Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature

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As is well-known, Duns Scotus adopts a moderately realist stance on the being of the common natures of categorial entities—substances and accidents. He believes that such natures have extramental being, such that, though real, each nature—e.g. humanity, redness, and so on—in itself lacks *numerical* unity. Scotus holds, too, that the divine nature is not like this: it is numerically singular, really the same in each exemplification of it. Scotus thus accepts a version of a more extreme realism in the case of the divine nature. Here, I intend to show how Scotus distinguishes these two cases and, more generally, how he understands them. In addition, my investigation also has ramifications for Scotus's account of individuation.

I shall first of all give an account of three crucial terms in Scotus's theory: *predicability, divisibility*, and *communicability*. While Scotus's use of this terminology is not always consistent, a reasonably clear overall theory will emerge. Secondly, I shall look more closely at Scotus's use of certain identity claims in the context of his theory of common natures, by way of showing that he has good reason to hold that the more extreme form of realism that he accepts in the case of the divine nature is not logically incoherent. In the third section, I shall show how Scotus argues for the existence of these different sorts of natures in the cases, respectively, of creatures and of God.

I. DIVISIBILITY, COMMUNICABILITY, AND PREDICABILITY

The clearest place to start is with a central passage on the issue of predication:

> [1] Nothing in reality, according to any unity at all, is such that according to that precise unity it is in proximate potency to each *suppositum* by a predication that says "This is this." For although it

> is not incompatible with something existing for it to *be* in another singularity than the one it is in, nevertheless it cannot truly be *said* of each of its inferiors such that each one is it. This is possible for an object, the same in number, actually understood by the intellect. This object as understood has also the *numerical unity* of an object, according to which it itself, the very same, is predicable of every singular by saying "this is this."[1]

Predication here is a relation or relations between singular things or objects: things that have numerical unity. Scotus holds that, generally speaking, the things or objects between which a predication relation holds are thought-objects:

> [2] Here, [in the proposition] "Caesar is a man," the existent [viz. *man*] is not predicated of the non-existent [viz. Caesar]. Rather, human nature, conceived as it can be said of many, [is predicated of] the same nature, conceived as "this."[2]

The relata here are thought-objects, variously signifying the nature "as this" and the nature "as it can be said of many." Scotus, as **[1]** makes clear, holds that the subject term in such a proposition—signifying the nature "as this"—can refer to an extramental individual or *suppositum*. But, according to **[1]**, a similar possibility of reference does not (generally) obtain in the case of the predicate term. The reason for this is that the predicated object must, on Scotus's theory, be numerically one: it must be the same thing, said of different *supposita*, or, as **[2]** makes clear, of the thought-objects signifying such *supposita*.[3]

Two questions are immediately apparent here. Why suppose that the predicate, if it is a created universal, lacks an extramental referent? Further, why suppose that the predicated object must be numerically singular? The answers to these two questions turn out to be related, and are best answered by considering more closely the character of created natures. For, as both **[1]** and **[2]** make clear in their different ways, the predicated object is, in fact, the universal concept, abstracted from particulars. Following a tradition

1. Scotus, *Ordinatio* [= *Ord.*] 2.3.1.1, n. 37 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. C. Balić et al. [Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–], 7:406–7; ET in Paul Vincent Spade, ed., *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals: Porphyry, Boethius, Abelard, Duns Scotus, Ockham* (Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), pp. 65–66. *Suppositum* is the technical medieval term for whatever is an ultimate subject of properties: it is incommunicable (i.e., something that can be neither exemplified nor instantiated). See Scotus, *Ord.* 3.5.1–2, n. 5 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Luke Wadding, 12 vols. [Lyons, 1639], 7:132), and, for the applicability of the notion of incommunicability here, *Ord.* 1.23.un., n. 15 (Vatican, 5:355–6). I discuss incommunicability at length later in the first section of this article.

2. Scotus, *In Perihermeneias*, (I) 6–8, n. 7 (Wadding, 3:194[b]).

3. As we shall see below, the only case in which a predicate term has an extramental referent, and in which the predicated object is both extramental and numerically one, is that in which "God" is the predicate term.

that can be traced back to Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Neoplatonists, and was mediated to the medievals through Avicenna, Scotus holds that it is possible to think about a created nature in three possible ways: (1) in itself prior to its being instantiated in (or as) individuals; (2) as instantiated in (or as) individuals; (3) and as a concept predicable of many. To answer the first question above, we need to consider these three features of a nature in a little more detail.

According to Scotus, the nature is an object that in itself has not numerical unity but some sort of "less-than-numerical" unity.[4] It exists in each of the particulars that possesses it, but each such particular is a subjective *part* of the nature is (there is some sense in which no particular is the whole nature). The common nature, in Scotus's account, has some extramental being of its own, prior to there being instances of it. I do not mean that Scotus's theory of common natures entails that common natures can exist separately from their instantiations; rather, the nature has a twofold being: its own intrinsic being, making it not nothing, and a further being as instantiated. The nature can, however, have a further sort of being too: it can have intentional being as a mental object, and as such it is a universal, the object that is predicated of individuals of such and such a kind. Universality, like individuality, is an accident of the nature: it is the nature's accidental existence as a thought-object. All of these points are put nicely in the following passage:

> [3] Just as a nature, according to its being, is not *of itself* universal but rather universality is *accidental* to the nature according to its primary aspect according to which it is an object, so too in the external thing where the nature is together with singularity, the nature is not *of itself* determined to singularity, but is naturally prior to the aspect that contracts it to that singularity.... [Less-than-numerical unity] is a proper attribute of the nature according to its primary entity.[5]

Scotus's motivation in ascribing some being, some entity, to the common nature in itself is presumably that, if it had no such being, it would be nothing at all, and thus could not be the subject of a *haecceity*. This might appear to be merely some version of nominalism; however, it is not, because Scotus is explicit that the common nature is real—extramental. The trick, as far as Scotus's account is concerned, is to hold that there can be a real object that in itself lacks numerical unity.[6] (Thus, the unity of the common

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4. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, nn. 30 and 34 (Vatican, 7:402, 404; Spade, pp. 63–64).

5. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 34 (Vatican, 7:404; Spade, pp. 64).

6. As Peter King has pointed out, Ockham located perhaps the most worrisome feature of Scotus's account: namely, that a common nature, as divided or instantiated, seems to be both less-than-numerically one, and yet individual: the nature of Socrates is both "contracted" to its instantiation as the individual Socrates, and yet common: see Peter King, "Duns Scotus on the Common Nature and the Individual Differentia," *Philosophical Topics*, 20 (1992): 51; see King's n. 3 for an extensive list of Ockhamist texts focused on this problem in Scotus's account. In terms of my discussion here, we could rephrase the objection as follows: the common nature is

nature is much tighter than merely aggregative unity. There is no sense in which the parts of any aggregative whole really exhibits all the features of that whole defined extensionally. The common nature *in itself* [prior to instantiation] does not admit of an extensional definition.)

As we have just seen, Scotus believes that being one or more particulars is a property of this common nature: it is a property had by the nature in virtue of its union with one or more individuating *haecceities*:

> [4] Community belongs to the nature outside the intellect, and so does singularity. Community belongs to the nature from itself, while singularity belongs to the nature through something in the thing that contracts the nature.[7]

On this view, a created common nature that is in many things is not *eo ipso* predicable of them; indeed, it is not predicable of them at all. The reason for this is that Scotus denies such a common nature is in itself numerically singular—and thus that it can satisfy a necessary condition for being the predicate in a true statement of the form "*x* is N":

> [5] There is in reality something common that is not of itself a "this." Consequently, it is not incompatible with it of itself to be "not-this." But that common something is not a universal in act, because it lacks that indifference according to which the universal is completely universal—that is, the indifference according to which it itself, the very same, is predicable by some identity of each individual in such a way that each is it.[8]

This is why the predicate term lacks an extramental referent: there is no one extramental thing for the predicate to refer to. The predicate is numerically one object that represents equally all the individuals that fall under it.

This brings me to the second question: Why should Scotus hold that the significate of the predicate term in a statement of the form "*x* is N" has to be numerically singular? The reason seems to be that he accepts Aristotle's

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both less-than-numerically one, and yet actually numerically many in its instantiations (contracted to as many individuals as instantiate it). The two problems are in fact the same, since the point of Ockham's objection is that each instantiation of the nature is numerically one; many such instantiations will be numerically many. The common nature in itself is supposed to be neither numerically one, nor numerically many, but less-than-numerically one. Scotus's solution, as sketched by King, is that the common nature as such is in potentiality to its instantiation as an individual (or as numerically many individuals). But being less-than-numerically one *qua* potential is consistent with being actually numerically one in any given instance (and with being numerically many in many individuals). For a detailed discussion and defence of this, see King, "Duns Scotus on the Common Nature," 64–6, referring to Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.5–6, n. 171 (Vatican, 7:476; Spade, p. 102).

7. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 42 (Vatican, 7:410; Spade, p. 67).

8. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 38 (Vatican, 7:407–8; Spade, p. 66); see also *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 34 (Vatican, 7:404–5; Spade, pp. 64–65).

association of universality, predicability, and numerical singularity:

> [6] The universal in act is what has some indifferent unity according to which it itself, the very same, is in proximate potency to being *said of* each *suppositum.* For according to the Philosopher, *Posterior Analytics* 1,[9] the universal is what is one in many and said of many.[10]

The significate of the predicate term in a true statement of the form "*x* is N" is numerically singular because Aristotle's account of predication—and, ultimately, how the term *predication* is defined—entails this. This numerically singular universal concept *represents* the particulars that fall under it. In **[1]**, Scotus talks about this representation as a sort of identity: "the very same, is predicable of every singular by saying 'this is this'." I shall explain the relevant sense of identity in the next section.

Thus far, the account is reasonably straightforward; however, it has the disconcerting consequence that the nature *in itself*—the nature with extramental being considered prior to its instantiation—is *not* predicable of the *supposita* that fall under it. The nature in itself lacks numerical unity, and any predicate is numerically one. The nature in itself is divisible, capable of being made numerically many as instantiated in *supposita* of the same kind:

> [7] There are several individuals having the same common being (*esse*), which common being is divided into those individuals . . . [i.e.] into subjective parts.[11]

Divisibility and predicability are not, in other words, the same. Working out how to distinguish them is not in itself a problem, given the basic facts that divisibility entails numerical multiplicity, and predicability entails numerical singularity (i.e., indivisibility). There is, however, a startling further consequence to this distinction: a universal on Scotus's analysis—a predicable object—turns out to be numerically singular and thus (paradoxically) an *individual.* Indivisibility, individuality, and singularity are all, in this context, synonyms. Recall that divisibility (into numerically many things) entails less-than-numerical unity, and thus that numerical unity entails indivisibility. The universal is numerically one; so it is indivisible. And individuality is defined as indivisibility.[12] While this in not such an odd thought, given that universals are (with the exception of the divine nature) merely thought objects, it forces us to be a bit more careful in our understanding of passages such

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9. 1.4 (73^{b}26–33).

10. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 37 (Vatican, 406–7; Spade, p. 65). I take it that the numerical identity of the concept is not a claim about the mental acts or qualities themselves, but about the *contents* of these acts. My thought of N has the same content as anyone else's; but the thought itself is a distinct thing from anyone else's.

11. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.4, n. 106 (Vatican, 7:443; Spade, p. 85). Scotus's use of *esse* here is doubtless supposed to be equivalent to *essence,* in line with his usual practice.

12. See e.g. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.2, n. 48 (Vatican, 7:412–13; Spade, p. 69).

as **[2]** above. The universal is a numerically singular thought object that signifies (or can signify) the extramental common nature; the same thought object can be considered, too, as signifying (or as being able to signify) not the common nature but some extramental instantiation of that nature.

Scotus himself is reluctant to draw explicitly the conclusion that the universal is individual, though, as we shall see below, he does so in connection with the divine nature, an immanent universal. Furthermore, I have already given sufficient evidence to show that he is unequivocally committed to the numerical singularity of the universal concept. Thus, there turns out to be a problem in Scotus's presentation, which is that divisibility often appears to be defined as predicability, and indivisibility as impredicability. The problem specifically is located in Scotus's attempts to define what a *subjective part* is, because the definitions that Scotus offers tend to associate subjective parts with predicates:

> [8] There is among beings something indivisible into subjective parts—that is, such that it is formally incompatible for it to be divided into several parts each of which is it. . . . What is it in this stone, by which as by a proximate foundation it is absolutely incompatible for it to be divided into several parts each of which is this stone, the kind of division that is proper to a universal whole as divided into its subjective parts?[13]

> [9] A universal whole, which is divided into individuals and into subjective parts, is predicated of each of those subjective parts in such a way that each subjective part is it.[14]

This may make us think that divisibility and predicability are synonymous. After all, Scotus expressly notes that divisibility is proper to a universal whole. In addition, he apparently states that the relation that exists between a universal whole and its parts is predicability.

Equally, other passages make it clear that indivisibility in this sense entails impredicability. For example, the *ex professo* discussion of individuation is often cast in terms of a discussion of impredicability:

> [10] In every categorial hierarchy there can be found something intrinsically individual and singular of which the species is predicated—or at least there can be found something not predicable of many.[15]

Here, the individual and the impredicable appear to be identified.

On this reading, then, divisibility entails predicability, and indivisibility impredicability. But I take it that these claims are mistakes, perhaps springing from the difficulty of describing the relation of divisibility. It is important to keep in mind that these mistakes do not accord with Scotus's

13. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.2, n. 48 (Vatican, 7:413; Spade, p. 69).
14. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.4, n. 106 (Vatican, 7:443; Spade, p. 85).
15. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.4, n. 90 (Vatican, 7:434; Spade, p. 80).

standard usage. Other texts in the same series of questions on individuation seem to suggest something quite different from passages **[8]** to **[10]**, and more in line with the thrust of my account of Scotus's passages **[1]** to **[7]** above. Thus, Scotus often denies that a divisible common nature is predicable: see, most notably, passage **[7]** quoted above. Furthermore, this kind of predicability is sometimes held to entail not divisibility but indivisibility (i.e., singularity). Passage **[1]** is the most obvious case, but there are other examples too:

> [11] What is common in creatures is not really one in the way in which what is common is really one in the divine. For there the common is singular and indivisible because the divine nature itself is of itself a "this." And it is plain that with creatures no universal is really one in that way. For to maintain this would be to maintain that some created, *undivided* nature would be predicated of many individuals by a predication that says "this is this," just as it is said that the Father is God and the Son is the same God.[16]

Scotus thus has two quite distinct relations in mind when he speaks of predicability and divisibility—relations that his initial association of divisibility into subjective parts with the universal whole tends to obscure. This is further confirmed by things stated elsewhere when discussing the related notion of *communicability*. When discussing the distinction between the divine nature and a Scotist common nature, Scotus notes:

> [12] Any nature is communicable to many by identity; therefore the divine nature is so communicable. ... But it is not divisible, [as is clear] from the question on the unity of God. Therefore it is communicable without division.[17]

The point about the divine nature is that it is numerically one: its numerical unity prevents its divisibility: "The unity of God is proved from the fact that divine infinity is not divided into many essences."[18] The divine nature is thus what modern philosophers would call an *immanent* universal. In this, it is contrasted with a created common nature, which, in itself, has a unity that is less-than-numerical, and as divided into its instances is numerically many. So, in **[12]**, Scotus claims that divisibility entails a lack of numerical unity (in fact, he argues that numerical unity entails indivisibility, but the two claims are of course logically equivalent). This is not an oversight; Scotus expressly states that indivisibility is consistent with communicability ("indivisibility does not entail incommunicability").[19] Scotus is making a clear distinction here between those natures that are divisible (into numerically many subjective parts) and those that are not. Scotus misleadingly describes

16. Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 39 (Vatican, 7:408; Spade, p. 66).
17. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 381 (Vatican, 2:346).
18. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 367 (Vatican, 2:339).
19. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 367 (Vatican, 2:340).

both of these relations in terms of predicability: something "communicable by identity" is such that every *suppositum* to which it is communicated "is it."[20] We have already seen how Scotus defines *divisibility* in this way (though, as I have tried to show, the official account of divisibility, found in Scotus's discussion of individuation, is in fact aporetic). The divine nature is a universal: it is thus numerically singular and individual in a way that no other extramental nature is (since no other extramental nature is a universal).

One reason why it is important to be clear here is because of the problems associated with translating medieval terminology into modern terminology. One modern commentator claims that individuality should be conceived as noninstantiability, and that both in turn should be identified with incommunicability:

> There are those [medieval philosophers] who conceive individuality as noninstantiability, that is, as the impossibility for individuals to become instantiated in the way that universals can. Thus Socrates, for example, cannot be instantiated into other human beings or any other things for that matter, unlike "human being," which can be instantiated into Socrates, Aristotle, and the readers of this book. Scholastics developed a notion similar to this, but they called it "incommunicability." This is in every way the most successful understanding of individuality in my opinion.[21]

This understanding is not quite Scotus's. Scotus distinguishes individuality from incommunicability, for, as we shall see, he believes that there is at least one individual that is communicable—namely, the divine nature. The issue is in part terminological, but, if pushed, we should want to claim the following set of equivalences between Scotus and modern terminology. Suppose that an instantiation is a particular property or nature, such that Socrates's whiteness is an instance or instantiation of whiteness. Suppose further that an exemplification is a substance that bears a relation to a universal property or nature, such that Socrates is an exemplification of the universal whiteness (assuming that he is white). Thus, communicability is exemplifiability, divisibility is instantiability. Consequently, incommunicability is non-exemplifiability, and indivisibility noninstantiability. The reader should note that incommunicability and noninstantiability are clearly distinguished here. A created substantial common nature has instances; the divine nature has exemplifications.[22]

20. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 380 (Vatican, 2:346).

21. Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation 1150–1650*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 6.

22. So the following assessment needs correction: "Scotus . . . understand[s] the intension of individuality as incommunicability or noninstantiability" (Woosuk Park, "Understanding the Problem of Individuation: Gracia vs. Scotus," in *John Duns Scotus:*

I take it, too, that *communicability* and *predicability* are synonymous. Scotus's claim is that a created nature is communicable in the sense that the nature as universal (a numerically singular mental object) is predicable of a mental object that represents an extramental individual; the divine nature is an extramental individual that is predicable of each divine person.[23]

Metaphysics and Ethics, ed. Ludger Honnefeldr, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 53 [E. J. Brill: Leiden, New York, and Cologne, 1996], p. 276). Individuality is indeed noninstantiability; but it is not incommunicability. I suspect that this oversight results from the fact that modern commentators simply do not discuss the notion of incommunicability in Scotus in this context at all, and merely repeat Scotus's misleading characterization of divisibility as a relation between a universal and its subjective parts. In point of fact, Scotus certainly believes that, if there are blocks on an individual created nature's being exemplified by many *supposita*, these blocks do not result from the individuality of the nature: see Scotus, *Ord.* 3.1.2, nn. 5–6 (Wadding, 7:36–37), and my discussion in "Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity," (forthcoming). Put another way, individuality is not non-exemplifiability as such, since in principle individuals can be exemplified; what individuals cannot be is divided: they cannot be made numerically many. For an individual to be exemplified is for it to be a one-of-many (or perhaps a "one-of-one" if it should be that an individual is uniquely exemplified; of course, with the exception of Christ's human nature and the divine essence, no individual is in fact exemplified: for the communicability of Christ's individual human nature, see *Ord.* 3.1.1, n. 10 [Wadding, 7:16]; *Quodlibetum* 19, n. 11 [Wadding, 12:502; ET published as Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*, ed. and trans. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 427–28 (nn. 19.33-5)]). As I will show below, Scotus is quite clear that the divine nature is communicable—that is, exemplifiable—without its being divisible. The divine nature is unequivocally individual. We should note too a consequence of Scotus's view, which is that accidents are both instantiable and (in a sense) exemplifiable. Socrates's whiteness is an instance of whiteness; and it *inheres* in Socrates, who is to that extent an exemplification of the universal whiteness: on the inherence of accidents, see Richard Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 103–6, 114.

23. Scotus consistently distinguishes between two types of predication relation: formal predication, and predication by identity. He never gives a clear and thorough account of his understanding of the distinction. This is unfortunate, not least because Scotus, as we have seen, is prepared to talk about identity between subject and predicate even in the case of statements about creatures, whereas the notion of predicability by identity was introduced into medieval theology specifically as a way of dealing with Trinitarian difficulties. (The probable origin is Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, 1.5.1.1 ad 2 [*Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), 1:113].) A brief *ex professo* account of the distinction can be found in Scotus, *Ord.* 1.4.2.un., text. int. (Vatican, 4:4, ll. 14–16). However, we can learn more from other discussions. Most notably, at one point Scotus seems to suggest that the distinction between the two sorts of predication has to do with the *reference* of the predicate term: in formal predication, the predicate lacks any sort of referent; in predication by identity, the predicate has an extramental referent: see Scotus, *Ord.* 3.7.1, n. 4 (Wadding, 7:190). Yet even this is not quite sufficient. For, as we have seen, Scotus talks of the relation between a (mental) universal and the subject that it predicates as identity. My suggestion is this: A formal predication asserts

If we keep all this in mind, the predicability claim that Scotus seemingly makes about common natures in the definition of "divisibility into subjective parts" can be seen for what it is. The point of claiming that a nature is divisible into subjective parts, presumably, is that each instantiation of a common nature exhibits all the intensional features of that nature: there is no feature of stone-nature that a stone lacks. We should not, however, think of this as a predicability relation in the same way as universals are predicable. After all, there is a sense in which a stone is only a part (a subjective part) of stone nature; there is no sense in which an exemplification of a universal is a part of the universal (despite Scotus's very misleading claim in **[8]** and **[9]** that a universal *is* divisible into subjective parts).

I have tried to show thus far that Scotus holds that common natures—the natures of creatures—are objects that exhibit less-than-numerical unity. It is for this reason that the nature can receive the accidental modification of predicability when existing as a mental object. In contrast to this, a universal (whether mental or extramental) is a one-of-many, a properly exemplified nature really predicated of its *supposita*. In the next section, I want to examine what it is for a universal to be communicable/predicable by identity. On the face of it, this sort of claim seems to involve postulating an identity between a *suppositum* and its nature. This may seem to present Scotus with identity problems of a Leibnizian kind, particularly if the universal nature is—like the *suppositum*—an extramental existent.

II. IMMANENT UNIVERSALS AND PREDICABILITY

Scotus's moderate realism involves the disarming claim that there exist objects that lack numerical unity. This claim looks so counterintuitive—both for us (who tend to assume that everything that exists is numerically one) and for the medievals (who tend equivalently to assume that being and unity are convertible)—that Scotus must have some strong motivations for wanting to accept it.[24] There is one obvious such motivation: that accepting immanent universals (extramental objects that are predicable singulars)—accepting, in other words, the sort of extreme realism that

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that the individual exemplifies a divisible common nature. A necessary condition for the truth of such a predication is that a universal mental object—a predicate—is identical with the mental object that represents the subject of the predication. Thus, the formal predication of a nature requires for its truth the predication-by-identity of a universal (where this universal is, in the case of every creaturely essence, merely a concept).

24. On the relevance of this worry for Aquinas's theory of the common nature found in *De Ente et Essentia*, see Joseph Owens, "Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics," *Mediaeval Studies*, 19 (1957): 1–14. Aquinas infers from the fact that a nature lacks unity that it lacks any sort of being too.

allows that there can be objects which are both numerically singular and repeated in different *supposita*—raises intolerable problems for the indiscernibility of identicals. Some of Scotus's objections to this form of extreme realism appear to be objections along these lines. However, as I shall show in a moment, we have to be very careful how we understand these objections, since Scotus clearly holds that there is one nature, the divine nature, which is, indeed, an immanent universal. In addition Scotus does not believe that the doctrine of the Trinity raises any insuperable problems for the principle of the indiscernibility of identicals. I am not suggesting that Scotus accepts some kind of relative identity in this context (although he may well, in other contexts, accept something analogous to it); rather, I am suggesting that, ultimately, Scotus does not believe that accepting extreme realism presents any difficulties even for someone who accepts Leibniz's law.

Arguing for this is not easy, largely because it is not easy to unpack everything that Scotus has to say in criticism and defense of immanent universals. Certainly, many commentators accept without reservation that Scotus's worries about such universals stem from concerns about identity. For example, in his magisterial commentary on a whole series of texts from Scotus and Ockham on the nature of universals, Martin Tweedale ascribes Scotus's claim that the actual universal, as *predicable*, is just a concept (an *ens objectivum*), to Scotus's understanding of this:

> My way of defending Scotus . . . is to make plausible the idea that a conjunction of predications of the form "*A* is *B*, and *C* is *B*, and *D* is *B*, etc.," where the subject terms all stand for distinct singular real things, and the predicated item *B* is a single item too, can only be true if *B* is an *ens objectivum*. I argue as follows: Suppose *B* is not an *ens objectivum* but something with real being. Then either *B* has numerical unity or it does not but has some unity less than numerical. Not the former, for then *A*, *C*, *D* etc. would *all be identical to the same individual and thus identical to each other* [my italics]. . . . Not a unity less than numerical, for then to be real *B* would have to be at least possibly numerically many, but no numerically singular thing, like *A*, *C*, and *D*, is even possibly numerically many.[25]

A minimal requirement for a theory of universals is that it must be consistent with the claim that there are (or can be) numerically distinct *supposita* of the same kind. An obvious application of the transitivity of identicals to the sort of identity claim made here shows that the strongly realist theory is inconsistent with the possible existence of numerically distinct *supposita* of the same kind.

25. Martin M. Tweedale, *Scotus vs. Ockham—A Medieval Dispute over Universals*, 2 vol. (Lewiston, Queenstown, and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press), 2:648, commenting on Scotus, *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, n. 34 (Vatican, 7:404; Spade, pp. 64–65).

At many points, Scotus himself seems to argue similarly. For example:

> [13] The universal is numerically one object of the intellect, and is understood by numerically one intellection, such that the intellect, in attributing [the universal] to diverse singulars, attributes numerically the same object, conceived many times, to diverse subjects, in stating "this is this." But it seems impossible that something real is numerically the same intelligible thing and yet be predicated in this way of diverse [subjects].[26]

To understand this argument, we need to be clear about both the context and the sort of object that Scotus has in mind. The context is the individuation of created substances; the sort of object that Scotus has in mind is a created nature. As I shall show in the next section, one of Scotus's arguments against extreme realism is that the only sort of nature that can be numerically one in all of its *supposita* is an *infinite* nature. All created natures are finite. The impossibility that Scotus is talking about in **[13]** extends only to finite natures. Thus, Scotus cannot be talking about *logical* impossibility in **[13]**, and he cannot, therefore, have in mind serious worries about identity. What blocks a finite nature from being numerically one in all of its *supposita* is its finitude—it is, we might say, not big enough to go around. It is this impossibility that Scotus has in mind in **[13]**.[27]

This finitude argument strikes me as particularly weak. I will discuss its difficulties in the next section. Fortunately, as I shall also show in the next section, Scotus's arguments against extreme realism in the case of created natures do not rely on the finitude argument. Still, the discussion is a salutary corrective against the more usual readings of Scotus's objection to extreme realism, as found, for example, in Tweedale's commentary. Scotus's argument against extreme realism is made harder to grasp by the fact that he clearly thinks (less than ideally) of every type of instantiation or exemplification as a (weak) form of identity. In these sorts of contexts, Scotus believes that our most perspicuous way of proceeding is by talking of a 'formal' distinction, the sort of real distinction whose terms are not things but properties (quiddities in Scotus's terminology).[28] Scotus applies

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26. Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* [= *In Metaph.*] 7.18, n. 21 (*Opera Philosophica* [= *OPh*] ed. Girard. J. Etzkorn and others [St Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1997–], 4:343).

27. There is another possible interpretation of arguments such as that proposed in **[13]**. In his most unequivocal statement of this sort of criticism, Scotus states that the view that an extramental universal is really predicable of instances of it is straightforwardly contradictory, not because of worries about identity, but because it entails that numerically one and the same thing (the universal) is *both* the essence of many *and* external to them: see Scotus, *In Metaph.* 7.18, n. 15 (*OPh*, 4:341).

28. See, for example, Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, nn. 388-410 (Vatican, 2:349–61); for the description of the distinction as having properties rather than things as its terms, see nn. 400–403 (Vatican, 2:355–7); in particular "essence does not include in its formal quidditative notion (*ratio*) the property of a *suppositum*, nor vice versa. For this reason it can be conceded that—prior to any act of the intellect—there is

the distinction in this context as a way of distinguishing the divine essence from its exemplifications (namely, the divine persons). On the one hand, Scotus believes that separability is necessary for real distinction. Since there is no sense in which an essence is (under normal non-theological—non-Christological—circumstances) exemplified or instantiated contingently, we should not think of *supposita* as separable from their essences. On the other hand, no essence is in every way identical with its *supposita*; since (minimally) it is true of the essence (but not of its *supposita*) that it is instantiated or exemplified, and true of the *supposita* (and not of the essence) that they instantiate or exemplify:

> [14] Here there remains a further difficulty. Unless some distinction is posited between the notion of essence and the notion of *suppositum*, it does not seem intelligible that the essence is numerically one while the *supposita* are many. . . . I say without asserting it, and without prejudice to some better opinion that the notion by which a *suppositum* is incommunicable (let it be 'a') and the notion of essence as essence (let it be 'b') have some distinction prior to every act of intellect, whether created or uncreated. I prove it thus: The first *suppositum* [viz. the Father] formally possesses communicable entity [viz. the divine essence], otherwise he could not communicate it; and he really possesses incommunicable entity too, otherwise he could not positively be a *suppositum* in real entity.[29]

It is easy enough to see, through all the scholastic jargon, what Scotus is getting at. In fact, I suspect he overestimates the amount of theory required to get an account of the distinction between the divine essence and the divine persons up and running. It is clearly an abuse of Leibniz to use his law to show that a *suppositum* is identical with its nature. (It may be—though I doubt it—that *supposita* are identical with their natures; however, this is not something that can be decided by *fiat*.) There is no reason for us to think of instantiation or exemplification as forms of identity at all, and we should resist all temptation to do so. But if we resist this temptation, which is perhaps not a particularly powerful one in any case, then the fact that the divine persons exemplify a nature that is numerically one will not lead us to suppose that the different exemplifications (the divine persons) are identical with each other.

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a reality of the essence, by which it is communicable, and a reality of the *suppositum* by which it is incommunicable": n. 403 (Vatican, 2:357).

29. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, nn. 388-90 (Vatican, 2:349–50). Scotus's application of this formal distinction to the doctrine of the Trinity provoked some controversy in the early fourteenth century—compare for example his somewhat reserved exposition in **[14]** with the rather drier and more distinctive version from the earlier *Lectura* (usually dated to the last two or three years of the thirteenth century): "Let him who can grasp this grasp it, because that it is so my intellect does not doubt": Scotus, *Lectura* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 375 (Vatican, 16:217).

Scotus expressly uses this strategy to reply in the Trinitarian context to arguments such as that raised by Tweedale above:

> [15] If you say that we can at least conclude from the real identity of [the persons] with the essence to their identity with each other, I say that the essence does not have such unique identity of subsistence as the persons or personal [properties] have that the extremes are united in an essence. For this reason the identity of the subsistents or subsistence cannot be inferred on the basis of their identity in the essence as in a medium.
>
> From this, the response to sophistical arguments, such as "This God is the Father, the Son is this God, therefore the Son is the Father" is clear. (This [sophism] is [apparently] confirmed by the fact that, if the middle term exists as a "this something," then the extremes are necessarily united.) I reply: just as in creatures, the common is a "such" (*se habet ut quale quid*), and the singular a "this something," so here, the essence, common to the persons, has the role of a "such," and the person has the role of a "this something." The middle term here is a "such," not a "this something." But the identity of the extremes in the conclusion is concluded as if the medium were a "this something." So in the argument here, there seems to be a fallacy of the accident and of the consequent (because "this God" is understood in the premises for different *supposita*), and likewise a fallacy of the figure of speech, changing "such" into "this something."[30]

In the first paragraph of **[15]**, Scotus notes that we would not want to argue from the exemplification of numerically one essence to the identity of the *supposita* exemplifying the essence. In the second paragraph, Scotus shows how this insight can be used to block troublesome but ultimately sophistical arguments to this effect. Being an exemplification of the divine essence does not entail being wholly identical with this essence; the fallacy lies in supposing that the term *God* fails to refer to a kind (or something like a kind) rather than to an individual.

All this allows us to get a clearer insight on Scotus's talk about predicability or communicability by identity. The relationship that Scotus has in mind here is something that cannot obtain between a common nature and its instances. The common nature is divided up between its instances, and is thus not identical (in the sense relevant here) with any of them, and certainly not with all of them. According to Scotus, however, an immanent universal certainly is identical, in the sense I am discussing here, with its exemplifications. (So, too, is a universal concept, at least to the extent that one and the same object represents equally every particular that falls under

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30. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, nn. 414–15 (Vatican, 2:363–4). For the fallacies, see Aristotle, *Soph. el.* 1 (166^{b}28–30, 167^{b}1–3, and 166^{b}10–14 respectively). A similar argument occurs at Scotus, *Ord.* 1.4.1. un., text. int. (Vatican, 4:382, ll. 33–34).

it.) We could claim that the relevant identity in the case of a universal is that the universal itself is numerically identical in its different exemplifications in a way that a common nature fails to be. So the sense of communicable by identity, when predicated of an immanent universal, must be something like the following: A nature N is communicable by identity to a subject *s* if and only if, both, *s* is an exemplification of N, and any part of N is also a part of *s*. The point of the second conjunct here is that there is no sense in which any *part* of a nature is distinct from its subject; in short, the nature does not have subjective parts at all in the sense outlined above. Expressing the concept in this way helps us to see why Scotus should have—albeit undesirably— decided to think of exemplification as a form of identity. Of course, it is not really a form of identity at all, despite Scotus's terminology. It is just a way of taking about a relationship in which the nature is not divided up into its various instantiations. In the case of an immanent universal, the *whole* nature is genuinely repeated, without division into subjective parts, in each of its exemplifications. In such cases, then, the predicate term, as well as the subject term, has an extramental referent: the immanent universal itself.[31]

III. ARGUMENTS FOR MODERATE REALISM

Scotus, then, rightly does not reject extreme realism because of identity concerns. In fact, the arguments he generally employs—setting aside the sorts of argument, such as that cited in **[13]** above, that appear to trade on questions of identity—appeal to the *empirical* facts of the universe: created *supposita* are such that the natures of which they are instances cannot be immanent universals. The force of the arguments lies in their attempts to show why this should be the case. There are basically three clusters of arguments: (1) from the finitude of created essences; (2) from the fact that different substances of the same kind possess numerically distinct quantitative accidents; (3) from the fact that different substances of the same kind perform distinct operations. In this section, I will examine these three clusters.

   (Argument 1) If numerically one thing is to be repeated in numerically many different exemplications, then the repeated object is in no sense limited to any one exemplification. In this sense, the repeatability of numerically one object requires that the object is limitless—that is, infinite. But no created object is both numerically one and infinite. Therefore no created object is an immanent universal.[32]

31. On this, see n. 25 above.
32. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.2.2.1–4, n. 385 (Vatican, 2:348); *Ord.* 3.1.2, nn. 3–4 (Wadding, 7:33–34). For a related argument, focusing on perfection rather than infinity, see *Ord.* 2.3.1.2, n. 52 (Vatican, 7:415; Spade, p. 70).

This argument is hardly convincing as it stands, since it equivocates on senses of *limitless*. It is one thing for there being no restrictions on the repeatability of an essence, and quite another for there to be no restrictions on an essence *tout court*. I do not know what could be done to the argument to salvage it from this objection. Possibly, Scotus appeals to it so readily because of its close relation to arguments found in his immediate predecessors.[33] More likely, perhaps, is Scotus's quasi-mathematical way of understanding divine infinity as analogous to the set of all integers.[34] Such an essence cannot be divided into numerically many (infinite) *supposita* as subjective parts, because the infinite cannot be added to. Furthermore, any finite essence can be divided into subjective parts without falling foul of the mathematical difficulty Scotus perceives in the division of an infinite essence.[35] Hence, communicability without divisibility entails infinity. Most likely perhaps is the following simple thought. According to Scotus, the intrinsic infinity of the divine essence is what individuates this essence.[36] A created nature, contrariwise, is individuated by a *haecceity* extrinsic to the nature. No created nature is individual of itself, and thus every created nature can be divided. In short, infinity entails being numerically one, and thus indivisible.

Scotus's remaining arguments are much more metaphysically challenging. There are, broadly speaking, two of them, both very similar in basic thrust but both starting from rather different premises. As I shall show, they both suffer in Scotus's presentation from a similar defect. However, with one small modification both of them appear to me to be salvageable.

(Argument 2) When presenting his account of individuation, Scotus attempts to highlight some counterfactual consequences of accepting immanent universals:

> [16] This opinion posits that that one substance [viz. the universal], under many accidents, will be the whole substance of all individuals, and then it will be both singular and this substance of this thing [*x*], and in another thing [*y*] than this thing [*x*]. It will also follow that the same thing will simultaneously possess many quantitative dimensions of the same kind; and it will do this naturally, since

33. See, for example, Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta* [= *Quod.*] 6.7 (2 vol. [Paris, 1518], 1:220^{v}C);William of Ware, *In Sententias* 159 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS Lat. 1438, fo. 107ra). I deal with some of these matters in my *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

34. See Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 39–41.

35. For the first of these claims, see e.g. *Ord.* 1.2.1.3, n. 175 (Vatican, 2:232; ET in Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings: A Selection*, ed. and trans. Allan B. Wolter [Indianapolis, IL, Hackett, 1978], p. 88). I do not think that Scotus ever makes the second explicitly; but I can think of no reason, whether textual or conceptual, why Scotus could not accept it.

36. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.8.1.3, n. 149 (Vatican, 4:227).

numerically one and the same substance is under these [viz. *x*'s] dimensions and other [viz. *y*'s] dimensions.[37]

At first glance, Scotus appears to be making two objections here. The first is the kind of identity objection that I have already argued Scotus does not accept. The second is that one substance will have different (and contrary) accidents of the same kind. In fact, it is not clear to me that the first of these objections should be seen as such at all. Partly, I think this because there is good reason to suppose that Scotus really does not want to make coherence objections to extreme realism. But there is a further reason for denying this reading. If we read the argument in this way, the parenthetical "under many accidents" is otiose. We should read the passage as offering just one argument:

> (1) If extreme realism is true, then numerically one substance is the essence of many *supposita.* (Premiss)
>
> (2) If numerically one substance is the essence of many *supposita*, then if the substance can be the bearer of quantitative accidents, numerically one substance is simultaneously the subject of contrary quantitative accidents. (Premiss)
>
> (3) It is not possible for numerically one substance to be simultaneously the subject of contrary quantitative accidents. (Premiss)
>
> (4) It is not the case that numerically one substance that can be a bearer of quantitative accidents is the essence of many individuals. (From [2] and [3])
>
> (5) It is not the case that extreme realism is true for those substances that can be bearers of quantitative accidents. (From [1], [2], and [4])

There is an alarming feature of this argument, which is that it presupposes that it is the universal (the "substance" in the above argument), rather than the *suppositum,* that is properly the subject of quantitative accidents. As we shall see below, Scotus tends to think about substances in this (clearly mistaken) way—presumably because of the close association in his mind between the universal and its individuality: an extramental universal is itself an individual (though not incommunicable) thing, and it is a short step from this intuition to the further one that it is itself the subject of certain accidental modifications.

(Argument 3) The final argument as presented by Scotus on the face of it relies on a questionable assumption that is closely related to the questionable assumption made in the second argument:

> [17] Every form, existing as a form in another, gives to that thing that the thing is denominated by its [viz. the form's] action, just as [the

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37. Scotus, *Reportatio Parisiensis* 2.12.5, n. 3 (Wadding, 11:326ᵇ); see also *Ord.* 2.3.1.1, nn. 37, 41 (Vatican, 7:406–7, 409–10; Spade, pp. 65–67).

form] gives existence (*esse*) to the thing. And although a form [existing] in a *suppositum* is denominated by its [viz. the form's] action, nevertheless [it is not so] by final denomination, but the *suppositum* is more finally denominated by the same action [of the form]. But suppose some *per se* existent form naturally has some proper action. If this [form] gives the same existence to many ... then by [something's] having existence through this form,[38] it is denominated by the same action [just as if it had the same existence of that active form]. When therefore [the objection] claims "action belongs to a *suppositum*, therefore there are many actions of many *supposita*," I deny the consequence except in the case that the thing which is the *ratio agendi* [i.e., the form] is multiplied in [these *supposita*].[39]

The questionable assumption here is that a *suppositum* has (some of) its accidental properties—namely, its operations—in some sense indirectly: these properties inhere in the *suppositum* by inhering directly in the essence or nature exemplified or instantiated by the *suppositum*. The claim clarifies the questionable assumption made in the second argument, by specifying that the accidents do not inhere merely in the essence or nature. Nevertheless, we would perhaps not want to be saddled even with Scotus's weaker claim that some accidents inhere directly in the essence or nature and only indirectly in the *suppositum*. Of course, if we made this claim, we could again see why Scotus should believe that *supposita* exemplifying numerically one universal should have some of their accidents also in common. More interesting, however, is that the sort of accidents it focuses on are not quantities (as in the second argument) but *operations*. This focus provides a way for us to see how the numerical identity of an essence causes the numerical identity of operations, even if we unequivocally reject the questionable assumption that operations are brought about by the essence as such, rather than the *supposita*.

Suppose we reject Scotus's assumption and adjust the argument accordingly. To do this, we need to suppose that all talk of operations requires talk of the *causal powers* in virtue of which these operations are brought about. (This does not seem to me to be an unreasonable assumption, though it is admittedly not a popular one today.) Clearly, the possession of causal powers correlates with the possession of an essence. Anything that possesses an essence of a certain sort possesses the causal powers for which the possession of the essence is sufficient.[40] Whether or not we would regard possession

38. Reading *ista forma* as ablative—contrary to the apparent suggestion in the edition.

39. Scotus, *Ord.* 1.12.1, n. 51 (Vatican, 5:54–55); at the passage marked with ellipsis, Scotus talks of whiteness doing things.

40. This does not mean that all of a *suppositum*'s causal powers are possessed in virtue of its essence. Further, it might not be easy to distinguish those powers that are possessed in virtue of an essence from those that are not. Perhaps we could claim that causal powers that all members of a species possess are possessed in virtue of

of an essence as (in an Aristotelian world such as Scotus's) *reducible* to the possession of certain causal powers, I think we would at least want to regard the possession of *numerically one* essence by many different *supposita* as sufficient for those *supposita* possessing *numerically the same* set of causal powers. But it is easy enough to show that, on any reasonable understanding of causal powers, such *supposita* will all perform numerically identical operations. Operations in this theory are brought about in virtue of causal powers. Operation *a* is brought about by a *suppositum x* in virtue of *x*'s possession of power *P*. For *x* to bring about *a* is just for *x*'s power *P* to be active. But suppose *P* is possessed both by *x* and by another *suppositum y*. *P* is active, and possessed by *y*. So *y* brings about *a* as much as *x* does. It is no objection to this to claim that *x* can use *P* without *y* using *P*. Agency, if analyzed in terms of causal powers, cannot properly involve talk of *supposita using* causal powers except on pain of infinite regress. If *x* uses *P*, then *x* must possess a power—P_1—for using *P*, and another power—P_2—for using P_1; and so on *ad infinitum*.[41] So we block the regress at the first step, and analyze action in terms of the possession of a causal power that is active.

So *supposita* that exemplify immanent universals share numerically the same operations as other *supposita* of the same kind (for at least some of their operations). But there are no created *supposita* which are such that every *suppositum* of a certain kind shares such a numerically singular operation. I conclude that no created essence is an extramental universal. This allows us also refine to Scotus's second argument. Suppose that accidents such as quantities (but not just quantities—qualities will be a case in point too) actualize passive potencies (passive powers or liabilities) in their *supposita*. The passive potency that a *suppositum* possesses for its accidents is had by it in virtue of the essence it exemplifies. The essence is numerically one; so the passive potency is too. For a *suppositum* to possess an accident is for its passive potency to be actualized. But suppose two *supposita*, *x* and *y*, possess the same passive potency *L*—a liability for an accident *F*. And suppose *x* exemplifies *F*. In this case *L* is actualized. But *y* possesses *L* too. *L*'s actualization is what it is for a *suppositum* that possesses *L* to possess accident *F*. So *y* possesses *F* too.

The point of all this is that things exemplifying immanent universals will be such that some of their accidents and operations—those possessed in virtue of the exemplification of their essence—will be numerically identical. Since no created *supposita* share numerically the same accidents and

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the instantiation of a nature or essence. All human beings can breathe; some, on the other hand, appear in virtue of their genetic makeup to be incapable of discerning differences in musical pitch. The first of these looks unequivocally to be a power possessed in virtue of the instantiation of human nature; the second of these looks unequivocally to be something possessed in virtue of the individuating conditions of a *suppositum*.

41. Some of the medievals use considerations such as these to argue against a real distinction between a *suppositum* and its causal powers—see, for example, Scotus, *Ord.* 2.16.un., n. 16 (Wadding, 6:770), following Henry of Ghent, *Quod.* 3.14 (1:66ᵛP).

operations as all other members of their kind, no created essence is an immanent universal.

There is a problem here, which is that there is a *prima facie* equivocation on the notion of being possessed "in virtue of the exemplification of an essence." The problem is that, accepting a closely analogous claim that certain of the accidents and operations of an individual could be possessed by it in virtue of its *instantiation* of an essence, Scotus's common natures do not seem to provide a way to block the possession of the same accidents by all individuals instantiating the essence. (Think of *breathing* in the case of a human being.) If an accident is possessed "in virtue of the instantiation of an essence," then how can anything instantiating the essence fail to possess the accident? How could (numerically) distinct natures of the same kind (the divided instances of a common nature) be sufficiently differentiated in these various instances to allow for the nature to necessitate the possession of an accident in one of its instances, but not in another?

There is an answer available here. Put bluntly, a *suppositum* that exemplifies an immanent universal exemplifies a one-of-many, and this numerically unified universal is sufficient for the possession of a power that is itself a one-of-many, and of an operation or accident that is a one-of-many too. An individual that instantiates (is an instantiation of) a created common nature instantiates a nature that is (in its instantiations) numerically many. The powers possessed in virtue of the possession of such a nature will be specifically the same in each instance, but not numerically the same. The powers will have, as instantiated, numerical multiplicity, too. And, likewise, the operations. Thus, in order to block extreme realism, we just need to identify *supposita* of the same kind, that possess a certain sort of causal power in virtue of their essence, such that the actions brought about in virtue of this causal power by the different *supposita* are not themselves numerically identical. There will be many such *supposita*, since (minimally) the things many *supposita* do are dependent upon their circumstances. It may be thought that, in those cases where instantiated natures are divided, division does not seem to provide any more grounds for the possession of different properties than mere communicability does—given that in both cases the nature(s) are indiscernible. The analysis in terms of different causal powers helps us see why this is wrong. If a nature is divided in the way outlined above, the causal powers possessed by individuals in virtue of their possession of the nature are divided up too: Felix the cat's causal powers are numerically distinct from his sister Polly's. And this seems to be sufficient for Felix's being able to cause factually different things from those which Polly causes. Felix can be asleep while Polly is torturing a mouse.

The point of all this is that the objections Scotus has to extreme realism are not objections about its logical coherence. Indeed, the problem for him is in finding a cogent argument *against* the applicability of extreme realism in the standard cases of created substances of one kind. I hope that I have shown that Scotus's two theories of universals—variously universals as

thought objects and universals as extramental objects—are both coherent, and that there are in principle good reasons for arguing that created natures are, and the divine nature is not, divisible. All this opens the way for Scotus to see the divine nature as an immanent universal. I explore this Scotist insight in a further paper, with a view to showing that Scotus develops a theory of the Trinity that avoids accepting either three Gods or just one divine person.[42]

42. See my "Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity."