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SCOTUS' INTERPRETATION OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *VOLUNTAS UT NATURA* AND *VOLUNTAS UT VOLUNTAS*¹

Scotus's doctrine of will is a topic that is much discussed. In particular, there is abundant secondary literature on the two affections of the will.² However, Scotus also speaks about the will having two *appetites*, the natural and the free.³ This double appetite involves the distinction between what Scotus calls the "natural will" and "free will." Although one might think that this distinction parallels the classical medieval distinction between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut voluntas*,⁴ there are significant differences.

¹ I am grateful to Prof. Alexander Broadie for his valuable and patient clarifications, without which this article would never have been written.

² Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 39-45; John Boler, "Transcending the Natural: Duns Scotus on the Two Affections of the Will," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993): 109-26; Thomas Williams, "How Scotus Separates Morality from Happiness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 425-45; Tobias Hoffmann, "The Distinction between Nature and Will in Duns Scotus," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 66 (1999): 189-224; Mary Beth Ingham, "Duns Scotus, Morality and Happiness: A Reply to Thomas Williams," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 74 (2000): 173-95; Eadem, "Did Scotus Modify his Position on the Relationship of Intellect and Will?," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévale* 69 (2002): 88-116; Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 146-72.

³ *Duplex est appetitus in voluntate, scilicet naturalis et liber. Naturalem solum dico potentiam voluntatis absolute, sed non aliquid superadditum voluntati; sicut enim quaelibet natura habet inclinationem naturalem ad suam perfectionem, sic etiam natura intellectualis, scilicet voluntas, habet naturalem inclinationem ad suam perfectionem; alius est appetitus liber, qui est velle liberum. De primo appetitu dico quod non est actus aliquis elicited a voluntate, sed tantum inclinatio quaedam (Ordinatio, IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2; Vivès XXI).*

⁴ This distinction is rooted in John Damascene's distinction between *thelesis* and *boulesis*. The terms *ut natura* and *ut ratio* were fixed around 1230-1240. They appear in the *Summa Halensis*. Cf. Andrea A. Robiglio,

Since Scotus's doctrine of will has not often been dealt with from this point of view, I think it is of scholarly interest to do so. Several questions arise from the consideration of how Duns Scotus deals with the concept of natural and free will: Can one say that there is room in Scotus's doctrine of the will for the more classical concept of *voluntas ut natura* or should one rather speak of that idea being rejected? What is the relevance of the doctrine of the two affections of the will for understanding the distinction between natural will and free will?

Additionally, an investigation of this topic allows for a historical approach to the question about the origins of the Scotistic distinction. It is well known that Scotus's doctrine of will is indebted to St. Augustine and that the doctrine of the two affections of the will is taken from St. Anselm. More recently, scholars have pointed out the influence of Stoicism on late thirteenth century ethical discussions, and therefore also on Scotus's views.⁵ Aristotle's action theory (his explanation of how choice takes place) is not usually taken into account when explaining Scotus's doctrine of will. There are at least two reasons for this: on the one hand, it is not clear that Aristotle develops a doctrine of will,⁶ on the other, there is a standard interpretation (whose main representative is Gilson) of the late thirteenth century which defends the idea

L'Impossibile volere: Tommaso d'Aquino, i tomisti e la volontà (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2002), 153-57.

⁵ "The Stoics are especially important for any study of scholastic ethics because the moral point of view we see developing in the late thirteenth century, while surely influenced by Christian theology, finds older philosophical roots in Stoicism.... [T]ake into account Stoic teachings—the ideal of *apatheia*, the restriction of morality to what lies within the agent's control, the concern to make virtue, to make what is praiseworthy, independent of luck and external success – and the scholastic discussions are restored to their older and wider philosophical context," Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 249; see also 206-212. Mary Beth Ingham recently addressed the Stoic framework of Scotus's ethics in a paper entitled "The Franciscan Identity and Scotus's Ethics: Self-mastery and the Rational Will," presented at the conference "The *Opera Philosophica* of John Duns Scotus" (The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, October 18-21, 2007).

⁶ For a discussion of this topic, see Robiglio (2002), 123-27.

that the Franciscan thinkers are Augustinian and more or less anti-Aristotelian, especially after the condemnations of 1277.⁷ However, Scotus read and commented on several Aristotelian works, and, although there is no commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, there are several texts (scattered through different works) where Scotus resorted to Aristotle's doctrine of *prohairesis* to explain aspects of the will's functioning. I submit that the Aristotelian influence on Scotus should not be neglected, even though its nature and extent are not self-evident. Since it is not possible to develop all the historical sources I have mentioned, I will focus precisely on the relationship between Scotus and Aristotle on the topic of natural and free will.

The aim of this paper is to show that Scotus's explanation of natural and free will provides a new interpretation of the concepts of *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut ratio*. To do so it will be necessary to refer to the doctrine of the will's two affections. It is also my aim to explore how Scotus develops an original interpretation of Aristotle's theory of action. This article is thus divided into two parts. The first and second section explain Scotus's approach in a systematic way, while the third and fourth parts discuss the relationship of his doctrine to Aristotle's.

I. DUNS SCOTUS'S DOCTRINE

1. *Natural will and free will*

In what sense does Scotus accept the distinction between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut voluntas* and to what extent does he reject it? Three texts are relevant to the discussion: *Ordinatio* III, d. 15, q. un.; *Ordinatio* III, d. 17, q. un.; and *Ordinatio* IV, d. 49, q. 10. Whereas the first two correspond to a strictly theological context, concretely a Christological one (whether in Christ there were two wills and whether there was sadness in the higher part of Christ's soul), the third re-

⁷ I follow Kent's account of Gilson's interpretation. Cf. Kent (1995), 11-12.

plies to the question of whether all that is desired is desired in view of beatitude. I will also refer to relevant passages that are found in other texts from books I and II of the *Ordinatio*.

One can conclude from these texts that Scotus rejects the interpretation of the distinction between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut voluntas* according to which the *will as nature* is the will in reference to the last end, while the *will as such* is the will with reference to the means.⁸ The will is inclined with respect to the last end or the highest good *per modum naturae*, that is, necessarily. The reason for this is that a thing's nature is defined by its proper object: nature and proper object are correlative concepts. In the case of the will, the proper object is the good, so that if the intellect grasps something as the highest good, the will will adhere to it necessarily. On the other hand, regarding that which is a means to the end, the will has the power to choose, after the relevant deliberation: this is the *voluntas ut ratio*, which Scotus refers to as *voluntas ut voluntas*. His rejection of this position is clear in the following passage:

But against this I have argued above, in the questions "On Enjoyment"; for neither one potency nor one operative principle can have opposite ways of operating. Operating by way of nature and operating by way of freedom, however, are ways that have grounds which differ by their very nature. Therefore, the same potency does not have both the latter and the former way of operating. Consequently, with respect to the end and with respect to the means the will would not be one potency, and thus not a potency at all, as the

⁸ Whether this is the Thomistic interpretation of the difference between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut ratio* is a controversial issue. Although some passages (cf. for example *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 18, a. 3, c.) support this interpretation, others allow for the identification of *voluntas ut natura* with *velleitas* (or *simplex volitio*) and *voluntas ut ratio* with choice (or *electio*). Cf. Robiglio (2002), 153-83.

Philosopher argues in his treatment of common sense in *De Anima* II.⁹

Thus, Scotus's defense of the volitional faculty's unity motivates him to reject the aforementioned distinction. His argument is formulated in two steps: (1) Active principles or active powers (efficient causes) are divided into the natural and the free; now the will is precisely *the* free active power, as opposed to the other active principles which work naturally;¹⁰ (2) therefore, if the will referred to the end is to operate naturally, and not freely, it cannot be the same faculty as the will referred to the means, since it would be self-contradictory for one and the same active principle to act both naturally and freely.

Against this position, Scotus's doctrine is that the will is free. "Free" means capable of self-determination between contraries, a capacity that does not disappear when the will is compared to the last end or highest good.¹¹ Indeed, Scotus distinguishes two positive acts of the will, *velle* and *nolle*: to want and to reject. Although he grants that it is not possible to reject the highest good or to want the highest evil, nonetheless, the will can always suspend its act and not act: *neque velle neque nolle*.¹² In this way the will always maintains its

⁹ *Lectura*, I, d. 10, n. 24. Anton Vos et al., trans., *Contingency and Freedom: Lectura I 39* (Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 201.

¹⁰ Cf. *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, IX, q. 15, nn. 21-22 (*Opera Philosophica*, IV) and *Quodlibet*, q. 16, n. 13 (Vivès XXVI).

¹¹ *Ad oppositum: necessitas naturalis non stat cum libertate. Quod probro: quia natura et voluntas sunt principia activa habentia oppositum modum principiandi, ergo cum modo principiandi voluntatis non stat modus principiandi naturae; sed libere voluntas vult finem, ergo non potest necessitate naturali velle finem, nec per consequens aliquo modo necessario* (*Ordinatio*, I, d. 1, pars 2, q. 2, n. 80). Unless otherwise indicated the Latin texts are from the Vatican edition.

¹² *Ad tertium, dicitur uno modo quod licet non sit ibi defectus alicuius boni nec aliqua malitia et ideo forte non posset voluntas illud nolle, quia obiectum actus nolendi est malum vel defectivum, potest tamen illud bonum perfectum non velle, quia in potestate voluntatis est non tantum sic, vel sic velle, sed etiam velle et non velle, quia libertas eius est ad agendum, vel non agendum* (*Ordinatio*, I, d. 1, pars 2, q. 2, n. 149). *Et tunc non sequitur ultra: 'non potest nolle hoc; ergo necessario vult hoc,' quia potest hoc obiectum neque velle, neque nolle* (*Quodlibet*, q. 16, n. 5; Vivès XXVI).

openness to opposites and is never obligated to accept the suggestion that intellect presents to it:

If you object: if the will of necessity neither wills happiness nor hates or detests it, then what sort of act can the will have when the intellect shows it happiness? I grant that in most cases it will have an act of volition, but it does not necessarily have any act. Hence, when it is shown happiness, it can refrain from acting at all.¹³

Although it cannot be discussed in detail here, it is sufficient to point out that, even though the will's openness to contraries remains in the blessed as a remote potency, the will's exercise (or proximate potency) does not remain open to contraries on account of a divine decree that causes it to remain in *fruitio*.¹⁴

Does this mean that the concept of *voluntas ut natura* is entirely absent from Scotus's doctrine of the will? I suggest that Scotus accepts the distinction between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut voluntas* in a certain sense, while almost completely transforming its content. Concretely, he distinguishes two "appetites" in the will, the natural and the free:

There is a double appetite in the will, namely the natural and the free. I only call "natural" the will's power taken absolutely, but not anything added on to the will. For just as any nature whatever has a natural

¹³ *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 10; Vivès XXI. Wolter (1986), 195.

¹⁴ The discussion of this argument is found in *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 6: whether security belongs to the essence of beatitude. In n. 14 (an *additio*), the principal arguments are summarized as follows: (1) God's absolute power, not his ordered power, could cause the will of the blessed to be maintained in *fruitio*, in which case the blessed would have the proximate power to sin. This suffices to assure us that the openness to contraries is not destroyed. (2) The will's determination by a higher cause, God, does not deprive it of the possibility of sinning (remote potency), and in this sense the will *in patria* is the same as the will *in via*. However, since by a divine decree it can never actualize this possibility (proximate potency), the will of the blessed is differentiated from that of the wayfarer.

inclination to its own perfection, so also the intellectual nature, i.e. the will, has a natural inclination to its own perfection. The free appetite, which is to wish freely, is something else. I say of the first appetite that it is not some act elicited by the will, but only a certain inclination.¹⁵

In this text Scotus states a key difference between *natural* and *free* will: while the free will involves the capacity to elicit acts, the natural will consists simply in the will's inclination towards its own perfection. As noted in the text, the will has such an inclination to the degree in which it possesses a certain nature, namely, that of an intellectual appetite. Yet having the capacity to elicit acts is what specifically defines the will. Thus, one observes a certain ambiguity in Scotus's use of the term "will." On the one hand it can mean, in a broad sense, the intellectual appetite, on the other hand it means, in a strict and specific sense, a free active power. Scotus goes so far as to affirm that "the natural will is not a will, nor is natural volition volition."¹⁶ The natural "will" is just the intellectual appetite and its 'volition' is not an elicited act of the will but rather the inclination following what intellects grasps as fitting. Here Scotus is using both "will" and "volition" in the broad sense. Let us examine this point in detail.

In the question on the wills in Christ, Scotus points out that one can take "will" either in its proper sense or in a general sense, and in the latter case the name "will" designates

¹⁵ *Duplex est appetitus in voluntate, scilicet naturalis et liber. Naturalem solum dico potentiam voluntatis absolute, sed non aliquid superadditum voluntati; sicut enim quaelibet natura habet inclinationem naturalem ad suam perfectionem, sic etiam natura intellectualis, scilicet voluntas, habet naturalem inclinationem ad suam perfectionem; alius est appetitus liber, qui est velle liberum. De primo appetitu dico quod non est actus aliquis elicited a voluntate, sed tantum inclinatio quaedam (Ordinatio, IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2; Vivès XXI). All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.*

¹⁶ "I say that the same thing holds for the will, because the natural will is really not will at all, nor is natural volition true volition, for the term 'natural' effectively cancels or negates the sense of both 'will' and 'volition'. Nothing remains but the relationship a power has to its proper perfection" (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 17, q. un., n. 13). Wolter (1986), 183.

the same as appetite.¹⁷ This is the meaning of the term when it is found with the adjective “natural”: the appetite or inclination towards one’s own good together with knowledge thereof. The will is undoubtedly an intellectual appetite: an inclination towards one’s own perfection that is preceded by intellectual knowledge. However, this is not the most proper sense (the *ratio propria*) of the term “will”; the will, as such, designates the free will. Will is the power capable of operating or not operating, of operating in one direction or another, following or avoiding the inclination to the advantageous. This is what differentiates the will from the appetite in irrational animals. Animals can only follow the natural inclination toward what is best for them (pursuing pleasure or fleeing danger). In contrast, even though the will, as an intellectual appetite, also possesses this natural inclination toward its own good or perfection, it can go against its natural inclination toward what is most advantageous. A soldier can face the danger of death, instead of fleeing it, for the good of the city.

For Scotus, the *voluntas ut natura* or *voluntas naturalis* is an inclination inherent in the will as intellectual appetite. By this inclination the will is naturally moved towards the perfection most fitting for it:

The natural will as tending necessarily to the object willed has no elicited act in its regard. It is only a certain inclination in such a nature towards the perfection most appropriate to it. This inclination necessarily exists in nature, even though an act in conformity with such an inclination and nature may not be necessarily elicited. For no act is elicited except by the free will, whether it be conformed or natural or whether it be diffomed or against nature. And no

¹⁷ *Dico quod voluntas potest accipi sub propria ratione, –vel sub generali ratione et nomine, scilicet pro appetitu. Si generaliter accipiat, sic ad minus in Christo fuerunt tres appetitus, scilicet intellectualis increatus, et rationalis creatus, et irrationalis creatus (scilicet sensitivus); sed proprie voluntas addit supra appetitum quia ‘est appetitus cum ratione liber’. Et sic, stricte loquendo, tantum fuerunt in Christo duae voluntates (Ordinatio, III, d. 17, q. un., n. 9).*

matter how much it wills the opposite of that to which it is inclined, that inclination necessarily remains as long as the nature remains.¹⁸

It is important to stress the term “inclination”: the natural will is not really a power (something capable of eliciting acts), but just the *inclination* that the will has, in as much as it is a certain nature, to receive its own perfection. Considered as such a natural inclination to receive perfection, natural will is passive rather than active. However, natural and free will are not two different powers, but rather the same power considered under two different perspectives. Scotus calls the active power to will, nill, or not will, “free will,” and the inclination of this same power to receive its own perfection, “natural will.”¹⁹ Now, one can have a deeper understanding of why Scotus states that the “the natural will is not a will”: it is the will insofar as it is free, and not the natural will, that elicits voluntary acts. He repeats this point insistently:

What I have said in dist. 15 of this third book contradicts his first point, because the will, as nature, elicits no act whatsoever; therefore, as nature it does not tend to any object, be it the end or something else, by an elicited act, but only by way of a natural inclination, as a heavy object is said to tend downward even though it is at rest in some high place.²⁰

¹⁸ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 39, q. 2, n. 24. Wolter 1986, 203.

¹⁹ *Ad secundum, cum dicitur quod voluntas libera et naturalis sunt duae voluntates, dico quod voluntas naturalis –ut sic et ut naturalis– non est voluntas ut potentia, sed tantum importat inclinationem potentiae ad recipiendum perfectionem suam, non ad agendum ut sic; et ideo est imperfecta nisi sit sub illa perfectione ad quam illa tendentia inclinatur illam potentiam; unde naturalis potentia non tendit, sed est tendentia illa qua voluntas absoluta tendit –et hoc passive– ad recipiendum. Sed est alia tendentia, in potentia eadem, ut libere et active tendat eliciendo actum, ita quod una potentia et duplex tendentia (activa et passiva). Tunc ad formam dico quod voluntas naturalis, secundum illud quod ‘formale’ importat, non est potentia vel voluntas, sed inclinatio voluntatis et tendentia qua tendit in perfectionem passive recipiendum* (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 17, q. un., n. 18).

²⁰ *Ordinatio*, III, d. 33, q. un., n. 72. Wolter (1986), 345. Cf. *Ordinatio*, III, d. 18, n. 20 and *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2.

To sum up, the will has two appetites, the natural and the free. According to what has been presented thus far, one can say that free will is the will in a proper sense (an active power of eliciting acts) whereas the natural will could rather be called the intellectual appetite (an inclination towards one's own perfection).²¹

Once the concepts of natural and free will have been clarified, the following question arises: What is the relationship between the two appetites of the will (natural and free) and the two affections of the will (*affectio commodi* and *affectio iustitiae*)? At times Scotus seems to say that the natural will is the will considered insofar as it is affected by the *affectio commodi*, whereas free will is the will considered as possessing the *affectio iustitiae*.²² But, on the other hand, he says that both affections belong to (are perfections of) free will: "There is a double natural inclination: one to what is advantageous, the other to what is just. Both of these are a perfection of free will."²³ To shed light on this point, it is necessary to analyze certain passages along with the secondary literature regarding the two affections of the will.

²¹ "Scotus does not—contrary to Thomas Aquinas—conceive of the will simply as an intellectual appetite. If the will were merely an intellectual appetite it would not be a freely active potency but a natural active potency, since the intellect is a natural agent. Scotus often identifies the intellectual appetite with the affection for the advantageous" (Hoffmann (1999), 211-12).

²² *Alio modo dicitur voluntas ut natura, intelligendo omnem ordinem eius ad quodcumque consequens naturam voluntati—et hoc proprie non ut libera, sed ut est tantum appetitus intellectivus, sive ut habens affectionem commodi non iustitiae* (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 15, q. un., n. 90).

²³ *Inclinatio naturalis est duplex; una ad commodum, alia ad iustum, quarum utrumque est perfectio voluntatis liberae* (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 15, q. un., n. 54).

2. *The two affections of the will*²⁴

As noted at the beginning of this essay, there are several articles and studies on the two affections of the will. Many of them are from an ethical perspective and refer primarily to the relationships between moral obligation and happiness in Scotus's theory. Some (notably Wolter and Ingham²⁵) see in this doctrine the outline of an explanation of the reasonable character of Scotus's ethics: his ethics concern human flourishing and happiness, and are not simply based on the acceptance of commandments given by God's arbitrary will. Based on the same doctrine of the affections, others (such as Williams²⁶) sustain that Scotus's ethics are deontological and therefore focused on God's commandments and our obligations, a position close to Kant's formal ethics and absolutely incompatible with Aristotle's eudaimonistic project.

Given that my approach is, so to speak, metaphysical, rather than ethical, I will not discuss this interpretive problem from an ethical standpoint. Rather, I wish to clarify what the two affections are, the nature of their relationship with the will as a unique power, and, in particular, whether it is possible to identify the affection for the advantageous with the natural will and the affection for justice with the free will. I will now discuss Ingham and Williams's positions from this metaphysical point of view.

According to Ingham, both the *affectio commodi* and the *affectio iustitiae* constitute what she calls the "rational will,"²⁷

²⁴ The doctrine on the two affections of the will is found fragmentarily in widely differing passages of Scotus's work. Most of the texts are found in a theological context: the discussion on the nature of the angel's first sin (*Ordinatio*, II, d. 6); on whether God is the cause of sin (*Ordinatio*, II, d. 37); on whether Christ could merit (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 18); or on the distinction between the virtues of hope and charity (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 26). Still, there is no lack of references in questions that can be considered more properly philosophical: whether something distinct from the will can effectively cause in it the act of desiring (*Lectura*, II, d. 25); or whether conscience is in the will (*Ordinatio*, II, d. 39).

²⁵ Allan B. Wolter, "The Unshredded Scotus: A Response to Thomas Williams," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 77 (2003): 315-56; Ingham (2000), 182-95; Ingham (2002), 90-103; Ingham (2004), 146-62.

²⁶ Williams (1995), 425-45.

²⁷ Ingham (2004), 157.

in such a way that if one of the affections is lacking (be it the affection for justice or the affection for the advantageous), the will is not free.²⁸ On her account, Scotus reframes the traditional doctrine (the intellect as rational and the will as a mere appetite) and states that the will is a rational potency. The rationality of the will refers to the will's ability for self-restraint (*non velle*).²⁹ This self-control involves precisely the ability to check the affection for the advantageous by keeping in mind the orientation (through the affection for justice) to the good itself (*bonum honestum*).³⁰ Scotus, she says, liberates the will from the control of intellect but not from reason.³¹ Thus, she concludes that "the highest expression of freedom is ordered rational choice"³² and that "the will is naturally constituted to follow the dictates of right reason."³³ Ingham has a particular vision of the relationship between the two main texts involved in this explanation, namely Scotus's *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* IX, q. 15 and *Ordinatio* II, d. 6. While in the first text Scotus would have merely stated the *fact* that the will is rational with an *a posteriori* argument, in the second, unsatisfied with his first answer,³⁴ he would have given the *reason* for that. To summarize: the will is rational for Scotus because, while attracted by what entails its own perfection (*affectio commodi*), it is capable of self-control (*affectio iustitiae*) in such a way that its act is not necessitated by the advantageous. Rather, the will can choose the good for its own sake: the will can love in an orderly, *rational* way.

I would like to contest some points of Ingham's exposition. First of all, she assumes that the text of the *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* (IX, q. 15) is written before the text of the *Ordinatio* (II, d. 6). I have not found any strong proof of this thesis in the scholarly research. On the contrary, Scotus seems to have revised the *Questions on the Metaphysics of*

²⁸ Ingham (2002), 100 and (2004), 160.

²⁹ Ingham (2004), 149.

³⁰ Ingham (2002), 99.

³¹ Ingham (2004), 147.

³² Ingham (2002), 92.

³³ Ingham (2002), 103.

³⁴ Ingham (2004), 152.

Aristotle several times; particularly, books VII-IX are among Scotus's latest works according to the critical editors of the *Opera Philosophica*.³⁵ One of the arguments for this has to do with the quotations from the *De primo principio*. These quotations show that at least some parts of the *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* were written after the *De primo principio*. On the other hand, the editors of Scotus's *Opera Omnia* held that the *De primo principio* cannot be a source of the *Ordinatio* but rather a treatise written after it.³⁶ Thus, the text of *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* IX, q. 15 seems to be posterior to the text of *Ordinatio* II, d. 6.

The second problem concerns the expression "rational will" and its content. This is not a Scotistic expression. Scotus refers to *free* will and teaches that the will is the only rational power. I disagree with Ingham's interpretation of this last statement. Particularly in the text of the *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, Scotus discusses the will's ability to act otherwise, that is, self-determination as a feature of the will (in contrast to natural powers that act necessarily if certain conditions obtain). It is precisely because of this feature that the will is not a natural (or irrational) power, but a free (or rational) power. On my reading, Scotus has changed the Aristotelian distinction between rational and irrational powers into a distinction between self-determined and other-determined powers, calling the first type "will" and the second type "nature." Therefore the adjective "rational" now has a *new* meaning, totally different from its meaning in the Aristotelian text. It does not mean practical rationality, practical reason, or practical wisdom, but rather the contingency of will as a free power different from nature. When Scotus

³⁵ "Therefore, based on all the evidence presently at our disposal, it is our view that Scotus's *Questions on the Metaphysics* does not stem from a single period of his academic career. It is our conviction that Books VIII and IX, and probably Book VII as well, were produced later than the works to which, on occasion, they obviously refer," Girard Etzkorn et al., eds., *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Philosophica*, III: Introduction to the *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1997), xlv.

³⁶ Cf. Carolo Balic et al., eds., *Ioannis Duns Scoti Opera Omnia I: Disquisitio historico-critica* (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950), 161*-164*.

says that the will is the only rational power, he means that the will is the only self-determined power. But being a self-determined power means being a contingent power. In my interpretation “rational” stands for “contingent.”³⁷ Although Ingham understands that “rational” and “self-determined” are equivalent terms, she reads “self-determination” as entailing not only the ability to act otherwise (contingency), but also “self-control.” According to her, when Scotus says the will can *non-velle*, this refers to the will’s ability to restrain itself: its ability to control its acts and adjust them to the pursuit of the good for its own sake instead of following what is most advantageous as any other appetite would do. In this way, she connects the idea of the will as a rational power (*Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*) with the doctrine of the two affections (*Ordinatio*). She coins the expression “rational will” to refer to the will’s ability to love in an orderly fashion. In contrast, I think the move from self-determination to self-control is not justified: there are no indications in the text of the *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* that self-determination means orderly love. She also appeals to Scotus’s statement about the will as capable of willing, nilling or not-willing, viewing not-willing (*non velle*) as a positive act of the will that can be identified with self-restraint. Yet what Scotus says is that the will can refrain from eliciting any act.³⁸ This strongly suggests that *non velle* is not-acting at all rather than acting to control oneself, as Ingham suggests.³⁹

My third comment has to do with the idea of *both* affections being necessary for the will to be free: if either of them were lacking, the will “would be incapable of moral choice.”⁴⁰ Ingham holds that the will is a single power and that the two affections do not divide it into two faculties. Although I

³⁷ I have developed this argument in detail in a paper entitled “Scotus’s Interpretation of *Metaphysics* 9.2: On the Distinction between Nature and Will,” presented at the 2007 annual meeting of the *American Catholic Philosophical Association*. [See *Proceedings*, forthcoming.]

³⁸ Cf. *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, qq. 9-10, n. 10.

³⁹ Williams reads *non velle* as “fail to will”: no act is elicited by the will. I find his interpretation to be more faithful to the texts (Williams (1995), 430).

⁴⁰ Ingham (2002), 100-01.

agree with her on this point, I find she does not sufficiently consider how the formal distinction between natural and free will plays a role in understanding the relationship between the two affections. I will now develop this idea at greater length.

As noted in the first section, Scotus attributes to the will two appetites (natural and free) which involve a formal distinction between the will as an intellectual appetite (the will considered as a nature inclined to its own perfection) and the will as an active power (capable of eliciting acts in a free manner). This distinction is close to the distinction between the two affections, as Scotus says:

Nevertheless by distinguishing from the nature of the thing the two primary characteristics of this twofold affection (one inclining the will above all to the advantageous, the other moderating it, as it were, lest the will in eliciting an act should have to follow its inclination), he makes these aspects out to be nothing other than the will itself insofar as it is an intellectual appetite and insofar as it is free. For, as has been said, *qua pure intellective appetite*, the will would be actually inclined to the *optimum intelligibile* (as sight is to what is best visible), whereas *qua free*, it could restrain itself in eliciting its act from following this natural inclination, as to either the substance of the act or its intensity.⁴¹

Scotus describes the affection for justice as something innate that is “the will’s freedom itself.”⁴² Therefore what constitutes the will as a free active power is the affection for justice and not the affection for the advantageous⁴³ (or, as In-

⁴¹ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 50. Wolter, 471.

⁴² *Ad videndum solutionem istarum rationum, distinguo quid possit intelligi per istas affectiones ‘iustitiae’ et ‘commodi,’ de quibus loquitur Anselmus De casu diaboli cap. 4. Iustitia potest intelligi vel infusa (quae dicitur ‘gratuita’) vel acquisita (quae dicitur ‘moralis’) vel innata (quae est ipsamet libertas voluntatis)’* (*Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 49).

⁴³ Boler insists on the idea that the *affectio iustitiae* should not be considered as the inclination of a nature higher than the intellectual (for ex-

gham says, the interaction between the two affections⁴⁴). The *affectio commodi*, on the other hand, constitutes the nature of the will as an intellectual appetite and, therefore, as a natural will (*voluntas ut natura*). Such an inclination is present in any appetite, including the lower ones that are governed by senses, since they too move towards what benefits them. Wolter offers the following extremely clear explanation:

The first is its affection for the advantageous (*affectio commodi*). This makes it [created will] a rational or intellectual appetite that seeks what the intellect shows is advantageous for the creature, particularly what makes it happy. Under the aspect of its inclination for the advantageous we can speak of a “natural will.” This refers primarily not to an elicited action of the will but rather to an inclination or bias the will has as a “nature.” For like all natures, according to Aristotle, it seeks or “loves” whatever perfects its nature. This affection for the advantageous is also characteristic of all human sense appetites. Hence it is not something proper or peculiar to a rational creature possessing intellect.⁴⁵

Since the will, so considered, has no elicited acts but only an inclination *per modum naturae*, it makes sense for Scotus

ample, a rational nature) but rather precisely as the capacity to transcend nature, even the intellectual nature proper to *voluntas ut natura*: “Scotus is not saying just that the rational will has a higher and lower appetite; he is saying that the normal (Aristotelian) scheme, in terms of appetite and proper object, for explaining how an agent comes to move itself is not appropriate for will”; “But while the *affectio commodi* is said to be ‘natural and necessary,’ neither *affectio iustitiae* nor the combination of the two *affectiones* is so described. One must be careful, therefore, not to treat *affectio iustitiae* as a higher appetite that realizes the potential of a higher nature. The point I take Scotus to be making is that the will’s bringing itself to act cannot be accounted for on the model of natural appetite and its proper object” (Boler (1993), 116 and 117).

⁴⁴ “The possibility for such self restraint depends upon certain innate types of moral inclinations, namely the two Anselmian affections. *Their interaction* reveals self-control as the liberty innate to the will” (Ingham 2002, 102). My italics.

⁴⁵ Wolter (1986), 11-12.

to say that the will with only this inclination would not be free (cf. the well-known thought experiment of the angel created with only the *affectio commodi*).⁴⁶ Considered in itself as merely constituting the intellectual appetite, the *affectio commodi* is, Scotus says, "like a first perfection": it is more like a form that inclines one to act in a determinate way than like an act or an operation. It cannot be immoderate, just as nature cannot, since it is not the cause of an elicited act:

As for the first, the natural will is not of itself immoderate, since it inclines only after the manner of nature—and in this it is not immoderate, for it inclines as it was made to do, nor has it power to do otherwise. But to be so inclined or less inclined is in the power of the will as free, through an elicited act. When the natural will is taken to be orientated towards happiness, I grant this. But this will is not actually immoderate through an elicited act. For the inclination of a natural appetite is not an elicited act, but resembles a first perfection [i.e., something identical with the substance or being of the will]. And this is no more immoderate than is the nature to which it belongs. However, that nature is so inclined towards its object by this affection for the advantageous that if it had of itself an elicited act, it could not help eliciting it with no moderation in the most forceful way possible. But the natural will, as having only the affection for the beneficial, is not the cause of any elicited act; only the will as free can cause such, and therefore, *qua* eliciting an act, the will does have what is required to moderate passion.⁴⁷

Why, then, does Scotus state, as quoted above,⁴⁸ that both affections belong to free will? To answer this question, one must keep in mind that Scotus considers the affection for justice to be related to the love of friendship, while the af-

⁴⁶ Cf. *Lectura*, II, d. 25, q. un., n. 33 and *Ordinatio*, III, d. 18, n. 19.

⁴⁷ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, nn. 55-56. Wolter (1986), 473.

⁴⁸ See note 13.

fection for advantageous is related to the love of desire or concupiscence.⁴⁹

To love something in itself [or for its own sake] is more an act of giving or sharing and is a freer act than is desiring that object for oneself. As such it is an act more appropriate to the will, as the seat of this innate justice at least. The other act [of wanting something for oneself] pertains to the will inasmuch as it has an affection for the advantageous.⁵⁰

By means of the love of friendship the good is desired in itself; by means of the love of concupiscence the good is loved because it is advantageous.⁵¹ Between the two forms of loving there is a hierarchy similar to that between the two affections of the will. The love of concupiscence presupposes the love of friendship:

The affection for the advantageous which is concupiscence presupposes the affection for friendship and for justice, because everyone who desires a good for someone, first wishes that he be well in himself before desiring something else for him.⁵²

The possibility of a lack of moderation in the *affectio commodi* appears if this hierarchy is subverted, or if the love (of

⁴⁹ This relationship is accepted by Ingham but not by Williams. I discuss Williams's objections below; for the moment I take the parallel for granted.

⁵⁰ *Ordinatio*, III, d. 26, q. un., n. 110. Wolter (1986), 179.

⁵¹ Scotus stresses this difference when he refers in other texts to these two *velle* as "the act of loving" (*actus amandi*) and "the act of desiring" (*actus concupiscendi*) respectively. In this case, the change in terminology is interesting because Scotus does not grant desire the rank of love. This is consistent with the idea that the *affectio commodi* does not elicit acts. Love is properly the elicited act of the will as free, although it can also be taken in a broader sense as any inclination toward the good. Cf. for example *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 1, n. 10.

⁵² *Affectio commodi quae est concupiscentia praesupponit affectionem amicitiae et iustitiae, quia omnis concupiscens alicui bonum, prius vult illi bene esse in se quam illi concupiscat aliquid* (*Ordinatio*, III, d. 15, q. un., n. 66).

friendship) with respect to oneself brings with it an immoderate desire for the highest good insofar as it is one's proper happiness.⁵³ But that possibility only appears if the will has the affection for justice and is free to accept, reject, or refrain from acting regarding the inclination of the *affectio commodi*. Only insofar as there is in the will another inclination (*affectio iustitiae*) towards what is just (*bonum honestum*), that is, towards the good in itself, can the conflict between the good (in itself) and the advantageous arise for the acting being. In this sense I agree with Ingham that the space in which ethics takes place is the interaction between the two affections because the obligation to act in one way and not in another arises in an ethical context. However, I do not agree with her in assuming that the freedom of will is constituted by both affections: rather, I think it is constituted only by the affection for justice. Of course, once the inclination for the beneficial (*affectio commodi*) is checked by the ability to love the *honestum* (*affectio iustitiae*), the inclination for the beneficial is no longer a necessary tendency; in that sense, it belongs to free will.

One of the roles of the *affectio iustitiae* is thus to "free"⁵⁴ the will as appetite from its necessary tendency towards the most beneficial, rendering it capable of either following such an inclination or not. Scotus says that the *affectio iustitiae*

⁵³ This is the case in the devil's sin, as Scotus discusses in *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2.

⁵⁴ Boler speaks of transcending nature: "One might simply assume that a rational agent would have an appetite suited to its *rational* nature. But I think Scotus's rather unexpected (and somewhat paradoxical) terminology here reflects a crucially important substantive position on his part: to be a rational agent is to be capable of action "beyond the natural" – in some sense, even beyond one's "nature." For Scotus, the only *natural* appetite a rational agent has is its appetite as an *intellectual* nature. When Scotus speaks of the 'will as nature' in the rational agent, the nature at stake is the intellectual nature of the agent" (Boler (1993), 117). As for Wolter, while he basically accepts the idea that the mission of the *affectio iustitiae* is to free the will from its necessary tendency toward the advantageous, he stresses the need to avoid interpreting congenital freedom as arbitrariness: "[Native liberty] is described equivalently in what amounts to both a freedom *from* nature and a freedom *for* values." Allan B. Wolter, *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, Marilyn McCord Adams, ed. (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1990), 152.

is the innate freedom of the will *because* it is a 'check' on the *affectio commodi*:

Therefore, this affection *for justice, which is the first checkrein on the affection for the beneficial*, inasmuch as we need not actually seek that towards which the latter affection inclines us, nor must we seek it above all else (namely, to the extent to which we are inclined by this affection for the advantageous); this affection for what is just, I say, is the *liberty innate to the will, since it represents the first checkrein on this affection for the advantageous*.⁵⁵

By means of this innate liberty the will is capable of eliciting an act or its contrary; it is also capable of acting or not acting. If Anselm considers that justice signifies the charity which frees us from seeking God simply as our happiness in order to seek him as a good in himself, Scotus, as Wolter and Ingham have pointed out,⁵⁶ goes further and considers that justice belongs to the very constitution of the will: it is its innate freedom. Such freedom should be understood simultaneously as an openness *ad opposita* and as a capacity of self-determination in the midst of this openness.

So what is free is the affection for justice, although in as much as the affection for justice resides, for so to speak, in a potency (the will) which possesses a nature and an inclination thereof (the affection for advantageous), it has to manage this inclination to keep it in order. Therefore I would say that the *affectio commodi* can be considered in a twofold way: as a first perfection (the inclination of the will, considered as nature, to its own good or perfection) or in its interaction with the *affectio iustitiae* (the desire of an object for one self that can be contrary to the love of that object for its own sake). Under the first perspective, the *affectio commodi* can be identified with the natural appetite of the will: it is the natural will and constitutes the will as an intellectual ap-

⁵⁵ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 49. My italics. Wolter (1986), 469-71.

⁵⁶ Cf. Wolter (1986), 13; Ingham (2004), 159-60.

petite.⁵⁷ Under the second perspective, the *affectio commodi* belongs to free will which can take its inclination into account when eliciting its acts. However, the free appetite of the will is the *affectio iustitiae* that Scotus describes as the will's congenital freedom. In this way, I think the question asked in the first section can be answered.

Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note that the regulative function of the affection for justice over the affection for the beneficial is neither its only nor its main function. Thanks to the *affectio iustitiae*, one's reason for acting becomes not the perfection one can achieve but the intrinsic goodness of that particular action. In as much as the will pursues the good in itself, moral perfection is achieved although not directly intended. In a certain sense this idea can be found in some passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle says that the perfectly brave man acts for the sake of what is noble and because it is noble to do so.⁵⁸ The imperfectly brave man, on the contrary, acts because he is compelled by his rulers, out of fear, and to avoid not what is disgraceful but what is painful.⁵⁹ This is an interesting point because (1) it shows that Aristotelian ethics are not a eudaimonistic project in the same sense that some modern ethics are; (2) it also indicates that Scotus could have found some valuable elements in Aristotle's ethics which fit with his own project.

To close this section I will contest two points of Williams's article.⁶⁰ First, he states that, according to Scotus, the affection for justice is incapable of sinning. His grounding text is as follows⁶¹:

⁵⁷ Although I agree with Williams on this point (427), I do not subscribe to the ethical conclusions he draws from it, namely, the absolute separation of happiness and morality in Scotus's ethics and the absolute disparity between Scotus's and Aristotle's ethical projects.

⁵⁸ Cf. *NE*, 3, 7, 1115 b 10-15 and 1116 a 10-15. I am indebted to Timothy Noone for pointing out the importance of this other function of the *affectio iustitiae* as well as the relationship with the Aristotelian passages.

⁵⁹ Cf. *NE*, 3, 8, 1116 a 30-35.

⁶⁰ Williams (1995), 425-45.

⁶¹ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 40. Williams, who wrote his article before the publication of the critical edition, quotes Wolter's edition (Wolter, 348) and gives the number of Wadding-Vivès edition (n. 11). When possible I will use the Vatican edition and follow its numerotation.

For, at first, the disordered “desire” did not proceed from the affection for justice, just as sin did not proceed from it; therefore, it proceeded from the affection for the advantageous, since “every elicited act of will is elicited either according to the affection for justice, or for the advantageous.”⁶²

It might seem that Williams’s statement is correct. However, the problem is that Scotus is not assuming this as his own position. This text belongs to the arguments in favour of the thesis *angelum primum concupisse sibi immoderate beatitudinem* [“that the angel first desired beatitude for itself immoderately”]. It is the first of the five arguments in favor (nn. 40-45); afterwards Scotus gives three arguments against the thesis (nn. 46-48); only after all this, does he give his own solution (nn 49-62). He begins his solution by distinguishing three types of justice, the third one being precisely the affection for justice which Scotus describes as will’s innate liberty (n. 49). Further on in the argument, that explains the doctrine already presented in this paper regarding the affection for justice being the checkrein of the affection for beneficial, Scotus writes:

For the will, although it can moderate itself, can immoderately desire the beatitude that is fitting for it.⁶³

It is clear that Scotus is referring to the will in as much as it has the affection for justice (not in an Anselmian sense but in the third sense, which is the Scotistic sense). So it is clear he admits the possibility of the affection for justice not moderating the affection for the beneficial as it should and sinning as a result. Although the sin should actually be attributed to man and not to the will or to the affection for justice, the point I want to make is that one cannot use the text

⁶² *Primo sic nam primum ‘concupiscere’ inordinatum non processit ex affectione iustitiae, sicut nec aliquod peccatum processit; ergo ex affectione commodi, quia ‘omnis actus voluntatis, elicitus, aut elicitur secundum affectionem iustitiae aut commodi.*

⁶³ *Potest autem voluntas—potens se ipsam moderari—immoderate velle beatitudinem quae sibi congruit. Ordinatio, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 52.*

quoted from the *Ordinatio* to defend Williams's argument. Based on this text, Williams builds an argument to show that "the *affectio commodi* encompasses more than merely self-regarding desires."⁶⁴ He says that there could be sins that have their roots in the love of friendship more than in the love of desire or concupiscence; given that sinful acts could not come from the affection for justice, they must come from the affection for the beneficial. Therefore, the affection for the beneficial can be involved in acts of loving a good for its own sake. There is no need to discuss the first premise (which Williams supports with an example); since I have shown that the second premise is false, the argument's conclusion cannot validly follow.

The second point is Williams's challenging the parallel between the affection for justice with the love of friendship and the affection for the beneficial with desire or love of concupiscence. This challenge is closely related to the point I have just criticized: if the *affectio commodi* can elicit an act of love of friendship, the parallel does not work. Although Williams recognizes that there are some texts in favor of the parallel, he analyzes two passages⁶⁵ which, according to him, show there is no such relationship. Since the argument is the same in both cases I will only analyze the first text (*Ordinatio* II, d. 6, q. 1, n. 10). I limit myself to quoting the last part of the text:

Ita quod sicut quodcumque ens potest ipse [angelus] amare amore amicitiae, ita quodcumque ens potest concupiscere ipsi amato.

Thus just as [an angel] can love any being with the love of friendship, so *he can desire* any being *for the thing itself that is loved*.⁶⁶

The text shows that desire is not only aimed at willing something for oneself, but that it can also will something for the sake of some other things that are loved. For Williams, it

⁶⁴ Williams (1995), 431.

⁶⁵ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 1, n. 10, and q. 2, n. 35.

⁶⁶ Williams (1995), 433 (and note 20).

follows that the desire includes not only selfish or interested love but also disinterested love. So desire can be considered to be related to both the affection for justice and the affection for the beneficial. In a certain sense I agree with Williams: the text means that an angel can desire some being as ordered to something else, or because something else is loved, or as a means regarding something else which is loved for itself. Yet I do not agree with how Williams depicts the parallel, identifying the affection for justice with disinterested love and the affection for the beneficial with selfish love. Scotus does not describe the love of friendship and desire as disinterested and interested love, respectively, but rather in a way that fits perfectly with the texts quoted above:

[T]here is a twofold like or love, one which can be called the love of friendship [or benevolence], another called the love of desiring or wanting or coveting. Friendship or benevolent love concerns an object of well-wishing, whereas the love of desire concerns *some object I want for some other beloved (alicui alii amato)*.⁶⁷

In light of Scotus's definition of the two kinds of love, there is a perfect match with the parallel between the affection for justice and the love of friendship, and the affection for the beneficial and the love of concupiscence (or desire). The other texts⁶⁸ where Scotus states this relationship confirm this.

II. THE ARISTOTELIAN VIEWPOINT AND SCOTUS'S INTERPRETATION OF IT

I now pass from systematic considerations to a historical perspective and I attempt to explain how Scotus develops an original interpretation of Aristotle's action theory. It might seem surprising that I want to develop the Aristotelian roots of Scotus's ethics. The doctrine of the two affections, for ex-

⁶⁷ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 6, q. 2, n. 34. Wolter (1986), 463.

⁶⁸ According to Williams (433) the clearest one is *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 5, nn. 2-3.

ample, is taken from St. Anselm; and Anselm's background is not Aristotelian but rather Augustinian and possibly Stoic.⁶⁹ Because of this, my approach requires some justification.

First of all, my aim in this section is not to look for the Aristotelian roots of Scotus's doctrine of the two affections, since I do not think that is possible. My aim is to show that Aristotle's ethics had some impact on Scotus's description of the will. I am not saying that Aristotle's influence is more important than the influence of Augustine, Anselm, or even of Stoicism. However, I agree with B. Kent⁷⁰ that it is important to show that Scotus is not an anti-Aristotelian author, but rather one who commented on some of Aristotle's texts and knew his thought well. Indeed, in some cases, Scotus's interpretation of Aristotle is so original that his fidelity to Aristotle himself can be debated.

Thus, I have a twofold aim in this section: (1) to show how Scotus interprets certain Aristotelian terms (*orexis*, *boulesis* and *prohairesis*) and to juxtapose this interpretation with his notions of natural and free will; (2) in doing so, to ques-

⁶⁹ Scotus does not quote any Stoic authors. Like many other medieval thinkers, he receives a certain *corpus* of Stoic theses and uses them without considering their Stoic origin. As Spanneut explains: "Est appelée stoïcienne une thèse qui appartient à l'esprit du système et à ses tendances fondamentales, une thèse que la tradition antique ou moderne ... considère généralement comme stoïcienne, parce qu'elle porte le *label* de l'École. Quel qu'en soit l'inventeur ou le dépositaire, les stoïciens en ont pris le brevet." Michel Spanneut, *Permanence du Stoïcisme: De Zénon à Malraux* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1973), 103. In light of this description, Spanneut explains how Stoic theses (we could consider the unity of the virtues or the identification between the good [*agathon*] and the beautiful [*kalon*] which gives rise to the concept of the *honestum*, or the attitude towards external goods) were received in the Middle Ages: Cicero's *De Officiis* was passed on to the Middle Ages through St. Ambrose's *De officiis ministrorum*; on the other hand, Seneca is also well known in the Middle Ages both directly (*De providentia*, *De ira*, *De clementia*, *Letters to Lucilius*) and through collections of selected quotations (*Florilegium morale*, *Flores omnium doctorum*); the third channel of Stoic influence is the *Moralium dogma philosophorum* also known as *Moralis philosophia de honesto et utili* by William of Conches (XIIth century). This book is an adaptation of the *De Officiis* which played a similar role to St. Ambrose's *De officiis ministrorum*. Cf. Spanneut, 57-73, 112-18 and 179-208. I am indebted to Mary Beth Ingham for informing me of Spanneut's monograph.

⁷⁰ Kent (1995), "Aristotle among the Christians," 39-93.

tion whether Scotus's interpretation of Aristotle goes beyond what the Stagirite's text would allow for.

Regarding this last point there are at least two serious difficulties. The first has to do with the problem of the interpretation of Aristotle's work. As Gauthier⁷¹ has described, there are at least two kinds of approaches to Aristotle's works, namely, systematic and genetic. Systematic exegesis is the most frequent approach in medieval commentaries, while genetic analysis is far more common among post-Jaegerian modern scholars. Each approach takes a different attitude towards the consistency of the Aristotelian *corpus*. While the medieval interpreters usually consider the whole work of Aristotle as a single block of doctrine, the genetic approach emphasizes the differences, and even inconsistencies, between Aristotle's ethics and his psychology, or between his ethics and his metaphysics.

The second problem concerns the concept of will in Aristotle. The mere fact of asking whether Scotus appears in favor of or opposed to Aristotle's teaching in his explanation of the dual dimension of the will (*ut natura et ut voluntas*) seems to suggest that Aristotle had a doctrine of the will, which is a point of controversy in the interpretation of the Stagirite's thought.

I do not aim to resolve these controversies, whose extent greatly exceeds the bounds of this article.⁷² Still, I think that the question can be answered if one limits oneself to: (1) the Aristotelian explanation of the voluntary act, without addressing the issue of the existence of a power such as the will; (2) the texts in which Scotus explicitly interprets the key terms used by Aristotle. In any case, my aim in this section is not to offer new insights into Aristotle, but merely to

⁷¹ Cf. René Gauthier, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque, I: Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Louvain-Paris: Publications Universitaires-Beatrice Nauwelaerts, 1970), 5-61 and *La morale d'Aristote*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973), 5-24.

⁷² I basically agree with Wolter's position on this topic: "But neither is [Aristotle] talking about the will as potency, active or passive. For while much that he says allows one to infer something about the nature of the rational appetite and the originative source of *prohairesis* or election, he never speaks of the will as a potency in so many words." Wolter (1990), 179.

provide a basis for comparison with Scotus's teachings. I will use the *Nicomachean Ethics* as my textual basis for explaining Aristotle's approach.

3. Do the Aristotelian texts allow for some reconstruction of the distinction between voluntas ut natura and voluntas ut voluntas?

The distinction between the voluntary (*hekousion*) and choice (*prohairesis*) provides several keys for answering this question. Aristotle defines what he understands by voluntary and involuntary in chapter one of book three of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. As is well known, he provides two traits which permit one to distinguish voluntary from involuntary action: that the action result from a principle interior to the agent and that there be knowledge.⁷³ The first trait should be understood as opposed to the defining note of the involuntary: that of being a coerced action in which the agent contributes nothing on his own behalf.⁷⁴ The interior principle is not precisely defined in the texts here referred to, but it should be understood in the general terms of movement, inclination, or appetite for action. The second trait is the absence of ignorance; however, Aristotle notes that not just any ignorance entails involuntariness of the act, but only ignorance of the particular circumstances.⁷⁵

⁷³ "The voluntary would seem to be that of which the moving principle is in the agent himself, he being aware of the particular circumstances of the action" (*NE*, 3, 1, 1111 a 20-25). David Ross, trans., *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 52.

⁷⁴ "Those things, then, are thought involuntary, which take place by force or owing to ignorance; and that is compulsory of which the moving principle is outside, being a principle in which nothing is contributed by the person who acts – or rather, is acted upon, e.g. if he were to be carried somewhere by wind or by men who had him in their power" (*NE*, 3, 1, 1110 a 1-5). Ross (1990), 48. "The forced, then, seems to be that whose moving principle is outside, the person forced contributing nothing" (*NE*, 3, 1, 1110 b 1-5). Ross (1990), 50.

⁷⁵ "But the term 'involuntary' tends to be used not if a man is ignorant of what is to his advantage – for it is not mistaken purpose that makes an action involuntary (it makes men wicked), nor ignorance of the universal (for that men are blamed), but ignorance of particulars, i.e. of the circum-

When Aristotle discusses the case of actions carried out under threat, or due to overwhelming fear, he is inclined to think that they are voluntary since the principle of their fulfillment is in the individual himself. There is no exterior force endowed with the power to execute an action; rather, something within moves the members which act as instruments. (For example, fear is a passion which responds to an appetite, and cannot be compared to a coercive exterior force like being moved by a gust of wind.) Still, Aristotle grants that, abstractly considered, these actions are involuntary in a certain sense since no one chooses such actions for their own sake.⁷⁶ Apparently Aristotle wishes to stress that acting when moved by appetite (whether irascible or concupiscible) does not absolutely destroy the voluntariness of the acts; such appetites are precisely interior principles of action. In this context, it is interesting to see him add that, if this were not so (if acts proceeding from the appetites were involuntary), neither the actions of children nor those of lesser animals would be voluntary, and yet they are.⁷⁷ This statement clearly indicates that the term “voluntary” has a broader meaning in Aristotle than as used in modern languages. Indeed, it is not linked to the idea of a faculty like the will in the sense in which we understand it, as a free faculty. Curiously, it appears more linked to what the medievals would call a *natural* movement (that is, one responding to one’s own inclination) than to their notion of a *voluntary* act (an act elicited or commanded by the will).

stances of the action and the object with which it is concerned” (*NE*, 3, 1, 1110 b 29-1111 a 1). Ross (1990), 51.

⁷⁶ “Both terms, then, ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary,’ must be used with reference to the moment of action. Now the man acts voluntarily; for the principle that moves the instrumental parts of the body in such actions is in him, and the things of which the moving principle is in a man himself are in his power to do or not to do. Such actions, therefore, are voluntary, but in the abstract perhaps involuntary; for no one would choose any such act in itself” (*NE*, 3, 1, 1110 a 14-20). Ross (1990), 49.

⁷⁷ “Presumably acts done by reason of anger or appetite are not rightly called involuntary. For in the first place, on that showing none of the other animals will act voluntarily, nor will children; and secondly, is it meant that we do not do voluntarily any of the acts that are due to appetite or anger, or that we do the noble acts voluntarily and the base acts involuntarily?” (*NE*, 3, 1, 1111 a 25). Ross (1990), 52.

Does this mean that Aristotle fails to establish any difference proper to specifically human behavior? Surely not. Yet he does so by means of a different notion: that of decision or choice (*prohairesis*). The texts on choice are found in book three, chapter two; relevant comments are also found in chapter two of book six, where Aristotle shows the difference between speculative and practical intellect. Choice is always voluntary but the two concepts are not identical, since the voluntary covers a broader range of meaning. There are voluntary acts that are not the result of choice; such is the case, precisely, in the action of children and the lower animals, as well as in acts carried out spontaneously under the impulse of passion.⁷⁸ What does choice add to the notion of the voluntary? *Logos* and *dianoia*.⁷⁹ Choice includes a rational principle of action which consists in a certain reasoning process to reach a practical conclusion. Therefore the *logos* involved in choice is not purely speculative; rather, reason in its practical part is involved. Thus, Aristotle defines choice as “desiderative reason” (*orektikos nous*) or as “ratiocinative desire”⁸⁰ (*orexis dianoetike*). The expressions point to a combination of intellectual knowledge and appetite. Aristotle sees that pure speculative reasoning does not move man, nor is it the cause of any action; only the reasoning that looks at an end and is thus accompanied by a tendency towards that end is the origin of moral action.⁸¹ Reasoning without desire is not prac-

⁷⁸ “Choice, then, seems to be voluntary, but not the same thing as the voluntary; the latter extends more widely. For both children and the lower animals share in voluntary action but not in choice, and acts done on the spur of the moment we describe as voluntary but not as chosen” (*NE*, 3, 2, 1111 b 5). Ross (1990), 53.

⁷⁹ “It [*prohairesis*/choice] seems to be voluntary, but not all that is voluntary seems to be an object of choice. Is it, then, what has been deliberated about before? At any rate choice involves a rational principle [*logos*] and thought [*dianoia*]. Even the name seems to suggest that it is what is chosen before other things” (*NE*, 3, 2, 1112 a 14-20). Ross (1990), 55.

⁸⁰ “Hence choice is either desiderative reason or ratiocinative desire and such an origin of action is a man” (*NE*, 6, 2, 1139 b 4-5). Ross (1990), 139.

⁸¹ “The origin of action—its efficient cause, not its final cause—is choice, and that of choice is desire [*orexis*] and reasoning [*logos*] with a view to an end. This is why choice cannot exist either without reason and intellect or without a moral state [*ethikes estin hexis*] for good action and its opposite

tical and desire without reasoning is blind; this is why the Stagirite speaks of desire together with deliberation as the origin of virtuous acts. In order for the choice to be good the reasoning must be true and the desire right, in such a way that desire follows the conclusion of reason.⁸² This last idea is of interest as it indicates that desire does not just move spontaneously, but is also capable of obeying reason.

This characteristic of human desire differentiates it from desire in lower animals. In them, desire is also an inner principle of actions which are, as has been seen, “voluntary” but not moral. In humans, on the other hand, desire can be called rational in a certain sense, insofar as it listens to and obeys reason; although it is not properly rational as intellect is. (Aristotle gives the example of the difference between being able to obey a father’s or friend’s counsel and being able to solve a math problem.) This type of rationality does not occur in the vegetative part of the soul (which is not even capable of this “diminished” rationality) but in the appetitive part.⁸³ One must take into account that both parts (i.e. vegetative and appetitive), unlike *nous*, belong to the irrational part of the soul. The empirical proof of this statement is that we praise or censure someone for actions that have appetite or desire as their principle (which indicates that in a certain sense it falls under one’s power to perform them or not), whereas we do not do so with the acts of the vegetative part (Aristotle refers to nutrition). Thus we can speak of continence or incon-

cannot exist without a combination of intellect and character [*ethous ouk esti*]. Intellect itself, however, moves nothing, but only the intellect which aims at an end and is practical” (*NE*, 6, 2, 1139 a 32-37). Ross (1990), 139.

⁸² “So that since moral virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, and choice is deliberate desire, therefore both the reasoning must be true and the desire right if the choice is to be good and the latter must pursue what the former asserts” (*NE*, 6, 2, 1139 a 22-25). Ross (1990), 139.

⁸³ “For the vegetative element in no way shares in a rational principle, but the appetitive and in general the desiring element in a sense shares in it, in so far as it listens to and obeys it; this is the sense in which we speak of ‘taking account’ of one’s father or one’s friends, not that in which we speak of ‘accounting’ for a mathematical property” (*NE*, 1, 13, 1102 b 30). Ross (1990), 27.

tinence in the first case, but not in the second.⁸⁴ However this implies including in action not only desire but also a rational principle of acting, namely, choice or *prohairesis*.

The final aspect relevant to choice is the description of its object. Aristotle addresses this when he establishes the difference between *prohairesis* [choice] and *boulesis* [wish]. He establishes three differences among them: (1) whereas choice cannot be referred to impossible things, *boulesis* can, as in desiring immortality; (2) whereas the object of *boulesis* can be things that are not at hand, choice refers only to what we can accomplish by our own efforts: for example, we can desire that an athlete win a competition but we cannot make this the object of our choice; (3) whereas *boulesis* refers to the end, choice refers to the means, for example, we desire health but we choose the acts that lead to it.⁸⁵

This last difference deserves more attention: why is it that choice cannot refer to ends? Choice is the conclusion of the process of deliberation. In deliberation, the intellect proceeds by way of a type of analysis, establishing (if such is the case) intermediate ends to reach the end pursued, and discovering by what means to attain them until reaching a “first

⁸⁴ “There seems to be another irrational element [in addition to nutrition] in the soul – one which in a sense, however, shares in a rational principle [*logos*]. For we praise the rational principle of the continent man and of the incontinent, and the part of their soul that has such a principle, since it urges them aright and towards the best objects.... Now even this seems to have a share in a rational principle, as we said; at any rate in the continent man it obeys the rational principle – and presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; for in them it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as the rational principle” (*NE*, 1, 13, 1102 b 12–30). Ross (1990), 26.

⁸⁵ “But neither is it [*prohairesis*/choice] wish [*boulesis*], though it seems near to it, [1] for choice cannot relate to impossibles, and if any one said he chose them he would be thought silly, but there may be a wish even for impossibles, e.g. for immortality. [2] And wish may relate to things that could in no way be brought about by one’s own efforts, e.g. that a particular actor or athlete should win in a competition, but no one chooses such things, but only the things that he thinks could be brought about by his own efforts. [3] Again, wish relates rather to the end, choice to the means; for instance, we wish to be healthy but we choose the acts which will make us healthy, and we wish to be happy and say we do but we cannot say we choose to be so; for in general choice seems to relate to the things that are in our own power” (*NE*, 3, 2, 1111 b 20–30). Ross (1990), 53–54.

cause,”⁸⁶ that is, which actions must be performed first as a means to achieving the ends in an orderly way until reaching the end pursued. Choice bears upon this first cause as well as the subsequent ones.⁸⁷ However, in the process of analysis in which deliberation consists, the ends pursued fulfill the same function as the principles in a deductive or demonstrative process. Ends cannot be the object of choice, just as principles are not the object of scientific knowledge. Ends, like principles in speculative knowledge, are what is presupposed: “We deliberate not about ends but about means,”⁸⁸ “the end cannot be subject of deliberation but only the means.”⁸⁹ The ends are the domain of desire (*orexis*) in general and of *boulesis* in particular: to the latter correspond the last end, happiness, and other particular ends. This is why choice, to be right, requires rectitude of desire, that is to say, virtue.⁹⁰ On the contrary, vice, by destroying this rectitude, corrupts practical reasoning because it corrupts its principles.⁹¹

In light of this description, the following question arises: does the process of deliberation and choice which is proper to practical reason have the same necessity as a demonstrative

⁸⁶ “Having set the end, they consider how and by what means it is to be attained; and if it seems to be produced by several means they consider by which it is most easily and best produced, while if it is achieved by one only they consider how it will be achieved by this and by what means *this* will be achieved, till they come to the first cause, which in the order of discovery is last.... And what is last in the order of discovery seems to be first in the order of becoming” (*NE*, 3, 3, 1112 b 15-25). Ross (1990), 56-57.

⁸⁷ “The object of choice being one of the things in our own power which is desired after deliberation, choice will be deliberate desire of things in our own power, for when we have reached a judgement as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation” (*NE*, 3, 3, 1113 a 10-12). Ross, 58.

⁸⁸ *NE*, 3, 3, 1112 b 12. Ross (1990), 56.

⁸⁹ *NE*, 3, 3, 1112 b 30. Ross (1990), 57.

⁹⁰ “The choice will not be right without practical wisdom any more than without virtue; for the one determines the end and the other makes us do the things that lead to the end” (*NE*, 6, 13, 1145 a 4-6). Ross (1990), 158.

⁹¹ “For in syllogisms which deal with acts to be done are things which involve a starting-point, viz. ‘since the end, i.e. what is best, is of such and such nature’, whatever it may be ... and this is not evident except to the good man; for wickedness perverts us and causes us to be deceived about the starting-points of action” (*NE*, 6, 12, 1144 a 30-35). Ross (1990), 156.

syllogism? Although Aristotle often speaks in a way which gives the impression that action necessarily follows upon a practical conclusion, one can affirm that it is not correct to put both processes entirely on the same level. Perhaps the most illuminating case of the degree of contingency in action is the analysis of incontinence (*akrasia*) which Aristotle undertakes in the first part of book seven. Both the virtuous and the vicious individual act in agreement with their reason, although the vicious individual does not conclude rightly, whereas the virtuous one possesses right reason. The case of incontinence, on the contrary, is one in which the individual works against the practical dictate of his reason,⁹² but without renouncing it in a certain sense.⁹³ The motive for acting thus is the passion or desire which inclines one in a way contrary to reason, though without corrupting reason. Thus the incontinent one's action is voluntary and his error is not due to ignorance.⁹⁴ Without going into an in-depth analysis of incontinence, the interesting point is that Aristotle grants a hiatus between reason's dictate and the performance of the action: the action is not always in agreement with reason. The person chooses something against the dictate of reason. Therefore there is no necessary connection between reason (*logos*) and choice (*prohairesis*). However, the element that

⁹² "Evidently, then, incontinence is not vice (though perhaps it is so in a qualified sense) for incontinence is contrary to choice while vice is in accordance with choice" (*NE*, 7, 8, 1151 a 6-7). Ross (1990), 178-179.

⁹³ "But there is a sort of man who is carried away as a result of passion and contrary to the right rule – a man whom passion masters so that he does not act according to the right rule, but does not master to the extent of making him ready to believe that he ought to pursue such pleasures without reserve; this is the incontinent man, who is better than the self-indulgent man, and not bad without qualification; for the best thing in him, the first principle [*arche*] is preserved" (*NE*, 7, 8, 1151 a 20-25). Ross (1990), 179.

⁹⁴ "He [the incontinent man] acts willingly (for he acts in a sense with knowledge both of what he does and of the end to which he does it), but is not wicked, since his purpose is good, so that he is half wicked" (*NE*, 7, 10, 1152 a 15-18). Ross (1990), 182. Aristotle distinguishes between knowledge in potency and in act, and between universal and particular knowledge, in order to determine what kind of knowledge is operative in the incontinent man's action: cf. *NE*, 7, 1-2.

introduces this hiatus is disordered desire and not something like the will's freedom.

Broadly speaking, can one say that the Aristotelian approach offers some basis for establishing the difference between *voluntas ut natura* and *voluntas ut voluntas* (or *ut ratio*)? My conclusions can be summarized in three points:

(1) One must say that none of the key terms employed by Aristotle (*orexis*, *boulesis* or *prohairesis*) can be considered as equivalent to the notion of will; thus, one cannot properly speak of the distinction between *voluntas ut natura* and *ut ratio* in Aristotle.

(2) The idea of a natural inclination towards one's own good and perfection is present in Aristotle when he distinguishes voluntary from involuntary action precisely by making the former in agreement with an interior principle in the agent. Such an interior principle belongs precisely to the domain of desire (*orexis*) whether as an irascible appetite, as a concupiscible appetite or as *boulesis*. Ends belong precisely to the desiderative or orectic realm. The idea of an inclination towards the end, when applied to moral action, is connected with the medieval notion (criticized by Scotus) of *voluntas ut natura* as the will referred to the last end. Although, I repeat, one cannot speak of a will in Aristotle nor, therefore, of a natural will.⁹⁵

(3) The notion of *prohairesis* could be connected with (but not at all made equivalent to) the notion of *voluntas ut ratio* which Scotus criticizes, most of all insofar as it refers to the capacity of the choice of means by a previous deliberation. This notion, on the other hand, seems to be the distinctive note of human action (action which can be qualified as moral) as opposed to the actions of children or lower animals, or those that humans carry out under the impulse of appetite. It follows that in the case of humans, since reason forms part of this interior principle of acts, Aristotle defines *prohairesis* as desiring intellect (*orektikos nous*) or deliberate desire

⁹⁵ The passage that best supports Scotus's interpretation of *prohairesis* is not in the *Nicomachean Ethics* but in *Metaphysics* 9, 5. In this text Aristotle considers choice (*prohairesis*) as the key element in explaining how a rational power inclines for one of two opposites (cf. *Metaphysics* 9, 5, 1048 a 5-15).

(*orexis dianoetike*). Insofar as it defines what is specific to human action, this notion is interpreted by Scotus in a sense similar to his notion of free will.

4. Scotus's interpretation of Aristotle

There is considerable agreement among scholars regarding the deep connection between Scotus's doctrine of will and his predecessors' teachings on the topic. However, while some of them consider that Scotus differs from them in accepting Aristotle's authority⁹⁶, others consider that the anti-Aristotelian attitude of masters of theology at Paris after 1277 condemnation has been notably exaggerated.⁹⁷ I will not discuss this historical point.

The thesis I wish to uphold is that, on this point of his doctrine, Duns Scotus, by identifying the term "*prohairesis*" with the rational power and the rational power with free will, goes beyond the meaning assigned to this term by Aristotle, and leaves intellect on the side of nature. An in-depth treatment of this last assertion would require a detailed analysis of question 15 of book 9 of the *Commentary on the Metaphysics*.

⁹⁶ "As Stadter pointed out in his interesting historical study of the notion of the will in the 'middle Franciscan school' during the last quarter of the thirteenth century, Scotus's teaching about the will owes much to his predecessors. But while most of them regarded their views as anti-Aristotelian or neo-Augustinian, Scotus – especially in his questions on the *Metaphysics* – advances his as an authentic interpretation of the Philosopher himself." Wolter (1990), 178.

⁹⁷ "By this point it should be evident that philosophical developments in the late thirteenth century were more complicated and interesting, though perhaps less dramatic, than historical scholars have often made them appear. The Thomistic synthesis was not undone by *Augustinian* theologians who reacted violently against Aristotle's growing influence, pitted Augustine's authority against Aristotle's, and demanded that their contemporaries prove their loyalties. Most of the so-called Augustinians were themselves attempting a synthesis of Augustine's teachings and Aristotle's. Far from calling attention to conflicts between the greatest philosopher and the greatest Church Father, they tended to claim Aristotle's authority for their own views, working to reconcile his teachings with those of Augustine and other Christian authorities but warping his meaning in the process." Kent (1995), 246.

ics. I have undertaken such an analysis elsewhere,⁹⁸ so I will only refer to several passages from that text. I will limit my comments to a defense of the thesis just stated. I will comment on passages from the *Ordinatio* where Scotus interprets Aristotle's terminology either directly or indirectly, particularly the term "*prohairesis*."

The first passage of interest is found in the question dedicated to the discussion of whether something distinct from the will can effectively cause the act of volition in the will.⁹⁹ Having put forth and refuted various opinions, he states his solution: the will determines itself; nothing exterior to it is the total cause of its act. Thus, its act is contingent. He then deals with an objection based on the authority of Aristotle, namely, that intellect determines the will. Scotus replies that intellect works in the most natural way; it cannot be what determines the will since in that case the will would not be free. The objection then points out that intellect does not work in a natural way since the Philosopher contrasts precisely nature and intellect. In reply, Scotus makes a relevant distinction:

I reply that intellect can be understood either insofar as it is a certain operative power, or insofar as intellect and will are a principle and concur with respect to the practical things which are produced exteriorly by intellect and will. The Philosopher speaks little of intellect in the first sense, but in the second sense he speaks of the rational power very frequently, throughout almost the whole text of the *Ethics* as well as in book 9 of the *Metaphysics*, book 3 of the *de Anima*, and book 2 of the *Physics*. In this way, what acts by intellect is distinguished from what acts by nature.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ See note 37 above. See also Cruz González-Ayesta, *Naturaleza y voluntad* (Pamplona: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2007).

⁹⁹ This question is not discussed in the *Ordinatio* (the Vatican critical edition considers distinctions 15-25 of book II to be interpolations), but rather in the *Lectura* and in the *Reportata Parisiensis*.

¹⁰⁰ *Dico quod intellectus potest accipi secundum quod est quaedam potentia operativa, vel secundum quod intellectus et voluntas sunt princip-*

Insofar as it is an operative power distinct from the will, intellect operates *per modum naturae*. However, one can also take "intellect" in another sense, namely as a practical power with respect to the operable. If it is taken in this second sense, nature and intellect are contrasted with each other. Scotus specifically points out that Aristotle is speaking of intellect in this second sense "throughout the whole text of the *Ethics*." It is not difficult to imagine the terms Scotus has in mind: art, choice (*prohairesis*), and appetite.

Another text from book IV of the *Ordinatio* discusses which power is higher, intellect or will. The objection posits the superiority of intellect over will based on the Aristotelian assertion that the most noble habit is wisdom; since wisdom is an intellectual habit, the power which serves as its subject (namely, intellect) will be nobler. Scotus replies as follows:

One could speak otherwise, saying that the Philosopher did not generally distinguish intellect from will by the notion of an operative principle without reference to external action; whence he considers this principle as distinguished from nature to be one and the same thing, though he sometimes calls it art or intellect and sometimes calls it purpose. Nor does he do this in the case of internal operation with respect to the end, whence he does not distinguish the speculation of wisdom from love. Rather, that speculation includes love; or at least he does not assert that intellection can be insufficient without volition, because he neither affirms nor denies that it is distinct from another act that is less manifest.¹⁰¹

ium concurrentia respectu practicabilium, quae extrinsecus producuntur per intellectum et voluntatem. Primo modo parum loquitur Philosophus de intellectu, sed secundo modo multum frequenter fere per totum librum Ethicorum et 9 Metaphysicorum et 3 de Anima et 2 de Physic. de potentia rationali; et isto modo agens per intellectum distinguitur contra agens per naturam (Reportata Parisiensa, II, d. 25, q. un, n. 20; Vivès XXIII).

¹⁰¹ *Posset aliter dici, quod Philosophus communiter non distinxit intellectum a voluntate in ratione principii operativi, sine operatione ad extra; unde pro eodem habet principium distinctum contra naturam, nunc vocat artem vel intellectum, nunc propositum. Similiter neque in operatione ad intra respectu finis, unde et illa speculationem sapientiae non distinguit a*

The interesting point is the assertion that Aristotle does not distinguish intellect and will as operative principles; according to Scotus, he indistinctly refers to the operative principle which is contrasted with nature as art, intellect or purpose (*prohairesis*). Indeed, one can say that Scotus reads the term *prohairesis* as indicating a “rational power” insofar as it is contrasted with nature.¹⁰² According to the two texts that have been quoted, one should not understand “rational power” to be the intellect but rather the practical power with respect to the operable, the will.

There is yet a third text, in this case in from the *Quodlibetum*, which makes a similar point. Scotus contrasts two triads of concepts which parallel each other: “not on purpose,” “by nature,” and “irrational power” can be placed under the title “nature,” whereas their opposites correspond with another kind of active principle in which intellect and will concur. This active principle always acts freely (as opposed to naturally as in the case of the other active principle). Thus acting “on purpose” is acting as a free cause, *per modum voluntatis*:

By the three expressions: “not by deliberate intention,” “by nature” and “irrational potency,” Aristotle understands the active principle we commonly call “nature.” By the other three expressions [viz., “by deliberate intention,” “as a result of thought,” and “rational potency”] he understands the active principle in which intellect and will concur with regard to an extrinsic act. But each of these two potencies, taken in itself, has its own way of functioning as a principle. The intellect does so by way of nature [*per modum naturae*]. Hence, in relation to its own act it is *nature*.... The will, on the other hand, always functions

dilectione, sed magis speculatio illa includit dilectionem, vel saltem non asserit intellectionem non posse sufficere sine volitione, quia ut distinguitur de altero actu, qui est minus manifestus, nec affirmat nec negat (Ordinatio, IV, d. 49, q. 4 ex latere, n. 15; Vivès XXI).

¹⁰² [*Causa*] *efficiens enim dividitur in efficiens per intellectum sive propositum, et in efficiens per naturam, secundum Philosophum II Physicorum (Ordinatio, I, d. 36, q. un., n. 5).*

in its own peculiar way, viz., freely. That is why when it concurs with the intellect, as in the production of artifacts, the whole effect is said to be produced freely and intentionally or with deliberation, since the intention is the superior and immediate principle of the extrinsic production.¹⁰³

The identification of the rational power (*prohairesis*) with the will is made clearer if one takes into account the assertion, often repeated by Scotus, that there are two kinds of operative principles: nature and will. This passage from the *Ordinatio* can serve as an example:

Productive principles which do not imply perfection in themselves are reduced to one perfect thing, or to as few perfect things as they can be reduced. But they cannot all be reduced to one productive or active principle because that one principle would have the determinate mode of acting of one of these, namely nature or will, since there is no mean between these two modes of production. Therefore they cannot be reduced to greater than a duality of principles, namely to those that are productive by way of nature and by way of will.¹⁰⁴

Indeed if, as we have seen, the contrast between *prohairesis* and nature is that of two different and irreducible modes of efficient causality, and this same contrast is established not only between nature and intellect (as Aristotle views it)

¹⁰³ *Quodlibet*, q. 16, n. 13. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter, trans., *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions* (Princeton-London: Princeton University Press, 1975), 383-84.

¹⁰⁴ *Principia productiva ex quo non dicunt de se imperfectionem, reducuntur ad aliquid unum perfectum, vel ad aliqua perfecta in tanta paucitate ad quamtam possunt reduci; non possunt autem omnia reduci ad unum principium –productivum, vel activum– quia illud unicum haberet modum determinatum agendi alterius istorum, scilicet naturae vel voluntatis, quia inter modos istos producendi non est aliquis modus medius; ergo non possunt haec reduci ad maiorem paucitatem quam ad dualitatem principii scilicet productivi per modum naturae, et per modum voluntatis* (*Ordinatio*, I, d. 10, q. un., n. 8).

but also between nature and will (as on Scotus's account), then it is clear that Scotus interprets the Aristotelian term *prohairesis* as being placed on the side of the will and the will as being the only rational power, while intellect (insofar as it is distinct from will) is placed on the side of the principles that work *per modum naturae*. However, Scotus does observe that in Aristotle there is no treatment of the will as a faculty:

Hence Aristotle says: "I call this desire or proharesis," i.e., choice. But he does not call it "will," that is to say, a potency. And so if intellect is called "rational potency," the aforesaid distinction [between rational and non rational] must be understood in the way explained above. For the distinction is not applicable to the intellect's own acts nor insofar as the intellect concurs with the acts of subordinate powers precisely by means of its own act, for in both these ways it falls under the heading of "nature." Nevertheless it falls under the other heading [i.e., of "will"] insofar as through its act it is presupposed for acts of the will.¹⁰⁵

A confirmation of the thesis that the will is the only rational power can be found in the fact that, for Scotus, "obeying reason" means "obeying will's command." In this sense a text from book III of the *Ordinatio* is of interest. The text is found in a discussion on whether the moral virtues reside in the will or in the sensitive appetite. In this passage Scotus distinguishes two senses of the term "rational": one *stricte et primo*, the other *simpliciter*. In the first sense, the intellect alone is rational; in the second, the will is rational. In a derivative sense the sensitive appetites are also rational:

Thus it seems we can infer expressly from his own words that he sometimes speaks of the will as able to

¹⁰⁵ *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, IX, q. 15, n. 40. Girard J. Etzkorn and Allan B. Wolter, trans., *Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle by John Duns Scotus*, II (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1998), 613.

obey reason, whereas at other times he speaks of the sense appetite as such, as at the end of the first book. Now, just as he takes "able to obey reason" in a twofold sense, so he also gives "rational" a twofold meaning. One sense is strict and primary, and refers only to the intellect; the other is neither strict nor primary but is still properly called "rational" in an unqualified sense, and this is applicable to the will. The third sense, however, is not proper, but is taken broadly as referring to the sense appetite. Hence, the will, which is in the middle, is at times called "rational" in comparison to one of the extremes [the irrational appetite], and at other times called "able to obey reason" in comparison to the other extreme [or the intellect]. For taking reason strictly, it is "persuadable by reason," whereas taking "reason" not properly but broadly as anything pertaining to the mind, the will is rational. The sensitive appetite is not only persuadable but able to obey, and one could well ponder these words, for what is truly free is persuadable, but the sense appetite is not properly persuadable, but is able to obey because it is subject to the command of the will.¹⁰⁶

According to what is here stated, the will is rational in comparison with the strict sense of the term insofar as it can be persuaded by reason. (It can only be persuaded since it always keeps its capacity of self-determination). On the other hand, in comparison with the second sense, it is rational *simpliciter*; taking into account what has been said about intellect as a natural power, one could say that it is *the* rational power. As for the appetites, they are rational not by their relationship to intellect but rather, as is interesting to note, by their relationship to will. Indeed, it is significant that Scotus interprets the Aristotelian idea that the sensitive appetites are somehow rational, insofar as they obey reason, in the sense that they "obey will's command." Obeying reason is obeying the will, given that the will is *the* rational potency.

¹⁰⁶ *Ordinatio*, III, d. 33, q. un., n. 17. Wolter (1986), 325.

One can now state three conclusions in reply to the questions asked at the beginning of this article:

(1) Scotus rejects the interpretation of the natural will (or *voluntas ut natura*) as the will referred to the last end or highest good, insofar as he considers that such an interpretation would destroy the will's proper mode of causality which is free or contingent. Still, Scotus has a concept of the natural will which is related to his notion of *affectio commodi* and which should be understood as the inclination to one's own perfection or good which the will possesses insofar as it is an intellectual appetite.

(2) Scotus considers that *voluntas ut voluntas* is not the will that refers to the means, but rather the will as free; that is to say, as a faculty that is open to contraries and capable of directing itself so as to elicit its own act. Such a property also remains in the will when its object is the last end or highest good, since that is what intrinsically defines it. This capacity is related to the other affection of the will, namely, the *affectio iustitiae*, insofar as this affection frees the will from its natural (and necessary) inclination towards what is most advantageous.

(3) Aristotle does not teach that the will is a faculty, nor, consequently, that there is a distinction between the natural will and the will as such. Nonetheless, the notions of *orexis*, *boulesis* and *prohairesis* point towards the distinction, criticized by Scotus, between the will referred to the end and referred to the means. Scotus interprets Aristotle, and especially the term "*prohairesis*," in a sense that transcends Aristotle's text, thus concluding that the will is the only rational power. In a certain sense, he identifies Aristotelian *prohairesis* with this rational power.

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