

The doctrine of *hæcceity* or thisness (= suchness) as proposed by Duns Scotus points toward an important truth. "[A]n individual must be qualitatively unique in a fashion no assembling of universal terms ('communicable natures'), including the cryptic universal term 'matter,' can adequately account for. The individual can be intuited or felt, it cannot be thought, if that means identified by qualities shareable with other individuals. But what escapes such identification is qualitative, a suchness rather than a mere stuff or thatness. Intuition or feeling is richer than thought. . . .

"[But] if 'individual' means the wholly definite, concrete, or particular, in contrast to the universal or abstract, then it is not changing substances that are the final individualities but momentary states—say, I now, or an atom now. Socrates as always Socrates from birth on is partly indefinite, a sort of universal, until his death, and what then is fully particularized is not Socrates but only his career or actual event-sequence. This is distinct from Socrates just insofar as he could, at each moment, have responded somewhat otherwise to his world, and so far as creatures around him could have behaved otherwise than they did. To identify individuals with their careers was a sophism of Leibniz, at once a stroke of genius and a great error" (104).