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The Problem of Universals and Wyclif's Alleged "Ultrarealism"

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John Wyclif has been described as "ultrarealist" in his theory of universals. This paper attempts a preliminary assessment and argues that, pending further study, we have no reason to accept it. It is certainly true that Wyclif is extremely vocal but it is not obvious that the actual content of his view is especially extreme. The paper distinguishes two common Aristotelian/Porphyrian one in terms of predication and the Boethian one in terms of being metaphysically correct. The approach does Wyclif's theory of universals postulate new and non-standard entities besides those recognized by Aristotle. Again pending further study, neither do Wyclif's views appear to assign philosophically extreme or novel roles to universals. On the contrary, by at least one measure, his theory of universals is less extreme than Walter Burley's, a medieval realist. Wyclif, the universal is numerically identical with its singulars, but numerical identity is governed by something w

identicals.



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