by John of Bassoles, he also mentions Angelus Mercenarius († 1585) as referring to it. However, in all probability Leibniz did not have any acquaintance with the original author of the double negation theory: the scholastic master Henry of Ghent, the author of such works as *Quodlibeta* and *Summa quaestionum ordinariam*.

Henry, pondering over the intricate problem of the cause of individuation, came to the conclusion that such a cause must be something negative. According to him, it is an ontological negative factor (or negation construed ontologically as some real factor) that makes the created specific form, which is the end of creation, indivisible as a substance, which is to say, individual and particular (since this concrete substance lacks divisibility in both essential and accidental aspects). It is also another negation (again construed as a real factor) that is responsible for the fact that any given individual being, constituted as separate from all that, is other to itself. Henry describes this twofold negative factor as “double” negation because it operates in two areas: internally it removes from a given thing any multiplication and diversity (in terms of the same nature), while externally it excludes any substantial identity with other things. Thus, owing to this double work of negative factors, the constitution of an individual takes place and also its individuation; that is the constitution in its unshareable unity. Due to double negation, the generic and specific essence in a given individual acquires its delimitation to precisely this unique individual.<sup>28</sup>

This conception by Henry of Ghent, put forward in the course of the controversy over the principle of individuation, was one of the many views dis-

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verbotenus negatio. Sint igitur duo individua Socrates et Plato, principium Socratis erit negatio Platonis, et principium Platonis negatio Socratis, erit igitur neutribi aliquid positivum et in quo possis pedem sistere.” DMPI § 12.

<sup>28</sup> “Oportet ergo quod [causa individuationis] sit aliquid negativum. [...] Est igitur dicendum quod in formis creatis specificis [...] ratio individuationis [...] est negatio, qua forma ipsa [...] ut est terminus factionis facta est indivisa omnino in supposito, et individualis et singularis, privatione omnis divisibilitatis (per se et per accidens), et a quolibet alio divisa [...]. Quae quidem ‘negatio’ non est simplex, sed duplex,—quia est removens ‘ab intra’ omnem plurificabilitatem et diversitatem, et ‘ab extra’ omnem identitatem [...]. Sic ergo non nisi determinatione negationis circa formam... fit complete—ut ratione formali—et individuatō et suppositi constitutio.” HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodlibet*, V, q. 8 (Parisiis 1518).

puted by John Duns Scotus in his works. Because of the attention paid to this doctrine by the Subtle Doctor, it was summarized by Bassolius and it was through this intermediary that this conception was noticed by Leibniz.

The resolute rejection of negation as a possible basis for the principle of individuation by Leibniz shows that he conceived of individuality as a positive reality, which must, therefore, be constituted by a positive element. However, this positive moment constituting any individually created substance is neither the existence nor the *haecceitas* of John Duns Scotus. Leibniz will in turn criticize these two suggested candidates for the principle of individuation.

Leibniz affirms that the true principle of individuation is the whole entity of an individual, yet this total entity is by no means identical with the existence of an individual. Leibniz makes it clear that the existence of a being is not the total entity of an individual, but merely a component part of an individual being. The view that existence is the *principium individuationis* in the *Disputation* is ascribed, following Francis of Murcia († 1639), to a certain Carthusian monk, Dionysius Ricelius († 1471). On the information given by Fonseca, Leibniz cites also Nicholas Bonetus († 1343) as a proponent of this solution. It is not easy to identify the adherents of this theory in medieval scholasticism; on certain interpretations, Peter of Falco,<sup>29</sup> Thomas Aquinas,<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> PETER OF FALCO in his *Quaestiones ordinariae*, q. 8, ed. Alexandre-Jean Gondras, in *Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia* 22–24 (Lovaniensis-Parisiis: Beatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1968), 3 vols., states, that any given thing possesses perfect unity, which means it is singular, owing to actual perfection, that is perfection as a being. From this statement it is possible to infer that actual existence is the principle of individuation („Uno modo dicitur aliquid ‘unum’ unitate perfecta, quae fundatur super perfectam actualitatem sive entitatem”). Further on he observes that the cause of any thing’s unity, namely unity understood as indivisibility of a thing in itself and its separation from other things is a certain entity („Entitas vero est causa unitatis vel idem re quod unitas, addita ratione indivisionis in se et divisionis ab alio [...]. Materia est in potentia, forma vero est actus. Ex quo sequitur quod illud esse quod forma nata est dare, materia nata est recipere; ita unitatem: idem enim est principium essendi et distinguendi”). Given that the principle of a thing’s existing and being separate is the same and has to be an act, one could legitimately interpret that principle with existence; however, equally legitimately one could ascribe to Peter the conception of individuation through form, which, being an act, imparts existence to a thing and thus forms a singular being that is separate from other beings.

<sup>30</sup> This view has usually been attributed to Thomas Aquinas on the basis of the following passage from his *De anima*: “The cause of existence and individuality is for every thing the same.” See THOMAS AQUINAS, *De anima*, q. 1 ad 2, translation into Polish: Zofia Włodek and Włodzimierz Zega (Kraków: Znak, 1996), 22. However, the traditional interpretation of Thomas sees him as a proponent of the view (based upon Aristotle’s conception) that it is actually matter designated by quantity that is responsible for individuation. Yet some interpreters, e.g. Joseph Owens suggest that we ought to distinguish the metaphysical plane of the discussion of individuation, in this perspective being individual is a transcendental property being as such, namely the transcendental unity of a being in itself and its separatedness from other beings. On this as-

Aegidius Romanus, Henry of Ghent<sup>31</sup> or Robert Kilwardby<sup>32</sup> could qualify as proponents of this conception. Laurence B. McCullough in his paper states that, in criticising this thesis, Leibniz takes Henry of Ghent<sup>33</sup> as his direct opponent; however, it should be noted that he never cites Henry by name in the *Disputation*. According to McCullough,<sup>34</sup> Leibniz, who drew his information on the discussions of individuation in scholasticism from Bassolius, ought to have jointly treated the conception of individuation through an act of existing with the theory of double negation (as Bassolius considers these two solutions together); yet he consciously singles out individuation through existence for a separate criticism. In § 11, he observes that Bassolius in his report mentions those who combined existence and double negation in their conception of individuation, yet he dismisses such an approach with scorn and qualifies it as improbable and incoherent.<sup>35</sup> His summary dismissal of the conception joining existence and negative factors appears to be dictated by a *prima facie* difficulty in combining them into a coherent whole, a negative (negations) and a positive (existence) principles. However, if one construes the negations (in the sense of real negative features) invoked in the conception of double negation as merely features of an individual being consequent upon individuality conceived as being constituted by the possession by a being of the transcendental properties of indivisibility and being separate (from other beings), then the conception joining existence and negative factors could be saved. Then the act of existence would have to be construed

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sumption, the act of existence of a thing could be interpreted as the principle of individuation according to Thomas Aquinas. For this see Joseph OWENS, "Thomas Aquinas," in *Individuation in Scholasticism. The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, 1150–1650*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 173. In contemporary Thomism this view of individuation is accepted by Eric Lionel Mascall: "Both individual and specific properties of a being have the same ontological basis—all of them are posited by, and exclusively by the act of existence." Cf. E[ric] L[ionel] MASCALL, *Istnienie i analogia [Existence and Analogy]*, trans. Jolanta W. Zielińska (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, 1961), 93–94.

<sup>31</sup> The opinion that the conception of individuation through existence can legitimately be attributed to Henry of Ghent is defended by O.J. BROWN, "Individuation and Actual Existence in Scotistic Metaphysics: A Thomistic Assessment," *New Scholasticism* 53 (1979): 347–361.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Kilwardby is one of few authors who refer to the act of existence in the context of individuality: "Si igitur quaeritur quae sit individualis proprietates, forte bene dicitur quod actualis existentia." ROBERT KILWARDBY, *Sent.* II q.17, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum*, ed. Gerhard Leibold (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992).

<sup>33</sup> L.B. MCCULLOUGH, "Leibniz's Principle of Individuation in His *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui* of 1663," 208.

<sup>34</sup> L.B. MCCULLOUGH, *Leibniz on Individuals and Individuation*, 42–43.

<sup>35</sup> "Bassolius refert quosdam, qui principium Individui dixissent existentiam cum duplici negatione, quod satis improbabile nec ullam convenientiam habet." DMPI § 11.

as the foundation of the transcendental properties of a being and the consequent individuality. Thus, it would fulfil the role of the principle of individuation. The problem of individuation could then be regarded as solved, the negative features being merely the consequences flowing from the fundamental principle: the act of existence; the feared incoherence between the positive and negative factors would be removed.

However, Leibniz is resolutely critical of the position assuming that existence in itself should be the principle of individuation. In his argument against this thesis, he distinguishes two possible ways of considering existence, or two ways of conceiving of existence. Existence could be construed as a real mode (*modus realis*) which inheres in a thing and makes it individual, and is in a thing (*a parte rei*) a real factor different from the essence of that very thing; or else, existence could be thought of as merely conceptually different from the essence of a thing (the distinction of essence and existence being not real but merely conceptual). The former thesis Leibniz rejects, whereas the latter he interprets as a version of his own position, which consists in the essence together with the existence (that is: the total entity) of a thing being the principle of individuation.<sup>36</sup>

On the side of things (in objective reality), both essence and existence are one and the same reality, according to Leibniz.<sup>37</sup> This is argued for in the following way, if existence is really distinct from essence (that is to say there is a real distinction between the two), then it could be separated from essence and subsist on its own (without any essence), which is of course impossible.<sup>38</sup> Yet if existence could subsist separately from things, it would not, on its own, be able to be the principle of individuation for them.

It is clear that for Leibniz a real distinction obtaining between two things implies the ability of these things to subsist separately from each other. Thus, to postulate a real distinction between the essence and the existence of a single thing is, according to Leibniz, absurd in itself. He makes this abundantly clear while considering the possible ontological status of an essence after its hypothetical separation from existence. There are only two possibi-

<sup>36</sup> “Dupliciter autem capi potest, partim ut existentia realis aliquis sit modus rem intrinsece individuans ab ejus essentia a parte rei distinctus, quod si ita est, defendi minime potest, ut mox patebit. Sin ab essentia solum ratione differt, nobiscum egregie coincidit, et exprimit praeterea, quo respectu essentia sit principium individuationis.” DMPI § 13.

<sup>37</sup> “Si Essentia et Existentia sunt idem a parte rei, sequitur quod Existentia sensu adversariorum non sit principium individuationis. Sed verum prius, E. et posterius.” DMPI § 14.

<sup>38</sup> “[...] quaecumque realiter differunt, possunt a se invicem separari. Sed essentia et existentia non possunt separari.” DMPI § 14.

lities: an essence without its appropriate existence can either be a real being or simply nothing (non-being). If it were nothing, it would be completely absent from creation, which is absurd; or else it would not be really distinct from existence, which is precisely Leibniz's own position.

On the other hand, if a separate essence were some reality (some kind of real being), there would again be two possibilities: it could either be pure potency or again some kind of being in act. Yet it could not possibly be an actual being, for it would be indebted to existence for its actuality, from which it was separated in our initial assumption. Then the only remaining possibility is that the separate essence would be a being in pure potency. However, from this assumption we receive the following consequence: all essences would be identical with prime matter, since pure potency is the same as prime matter (here Leibniz adopts one of the basic concepts of Aristotle's metaphysics). In effect, things would not differ specifically, as they would lack their form, which is not pure potency, rather, as a principle, it is opposed to it. Thus, the separate essence of animal would not differ from the separate essence of man, since both would lack their formal element, which is the ground for any specific difference.<sup>39</sup> Leibniz has no more use for the view that differentiation of essences results from the real relation in which these stand to the Divine Ideas contained in God's mind; in his opinion such a theory would imply a necessity of accidental beings existing in God.<sup>40</sup>

All this reasoning aims at justifying the thesis that essence separated from existence cannot be a real entity. If this is so, then essence and existence are not separable and are not distinct in a real way (there is no real distinction between them).

The criticism of the conception according to which existence on its own (existence as being separate from essence) is the principle of individuation serves as a confirmation of Leibniz's declaration that every individual being is so by virtue of its own entity taken as a whole. Essence and existence are distinct from each other only conceptually (they are different concepts re-

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<sup>39</sup> "Essentia ablata existentia aut est ens reale aut nihil. Si nihil, aut non fuit in creaturis, quod absurdum; aut non distincta ab existentia fuit, quod intendo. Sin Ens reale, fuit aut pure potentiale, aut Ens actu. Sine dubio illud, nam non potest esse actu nisi per existentiam, quam tamen separatam esse praesupposuimus. Si igitur essentia est pure potentialis, omnes essentiae sunt materia prima. [...] Si igitur essentiae non differunt a materia, sequitur quod sola materia sit pars essentialis, et res non differunt specie, v. g. essentia bruti ab essentia hominis." DMPI § 15.

<sup>40</sup> "Et si dicas, differre per relationes ad Ideas, non est Relatio realis, esset enim accidens in DEO." DMPI § 15. This passage is so summary as to make the line of arguments behind Leibniz's statement unclear, according to McCullough. See L.B. MCCULLOUGH, *Leibniz on Individuals and Individuation*, 50.

ferring to the same thing), so it is essence together with existence that jointly constitute the principle of individuation of a given singular thing. It is worth observing that Leibniz's typology of possible distinctions that may be considered as obtaining between essence and existence includes only two items: the real and conceptual distinction. Here there is no mention of nor any attempt to analyse the formal distinction between entities as it was introduced by John Duns Scotus.

However, Leibniz was well aware of the existence and nature of this kind of distinction, as his critical analysis of Scotus' conception of individuation will make clear. Criticism leading to a rejection of this kind of distinction will prove to be one of the main points in the case he made out against the conception of individuation proposed by John Duns Scotus.

It is hard to be certain whether Leibniz, when relating John Duns Scotus' position on individuation, referred directly to Scotus' own texts (he quotes the *Commentary on the Sentences* II, d. 3, q. 6) or made use of John of Bassoles' and Jacopo Zabarella's reports; at any rate he mentions Zabarella as a witness to the fact that Scotus expounded his conception in his *Quodlibeta* and in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*.<sup>41</sup> Leibniz also cites Fonseca and Pererius as sources of information on Scotus.

Leibniz correctly identifies the essential metaphysical scheme of individuation accepted by Scotus: individuation is addition of the appropriate principle (in Scotus' case *haecceitas*) to the common nature (*natura communis* the specific nature shared by all individuals belonging to one species). Leibniz devoted most space in his *Disputatio* (namely § 17-26) to Scotus' conception of individuation, or, precisely, to its critical discussion. However, the reconstruction of Scotus' doctrine is fairly superficial, often leading to debatable interpretations. It might seem at first glance that haecceity, being a principle whose function was to ensure the uniqueness, difference, individuality, non-exemplifiability or unity of a being, ought for this very reason to have been accepted by Leibniz; this, however, is not the case: he takes a critical attitude towards Scotus' theory, one of the reasons being the fact that this theory is inseparably bound with the assumption by Scotus of the concept of common nature, which Leibniz rejected.

In Leibniz's interpretation Scotus adopted an extreme realist standpoint, for he assumed that universals possess true reality beyond and independently

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<sup>41</sup> DMPI § 16.

of the mind.<sup>42</sup> Scotus' conception of common nature (*natura communis*) is what makes Leibniz take this view of Scotus. Common nature enjoys the status of some sort of real being in Scotus, yet being real the common nature is neither individual nor universal. However, Leibniz interpreted it, contrary to Scotus' intentions, as not only real, but also universal being.

Before relating Leibniz's criticism of Scotus' theory of individuation, I will present the latter's conception referring directly to Scotus' own formulations contained in his writings.<sup>43</sup> The ontological characterization of common nature as a real being (of a sort, different from real individuals) is dictated in Scotus by his overriding concern to preserve the indisputable objectivity of the intellectual apprehension of the specific features of objects of cognition.

The affirmation that the only kind of real unity is the unity resulting from singularity attached to a specific nature, which is the numerical unity possessed by a concrete singular being, is unacceptable to Scotus. If the only kind of unity in real things were numerical unity, then the only kind of distinction between real things would be precisely numerical distinction, affirms the Subtle Doctor. He derives this conclusion referring to Aristotle's view formulated in the *Metaphysics*, according to which every kind of real unity corresponds respectively to the opposed, proportional, related distinction<sup>44</sup> (thus, to the numerical unity corresponds the numerical distinction, to the specific unity (identity) the specific distinction etc.).

To Scotus, a denial of the reality of the unity brought by common nature would result in a view according to which there would be no greater similarity between individuals of the same species than between individuals belonging to completely different species. Thus, there would be no greater difference between, say, Socrates and a line, than between Socrates and Plato. If this were the case, the intellect would not be able to form by means of abstraction a concept characterized by a stronger unity, taking for the basis for the process

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<sup>42</sup> "Notum autem est, Scotum fuisse Realium extremum, quia universalia veram extra mentem realitatem habere statuit." DMPI § 17.

<sup>43</sup> On the conception of common nature in Scotus see chapters I and IV in Martyna KOSZKAŁO, *Indywiduum i jednostkowienie. Analiza wybranych tekstów Jana Dunsza Szkota [The Individual and Individuation; An Analysis of Selected Texts by John Duns Scotus]* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> "Cuilibet unitati diversitas proportionatur et proportionaliter correspondet sua diversitas opposita." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 27, in IOHANNES DUNS SCOTUS. *Opera omnia*, t. XVIII, ed. Karl Balić (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis). Cf. ARYSTOTELES, *Metafizyka*, 1054a 20-21, translated into Polish by Kazimierz Leśniak, in *Dziela wszystkie*, t. II (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1990), 774.

of abstraction Socrates and Plato than if it took for such a basis Socrates and a line. Yet this would further imply that all specific concepts had no real foundation in things and, consequently, were no more than fictions of our mind. The upshot of this would be the assumption that all of our general concepts were arbitrary. If the common nature has no corresponding real unity, then there will be no single real basis for any process of abstraction and, in effect, we must acknowledge that there are neither real differences nor real similarities between beings.<sup>45</sup>

How is one to construe the ontological status of the real common nature? According to Duns Scotus the original apprehension of an intelligible nature by the intellect is neither in the aspect of universality nor in the one of singularity. Even if universality is the appropriate mode for the cognition of common nature it is not the mode of the primary apprehension of it. In its original encounter with a common nature, the intellect grasps nature as it is in itself, and not in its mode as universal or as singular. The first and original intention of the intellect is directed towards nature as it is discovered in a thing.<sup>46</sup>

Scotus, through this phenomenology of the intellectual apprehension of common natures, arrives at the explanation of the ontological status of common nature as it is in itself: common nature must be characterized by certain independence from both the mode of universality and the mode of singularity. Both universality and singularity come from without as a superadded element to a common nature as it is already formed in its primary neutrality and is an object of an abstractive comprehension. Common nature as it is in itself is (logically and ontologically) prior to the individuating principle and thus there is in it nothing incompatible with its being in a certain way without the individuating element.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> “Si omnis unitas realis est praecise numeralis, ergo omnis diversitas realis est praecise numeralis. Ergo omnia essent aequaliter ‘realiter diversa’, et sic Socrates tanta diversitate reali differret a Platone quanta a linea,—et ulterius sequitur quod intellectus non magis posset abstrahere ‘unum’ a Socrate et Platone quam a linea et Socrate, sed esset totum figmentum.” JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 26.

<sup>46</sup> “Sicut lapis prius est aliquid intellectui secundum se, et non sub ratione universalis nec sub ratione singularis, nec intelligit [intellectus] secundam intentionem quando primo intelligit lapidem, nec universalitas est pars intellecti, sed intelligit naturam lapidis secundum se, nec ut universalis nec ut particularis singularis.” *Ibidem*, q. 1, n. 32.

<sup>47</sup> “Universalitas accidit illi naturae secundum primam rationem eius, secundum quam est obiectum,—ita etiam in re extra, ubi natura est cum singularitate, non est illa natura de se determinata ad singularitatem, sed est prior naturaliter ipsa ratione contrahente ipsam ad singularitatem illam, et in quantum est prior naturaliter illo contrahente, non repugnat sibi esse sine illo

However, this being in a certain way of a common nature as free from an individuating principle is not existing in the full sense of the word "exist" (subsisting), for a common nature cannot subsist on its own without the individuating factor which is the *haecceitas*.

Scotus emphasises that just as it is prior to singularity, common nature is prior to universality, it possesses in fact certain intelligible reality (*esse intelligibile*); in extramental reality it possesses true real being of a kind, corresponding to its neutral entity (neither singular, nor universal).<sup>48</sup> In his *Lectura* Scotus denominates this special mode of being characterizing common nature the *esse quidditativum* of a thing. This quidditative being of common nature ensures that this nature is a reality of a kind and by no means a mere projection of the cognizing mind. Yet Scotus, while attributing a kind of real being to common nature, is clear on the fact that common nature is not an independent substance (a self-contained being). To Scotus, reality is first of all objectivity, being independent of the cognizing mind. The real being of common nature is characterized by a double priority. First, it has priority with respect to cognition, as the cognizing intellect originally apprehends the neutral common nature as the basis for all essential predication. Secondly, it also possesses ontological priority, for common nature in its specific unity is prior with respect to numerical unity, that is with respect to its being determined to being this concrete singular being (by super-addition of an individualizing element).<sup>49</sup> Relative to the neutral kind of being of common nature, it is possible to attribute to common nature a kind of unity, which is neutral with respect to singularity, which, nevertheless, is not essentially opposed to forming the stronger unity of singularity by being connected to an individuating principle; such is the meaning of the unity possessed by common nature, a real unity, although weaker than the numerical one.<sup>50</sup>

Scotus' subtle specifications notwithstanding, Leibniz defined the onto-

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contrahente." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 34, in JOHANNES DUNS SCOTUS, *Opera omnia*, t. VII, ed. Karl Balić (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1973).

<sup>48</sup> "Et sicut obiectum in intellectu secundum illam primitatem eius et universalitatem habuit vere esse intelligibile, ita etiam in re natura secundum illam entitatem habet verum esse reale extra animam." Ibidem

<sup>49</sup> "Unde lapis in illo priore—secundum naturam suam—in quo non determinatur ut sit in hoc vel in illo, habet quiddid dicitur de eo quidditative, cui 'ut sic' accedit esse intellectum in hoc vel in illo." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 32.

<sup>50</sup> "Secundum illam entitatem habet unitatem sibi proportionalem, quae indifferens est ad singularitatem, ita quod non repugnat illi unitati de se quod cum quacumque unitate singularitatis ponatur (hoc igitur modo intelligo 'naturam habere unitatem realem, minorem unitate numerali')." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 34.

logical character of Scotus' common nature as it is in itself as not only a real, but also universal being, thus making it a concept close to Platonic ontology.<sup>51</sup> In the light of Scotus' own views sketched above, Leibniz clearly has a mistaken interpretation. McCullough believes this was a fundamental blunder on Leibniz's part, one induced by his strong commitment to a definite side in the philosophical debate in which he engaged; it was precisely this commitment that prevented him from interpreting Scotus' views free of prejudice.<sup>52</sup> However, it should be noted in Leibniz's justification that platonic interpretations of Scotus' views on common nature had appeared before in the history of philosophy.<sup>53</sup> Scotus himself was perfectly aware of the possibility of formulating an objection to his theory as implying a commitment to the existence of a real universal in a thing; as the presence of a neutral common nature in a thing, say, in this stone, a nature that is ontologically prior to the singular existence of the said stone, could be interpreted as the presence of a real universal being as a real constitutive part of this thing (this stone).<sup>54</sup> Scotus defends his position as follows: a universal (a common univocal predicate attributed to individuals of a species) is predicated of several singulars of a species because of the numerically singular intelligible content found in each of these singulars, the content of which is exactly the content of the relevant common nature as apprehended in these singulars (*esse intelligibile*); thus, there is nothing in the constitution of a singular that is not singular itself. Yet the real basis of a universal predicate, which is common nature, is not something that is numerically one and literally one and is not the same in many individuals belonging to one spe-

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<sup>51</sup> In the discussion below the term "platonism" is taken in the sense that Scotus himself attributed to that term. Naturally, this is only one among many possible interpretations of Plato's view, and probably one that Plato himself would have repudiated. However, given the ignorance of the majority of Plato's own texts in the Latin Middle Ages, Scotus' interpretation of Plato was of necessity based on indirect sources (mainly Aristotle). This explains, among other things, absence of references in Scotus to Plato's analyses of participation of individuals in the ideas, the matter that formed the subject of Plato's discussion in the *Parmenides*.

<sup>52</sup> L. MCCULLOUGH, *Leibniz on Individuals and Individuation*, 56.

<sup>53</sup> Tamara Rudavsky names Albert Stöckl and Maurice De Wulf among historians of philosophy; see Tamara M. RUDAVSKY, "The Doctrine of Individuation in Duns Scotus," *Franziskanische Studien* 62 (1980): 62. Etienne Gilson regards Scotus' acceptance of the theory of the common nature as a standpoint close to Platonism; see Etienne GILSON, *Jean Duns Scot, Introduction à ses positions fondamentales* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1952), 451, footnote 2.

<sup>54</sup> "Sed contra istud videntur esse duae obiectiones: una, quia videtur ponere universale esse aliquid reale in re [...]—nam ista natura secundum quod ens in isto lapide, prior tamen naturaliter singularitate lapidis, est ex dictis indifferens ad hoc singulare et illud." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 35.

cies: there is nothing in Plato and in Socrates that is both numerically one and common to either man; what is human nature in Plato is not numerically the same as that which constitutes human nature in Socrates.<sup>55</sup>

In his *Lectura*, Scotus positively rejects what he understands to be the theory commonly attributed to Plato. According to Scotus' interpretation, Plato believed that in the human species, alongside singular human beings, there exists the unique idea of "man in general," which is also numerically one and which constitutes the measure or standard for every singular man. Scotus disagrees with Plato in saying that the unity found in general nature, taken as the measure for particulars, cannot be numerical unity.<sup>56</sup> Thus, he takes a critical stand with respect to the theory of ideas interpreted in this rather biased way. He marks the chief point of disagreement when he states that common nature in itself has no numerical unity, so it does not exist in the same way particulars do, as a single being, even though it is a real entity. Scotus adds to this criticism of Plato another point. He affirms that no idea can possibly exist as a self-contained subsisting being, the way that substances exist; the reason being that it is a general being, thus common to many. An idea cannot be "this man in general here and now" the way a concrete John can be "this John here and now." The idea of man, being general, would have to be the substantial being of all singular human beings, since a substance, according to the definition of substance, which is that which exists by itself, is the inherent property of that of which it is the substance.<sup>57</sup> It follows from this, that no idea can be a substance in this way, that is no idea can be the self-contained being with respect to singulars of the relevant species, for then we would have to acknowledge that the same idea, say the idea of man, is an inherent property of both Plato and Socrates, and this is impossible. The reason for this impossibility is that the numerically one and

<sup>55</sup> "Talis est 'universalitas in re' cui non repugnat 'esse universale'; sed istud non est universale formaliter, nam 'universale est unum in multis et de multis'. Unde universale secundum unam rationem numeralem dicitur de multis, quia secundum unum 'esse intelligibile' numero dicitur de Socrate et Platone, non tamen est unum ens numero in eis." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 34.

<sup>56</sup> "[Aristoteles] loquitur contra Platonem, qui posuit hominem separatim et esse mensuram et quidditatem istorum [hominum] inferiorum, eiusdem speciei cum eis; contra quod dicit quia non est possibile, quia in his quae sunt eiusdem speciei, non est prius et posterius. [...] Minor ergo est unitas naturae quam unitas numeralis." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 16.

<sup>57</sup> "Philosophus improbat illam fictionem quam imponit Platoni, quod scilicet non possit 'hic homo' per se existens — qui ponitur 'idea' — esse per se universale omni homini, quia 'omnis substantia per se existens est propria illi cuius est'." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 41.

same property cannot be a common feature shared by two completely distinct singular beings.<sup>58</sup> For obviously the property that is Plato's cannot be a property of Socrates, neither can Socrates take for his own property that which, as such, entirely inheres in Plato.<sup>59</sup> What is more, an idea, being the prime substance and existing all by itself, could not possibly be any property belonging to any concrete being whatsoever.<sup>60</sup>

Scotus' aforementioned critical statements, referring to what he considered to be Platonism, may serve as an indication that Leibniz had no direct acquaintance with Scotus' texts and did not know the latter's conception of common nature with enough precision and comprehension.

Some scholars, notably Jan Cover and John O'Leary-Hawthorne, suggest that the charge of extreme realism levelled by Leibniz against Scotus should not be taken in the full force of its formulation. According to them, it is highly unlikely that his intention was to attribute to Scotists the thesis that species (the objective correlates of universal concepts) are beings that are numerically distinct and capable of existing on their own like Platonic ideas. Leibniz appears to use the term "extreme realism" in a more loose way, by this term he means the position holding that common natures are real (have an objective existence of a sort), that they possess a kind of real unity, and that their reality is independent of any cognitive activity of the intellect.<sup>61</sup> Is this charitable interpretation of Leibniz accurate? Even though, to Leibniz's mind, Scotus' position is not Platonism in its pure form, it is still a kind of disguised Platonism, as his very telling comment on Scotus suggests: "In order to avoid the view that Aristotle attributed to Plato, he [namely: Scotus] invents the formal difference to conceal his error."<sup>62</sup> Leibniz's own position

<sup>58</sup> "Ad primum: quod substantia quaelibet singularis 'est propria sibi', ita quod eadem numero non potest esse alterius. Et hoc intendit Philosophus contra Platonem, qui ponit ideam unam multorum individuorum." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* VII q.13 n.109, in *Opera Philosophica*, t. IV, Libri VI-IX, edited by Girard J. Etzkorn (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University, 1997).

<sup>59</sup> "[...] idea non erit substantia Socratis, quia nec natura Socratis,—quia nec ex se propria, nec appropriata Socrati ut tantum sit in eo, sed etiam est in alio, secundum ipsum." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 41.

<sup>60</sup> "Si autem substantia accipiatur pro substantia prima, tunc verum est quod quaelibet substantia est ex se propria illi cuius est, et tunc multo magis sequitur quod illa idea—quae ponitur 'substantia per se existens'—illo modo non possit esse substantia Socratis vel Platonis." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 1, n. 41.

<sup>61</sup> Jan Arthur COVER and John O'LEARY-HAWTHORNE, *Substance and Individuation in Leibniz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 34-35.

<sup>62</sup> "Ne tamen in sententiam vergeret, tributam ab Aristotele Platoni, distinctionem formalem commentus est palliando errori." DMPI § 17.

was resolutely anti-realist: in some argument directed against Scotists, he stated plainly “there exist neither species nor genera outside of mind,” suggesting that the Scotists make the contrary assumption.<sup>63</sup>

In brief, even if the Scotistic neutral common nature was not construed by Leibniz in terms of a self-standing universal substance (akin to a Platonic idea), from the point of view of his anti-realist metaphysical commitments, such a kind of reality could still only be regarded as non-existent. For Leibniz, there is no such entity as common nature; one cannot attribute any reality to it. Only individual beings possess real entity. This fundamental assumption conditions Leibniz's whole discussion and his criticism of the conception of individuation accepted by Scotus.

The rejection of common nature and its ontological status leads Leibniz to a critical discussion of the formal distinction and moreover to a critical consideration and rejection of the *haecceitas*.

The formal distinction postulated by Scotus is described by Leibniz in the following formula: “This distinction obtains before any intervention of the cognizing intellect, yet it is related to the intellect.”<sup>64</sup> Further on in the text, Leibniz devotes more space to a discussion about the formal distinction and he cites texts of Peter of Poznań and the latter's description of the formal distinction as an intermediate between the real and the purely conceptual distinction. He also quotes another description used by Scotists, who define the formal distinction as obtaining between formal entities (*formalitates*) in a thing, which are identical with each other in the real thing in which they inhere; yet they differ from each other when apprehended by the cognizing intellect.<sup>65</sup>

Leibniz dismisses the thus defined distinction rather curtly; for him, if the formalities (formal entities) present in a thing are in truth formally different, then they cannot be identical in reality.<sup>66</sup> Thus, nowhere in reality can one find an instance of the formal distinction.

Leibniz believes that the concept of the formal difference had a part in the formulation of the problem of individuation in Scotus' mind. According to him, Scotus, having accepted the formal difference, “came to believe, that the genus was distinct in this way from the specific difference and the numerical

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<sup>63</sup> “Species per differentiam specificam contrahit genus, E. individuum per differentiam numericam speciem. Resp. neg. antecedens extra mentem.” DMPI § 21.

<sup>64</sup> “[Distinctio formalis] esset quidem ante operationem intellectus, diceret tamen respectum ad eum.” DMPI § 17.

<sup>65</sup> “[Differentia formalis] sit inter duas realitates seu formalitates in subjecto identificatas, diversus vero in ordine ad intellectum.” DMPI § 24.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibidem*.

difference from the species. And, since he assumed that universals are real (which he did either from a love of controversy or because he considered the opinion of Thomas Aquinas failed to yield acceptable solution and the one of the nominalists not worthy of credit) it was necessary for him to assume, that singulars are generated from universals and something superadded.”<sup>67</sup>

Leibniz argues against Scotus’ conception of individuation in the following way.

To begin with, he quotes Scotus’ affirmation that every kind of unity follows from some kind of entity; thus, the numerical unity follows from some entity. The entity from which the numerical unity follows is not included in the entity forming the species, so something must be added to the species to form an appropriate basis for a numerical unity; this added element is precisely the individual difference.

Leibniz has no use for this explanation. He rejects right away the pattern of individuation according to which individuality is something that a thing “acquires” as a result of adding an individual difference to its specific nature. To his mind, unity follows from entity only in the conceptual order, whereas in reality unity and entity are the same; similarly in reality the singular entity does not differ from the specific entity.<sup>68</sup>

To Scotus’ statement that neither form, matter, nor accidents can be the principle of individuation, so the only remaining candidate for the function of reducing the species to an individual is the *haecceitas*, Leibniz responds that the species is not reduced by anything, for the simple reason that it does not exist save in the mind.<sup>69</sup>

Finally, Leibniz refers to Scotus’ statement that all things that differ between themselves ultimately differ by elements that are primarily (or originally) diverse. For Scotus the overall scheme is simple: common nature is that through which Socrates and Plato are like each other, while the ultimate differences, which are their respective *haecceitates*, provide the element by which they are both made irreducibly different from each other. This is so

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<sup>67</sup> “Hac credidit genus distingui a differentia, et consequenter differentiam numericam a specie: quoniam enim universalia realia praesupposuerat, vel contradicendi studio, vel quod Thomae sententiam inexplicabilem putaret, Nominalium incredibilem, necesse fuit singularia ex universalibus et aliquo superaddito oriri.” DMPI § 17.

<sup>68</sup> “Omnis unitas aliquam Entitatem consequitur, E. et numerica; illa autem Entitas non est id quod in specie includitur. E. aliquid ei superadditum, nempe differentia individualis. Resp.: unitas Entitatem sequitur in conceptu, in re idem est. nec Entitas numerica differet a specifica realiter.” DMPI § 20.

<sup>69</sup> “Species non per formam vel materiam vel accidentia etc. contrahitur, E. relinquitur haecceitas. Resp.: per nihil contrahitur, qui extra mentem nulla est.” DMPI § 20.

because their *haecceitates* are primarily diverse between themselves (which means they have nothing in common).

Leibniz, however, remains unimpressed by this subtle conceptual architecture; to him most of it is superfluous. Once we dispense with common natures, we can do equally well without the rest. It is enough to assume, as Leibniz himself does, that Socrates and Plato are themselves primarily diverse, and thus do not need any *haecceitates*, that is special primarily diverse elements, in order to be made different from each other.<sup>70</sup>

It is easy to see that in the *Disputation* we already find the seeds of pluralistic metaphysical individualism, that is the metaphysical theory inseparably associated with Leibniz's mature philosophy. He is already positive that only the individual exists (in the proper sense of "exist"). There are no other kinds of reality than the reality of individuals; in particular there are no common natures, non-individuals in themselves, to which the status of real beings, in whatever way conceived, could be attributed. As Leibniz himself concisely put it, there is no real unity less than numerical unity.<sup>71</sup>

In Leibniz's individualistic pluralism, it is individuals (whether of the same or of different species) that are primarily diverse (*primo diversa*). In the Scotist tradition, only the individuating factors (*haecceitates*) are primarily diverse, they impart to individuals the status of unique things, although not absolutely unique. If Leibniz uses the term *primo diversae* in the sense given to that phrase in the Scotist tradition, then the consequences for his individualistic ontology are far reaching: the individuals in his philosophy are so unique that they fail to convene in anything, there is nothing in common to them, no common nature which they might instantiate. This has a consequence for epistemology: Leibniz finds it difficult to account for the objectivity of our concepts and for the possibility of universal predication concerning individual singulars. This difficulty will also appear in the mature philosophy of Leibniz.<sup>72</sup>

It is also worth emphasising that Leibniz's case against Scotus' conception falls into two parts. On one hand, Leibniz disowns the *haecceitas* because of the systemic nature of this concept and its relatedness to other

<sup>70</sup> "Quae differunt, per aliqua primo diversa differunt, E. Socrates et Plato per ultimam differentiam, nempe Haecceitatem. Resp.: quae differunt, limito: nisi sint ipsa primo diversa, et se ipsi differunt, per aliqua etc. sic neg. Min." DMPI § 20.

<sup>71</sup> DMPI § 21.

<sup>72</sup> To this point draws attention L.B. McCULLOUGH, "Leibniz's Principle of Individuation in His *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui* of 1663," 57; Przemysław GUT, *Leibniz. Myśl filozoficzna w XVII wieku* (Monografie Fundacji na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej: Seria Humanistyczna) (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2004), 96–97.

problematic concepts, namely those of the common nature and the formal difference. On the other hand, he puts forward an argument levelled directly against the principle of individuation postulated by Scotus: Scotus' theory fails to explain how individual accidents arise from the *haecceitas*.<sup>73</sup> This last objection allows for two different interpretations; we could understand it as meaning either (1) that the *haecceitas* provides no grounds for explaining why an individual should have precisely these accidents and not others; or (2) that the *haecceitas* fails to account for the way a general accidental property becomes this singular accidental property of this singular subject.

What might Scotus himself offer in response to this objection to his theory? The *haecceitas*, being a principle operative within the domain of the category of substance, individuates the substance as such. It is probably legitimate to conclude from Scotus' arguments, formulated in his critical discussion of the theory of individuation, holding that individuation is the function of the accident of quantity, that he would admit that accidents have no appropriate *haecceitates* of their own and that it is enough to assume that there is one fundamental cause of individuation which extends its individuating effect to all categories of being and all components of a thing. In the mentioned debate over individuation through quantity, Scotus expresses his opinion that individuality—as understood as designation and delimitation—is a necessary condition for grounding the accident of quantity in a thing,<sup>74</sup> and thus probably, every other accident. Scotus invokes Aristotle's authority in claiming that only singulars act as causes with respect to other singulars, and this holds true in every domain of causality. Scotus concludes from this that only an individual subject is the cause of an individual accident.<sup>75</sup> The *haecceitas*, in making any nature individual, would thus account for individuality of all features of a subject. Being the principle of a being's uniqueness, the *haecceitas* goes some way towards explaining the fact of a subject having precisely these accidents and not others from the same categories.

For his part, Leibniz confidently affirms that his own conception of individuation provides a satisfactory solution to the problem of the derivation of singular accidents. He invokes the following argument: whereas one can point

<sup>73</sup> "Inexplicabile est, quomodo accidentia individualia ab Haecceitate oriantur." DMPI § 26.

<sup>74</sup> "Sed singularitas—sive signatio—est necessaria condicio in substantia ad causandum quantitatem." JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 4, n. 96.

<sup>75</sup> "Sed ut est subiectum, est 'haec substantia': quia, secundum Philosophum I *Physicorum* et II *Metaphysicae*, singularium sunt causae singulares (in quocumque genere causae), ergo singularis accidentis singulare subiectum est causa". JOHN DUNS SOTUS, *Ordinatio* II, d. 3, pars 1, q. 4, n.87.

to a disposition in matter towards form, one cannot point to any disposition in a species (a common nature) towards a *haecceity*.<sup>76</sup> This statement seems to suggest that, in Leibniz's conception, particular accidents of a substantial being derive from a suitable predisposition of matter constitutive of that substance.

#### LEIBNIZ AND *TOTA ENTITAS*

Leibniz's conception of individuation expounded in his juvenile opusculum evidently follows the views of Francis Suárez, who affirms that "one ought not to look for other principle of individuation of an individual substance than that substance's own entity or the intrinsic principles constitutive of that entity. If a substance is simple, then it is individual all by itself and by virtue of its simple entity; if a substance is composed e. g. of matter and form, then, just as form, matter and their union are the principles of the entity of that substance, so these very principles are also the principles of the individuation of that substance."<sup>77</sup> According to Suárez, the entity of a thing is the essence of that very thing insofar as this essence exists; thus neither the essence on its own nor the act of existence alone constitute the entity, but the existing composition of the two. He further elaborated on this formulation and by way of explanation considered matter and form: neither "this form here" on its own nor "this matter here" on its own are principles of individuation, it is only their union that fulfils that function. This is so because a being composed of matter and form, in order to be numerically the same, complete and perfect, requires the presence of not only "this" matter or "this" form but of both matter and form at the same time.<sup>78</sup> For this reason Suárez draws the conclusion that the principles of the unity of a being are the same as the principles of the entity of that being. And since matter and form are the proper principles of a singular composed being, it follows that they are also

<sup>76</sup> "Nostra enim sententia facile explicari potest, quia dantur dispositiones materiae ad formam, nullae vero speciei ad Haecceitatem." DMPI § 26.

<sup>77</sup> "Ex hactenus dictis contra superiores sententias videtur quasi a sufficienti partium enumeratione relinqui omnem substantiam singularem neque alio indigere individuationis principio praeter suam entitatem, vel praeter principia intrinseca quibus eius entitas constat. Nam, si talis substantia, physice considerata, simplex sit, ex se et sua simplici entitate est individua; si vero sit composita, verbi gratia, ex materia et forma unitis, sicut principia entitatis eius sunt materia, forma et unio earum, ita eadem in individuo sumpta sunt principia individuationis eius." FRANCIS SUÁREZ, *Disputationes Metaphysicae*, d. V, sec. 6, n. 1, in *Opera omnia*, t. XXV (Paris: Vivès, 1861).

<sup>78</sup> "Quia hoc compositum, ut omnino et complete sit idem numero, requirit non solum hanc formam vel hanc materiam, sed utramque simul." *Ibidem*, d. V, sec. 6, n. 15.

principles of a being's unity and individuation.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the entity of a whole composition not only encompasses the entity of form and the entity of matter but also the unity formed by the mutual correlation of these component parts.<sup>80</sup>

Leibniz's own position on individuation is expressed in a formulation remarkably similar to Suárez's thesis: every individual being is individual by its whole entity. Every existent thing is individualised in its whole entity, no matter whether we deal with simple or complex beings. Leibniz quotes a long list of adherents to this view, according to him it had been shared by Peter Auriol, Hervaeus Natalis, Gregory of Rimini, Gabriel Biel, Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, and, last but not least, Francis Suárez we just mentioned. Following Paul Soncinans, Leibniz calls this view nominalism.<sup>81</sup>

The explicit reference to nominalism may indicate that in fact there is no need to look for a principle of individuation, as the very problem of individuation is illusory.<sup>82</sup> The very concept of individuation only makes sense insofar as there are non-individual component elements in reality that are made individual as a result of the intervention of some principle whose function is precisely to individuate these elements. However, the rejection of the reality of universals (or some neutral entities, whose unity is weaker than numerical) must lead to the conclusion that the problem of individuation is meaningless; it is no real problem at all. Since Leibniz discards the essential scheme of individuation, according to which there is some nature (universal or neutral) that is non-individual, which, however, undergoes individuating contraction through union with some individuating principle, the only theoretical option left to him is to accept that nature is contracted (individuated) by itself, and not by something super-added.<sup>83</sup> There is no principle of individuation as there is no individuating factor added to nature from without. Thus, nature is individual all by itself; yet, since any individual being is

<sup>79</sup> "Et confirmatur ratione facta, quia eadem sunt principia unitatis, quae entitatis; sed haec materia et haec forma sunt adaequatum principium intrinsecum huius compositae entitatis; ergo et unitatis et individuationis." Ibidem.

<sup>80</sup> "Entitas enim compositi non solum entitatem materiae et formae, sed etiam unionem earum inter se intrinsece includit." Ibidem, d. V, sec. 6, n. 16.

<sup>81</sup> DMPI § 4.

<sup>82</sup> Compare the observations by Ignacio Angelelli, according to whom if one accepts, with Leibniz, that the principle individuating an X is the X itself, then the problem of individuation is in fact eliminated. Ignacio ANGELELLI, "The Scholastic Background of Modern Philosophy: Entitas and Individuation in Leibniz," in *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation, 1150-1650*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 539.

<sup>83</sup> "Nam sic patet, quod natura sit determinata in se per seipsam, non aliquid additum." DMPI § 8.

made so by itself, one might apply the name of *principium individuationis* to the very entity of an individual being.

What does Leibniz mean by the term *tota entitas*? We may gather some clues suggesting an answer from his statement criticising Ramoneda: "Ramoneda erroneously divides as proponents of opposing views those who hold that an individual is singular by itself from those who believe that individuality is effected by matter and form. Yet, rather than opposed, these views are related, one being subordinated to the other as what is particular is subordinated to that which is general. For what is matter and form if not the total entity of the composition?"<sup>84</sup>

Thus, an individual being is made so by its own entity, that is by its own subcomponent metaphysical elements; in the case of immaterial substances by form alone, in the case of material substances by form conjoined to matter. It is better to use the term "entity" in this reference, since this term applies equally to material and immaterial beings. The metaphysical subcomponents of being themselves (form and matter) do not have any individuating principles other than themselves, which is to say, they simply are individual, as there are no non-individual structures in reality.

Leibniz's approach to the problem of individuation remains in agreement with the classical nominalist formulation of that problem by Ockham. According to the Venerable Inceptor, the individual being is individual by itself, for individuality belongs to a thing immediately and not owing to a contribution by something else.<sup>85</sup>

Ockham's thesis was a result of a critical examination of the Scotist conception of the individual as a being composed of a common nature and some individuating factor. Before Leibniz, Ockham defined individuality of a substance referring to the metaphysical component elements of that substance: "Whatever thing exists outside the mind, this thing is by itself this particular item (*haec*) and one should not ask about any cause of its singularity except

<sup>84</sup> "Male autem Ramoneda eos qui dicunt individuum seipsum individuate, et qui dicunt Materiam et Formam id praestare, dividit ut sibi contradistinctos, cum sint potius subordinati ut species generalibus. Quid enim est materia et forma unitae, nisi tota Entitas compositi?" DMPI § 4.

<sup>85</sup> "Et primo ostendo istam conclusionem quod quaelibet res singularis se ipsa est singularis. Et hoc persuadeo sic: quia singularitas immediate convenit illi cuius est, igitur non potest sibi convenire per aliquid aliud; igitur si aliquid sit singulare, se ipso est singulare." WILHELM OCKHAM, *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, q. 6, edition: Venerabilis inceptoris GUILLELMI DE OCKHAM *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum Ordinatio*, in *Opera philosophica et theologica*, cura Instituti Franciscani, Universitatis S. Bonaventurae, *Opera theologica*, t. 2, ed. Stephanus Brown and Geodeon Gál OFM (New York: Editiones Instituti Franciscani, 1970), 196, lines 1–6.

the external and internal causes of its substance, if this individual happens to be composite. The question one should ask instead is how anything can possibly be common (to many individuals) and universal.”<sup>86</sup> That the individual is singular all by itself entails, as it does in Leibniz, that its metaphysical components are simply singular too. One might perhaps express this, using Leibniz’s own vocabulary, that the whole entity of a given thing, being radically singular, is the “principle” of singularity for that thing.

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The *Disputatio metaphysica de principio individui*, a work by Leibniz as a young scholar, is firmly set in the scholastic tradition of philosophy and this, with respect both to the conceptions of individuation of which he is critical and to those he unreservedly embraces. It is clear from this work that his sympathy was gained above all by nominalist conceptions. Metaphysical pluralism and individualism, adopted by Leibniz in the mature period of his creative life, already had their beginnings in this early school dissertation. This opusculum is, for the most part, an analysis, by no means penetrating and comprehensive, of conceptions of others; its main interest, however, lies in the fact that it foreshadows Leibniz’s future philosophy.

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<sup>86</sup> “Et ita quaelibet res extra animam se ipsa erit haec; nec est quaerenda aliqua causa individuationis nisi forte causae extrinsecae et intrinsecae, quando individuum est compositum, sed magis esset quaerenda causa quomodo possibile est aliquid esse commune et universale.” Ibidem, 197, lines 10–15.

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SCHOLASTYCZNE ŹRÓDŁA TRAKTATU GOTTFRYDA WILHELMA LEIBNIZA  
*DISPUTATIO METAPHYSICA DE PRINCIPIO INDIVIDUI*

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu są scholastyczne inspiracje zawarte w dyspucie metafizycznej *De principio individui* Godfryda Wilhelma Leibniza. Celem artykułu jest, z jednej strony, rekonstrukcja stanowiska Leibniza dotyczącego zasady jednostkownienia, z drugiej zaś strony przedstawienie tekstów średnio-wiecznych autorów (Henryka z Gandawy, Piotra z Falco, Tomasza z Akwinu, Idziego Rzymianina, Henryka z Gandawy, Roberta Kilwardby'ego, Wilhelma Ockhama), do których poglądów Leibniz się odnosi, a które najczęściej znał z drugiej ręki. W swym młodzieńczym dziele Leibniz deklaruje, że zasada jednostkownienia ma być uniwersalna, to znaczy dotyczyć wszystkich rodzajów bytów oraz musi mieć charakter metafizyczny, a nie epistemologiczny. Indywidualność z kolei traktuje jako synonim jedności i różnicy. Opowiada się po stronie nominalizmu, odrzucając istnienie jakichkolwiek form bytów ogólnych, czy bytów o jedności słabszej niż numeryczna. W związku z tym odrzuca koncepcje, w których zasadę jednostkownienia stanowi: podwójna negacja, istnienie czy *haecceitas*, przyjmując rozwiązanie (bliskie tradycji Ockhama i odnosząc się do Suáreza), według którego cała bytość (*tota entitas*) indywiduum jest zasadą jednostkownienia. W efekcie według niego rzecz jest jednostkowa po prostu, co sprowadza się do tezy, że jest jednostkowa dzięki swym subkomponentom bytowym, które same są jednostkowe.

SCHOLASTIC SOURCES OF GOTTFRIED WILHELM LEIBNIZ'S TREATISE  
*DISPUTATIO METAPHYSICA DE PRINCIPIO INDIVIDUI*

Summary

The object of this article is the scholastic inspirations found in the metaphysical disputation *De principio individui* by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. The purpose of this study was, on one hand, a reconstruction of Leibniz's theory concerning the principle of individuation, and on the other hand, a presentation of some texts by medieval scholastic authors (Henry of Ghent, Peter of Falco, Thomas Aquinas, Aegidius of Rome, Robert Kilwardby, William of Ockham) to whose ideas Leibniz refers in the named work, even though he had, for the most part, only second-hand infor-

mation concerning them. In his juvenile treatise, Leibniz states that the individuating principle has to be universal, which means relevant to all kinds of being; it has to be metaphysical in character and not merely epistemological. He regards individuality as synonymous with unity combined with difference. He resolutely takes sides with nominalism and rejects the reality of all kinds of universal beings and beings whose unity is weaker than numerical unity. As a consequence of this assumption, he rejects the conceptions in which the principle of individuation is formed by: double negation, existence or the haecceity. By contrast, he embraces the solution (close to the tradition originated by Ockham and also related to Suárez), according to which the whole entity (*tota entitas*) of an individual thing is the principle of individuation. In effect, for Leibniz, any real thing is simply singular, which comes down to the thesis that a thing is singular owing to its own metaphysical subcomponents, which are singular by themselves.

**Słowa kluczowe:** zasada indywiduacji; indywidualny; podwójna negacja; istnienie; haecceitas; cała jednostka; pluralizm metafizyczny; metafizyczny indywidualizm; Leibniz; Jan Duns Szkot; Henryk z Gandawy; Suárez; Wilhelm Ockham.

**Key words:** principle of individuation; individual; double negation; existence; haecceitas; total (whole) entity; metaphysical pluralism; metaphysical individualism; Leibniz; John Duns Scotus; Henry of Ghent; Suárez; Wilhelm Ockham.

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