

Scotus on the Will :
The Rational Power and the Dual Affections¹
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John Duns Scotus believes it to be undeniably true that we human beings have free will. He does not argue for our freedom but rather explains it. There are two elements which are both characteristic of and essential to Scotus' account of human will: namely, 1) the will as a self-determining power for opposites, thus a 'rational' power; and 2) the 'dual affections of the will.'² The significance of each element taken separately is comprehensible if not obvious. We are puzzled, however, when we attempt to ascertain the relation between the two. This paper is an attempt to reach an adequate understanding of this relation.

My attempt will build upon existing interpretations. John Boler's interpretation, in particular, will be the focus of my attention. In his illuminating article "Transcending the Natural: Duns Scotus on the Two Affections of the Will,"³ Boler argues that "there are good reasons to keep the theory of dual *affectiones* distinct from the claim of superabundant sufficiency." (Boler, 115) Two key tenets of his approach, I take it, are the following:

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² Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Sent.* III d.26 n.17, *Opera omnia* XV (Paris 1893) 340. Almost all the references I make to Scotus and their translations are found in Allan B. Wolter's *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986).

- 1) we ought to distinguish and keep separate two notions (or accounts) of freedom in Scotus: the metaphysical and the moral;
- 2) while the self-determining power for opposites is to be associated with the former, the dual affections should be associated with the latter.

It is Boler's distinction of the two notions of freedom that I wish to question. More deeply, it is Boler's suggestion that there is no close connection between the self-determining power for opposites and the dual affections that I wish to examine. My main reason for questioning this suggestion is that it appears to imply that metaphysical freedom is possible without moral freedom, and this possibility troubles me. I will first attempt to show how Boler's interpretation gives rise to such a possibility. Then I will raise questions concerning this possibility with the purpose of exposing its problematic character. Such problems, I hope, will provide us with reasons both to doubt the distinction of freedoms itself and to entertain the possibility of there being a stronger tie between the rational power and the dual affections. I will ask three kinds of questions.

- First, does this possibility fit well with the text?
- Second, would the ensuing notion of morality would be acceptable to Scotus?
- Third, do we need such a distinction?

Ultimately, I wish to argue that Scotus has a single conception of freedom and the two elements in question account for this single notion of freedom in different ways. Moreover, I will suggest that for Scotus superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections are inseparably connected in that one is not possible without the other. Let us begin with a preliminary sketch of the two elements.

³ John Boler, "Transcending the Natural: Duns Scotus on the Two Affections of the Will," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 67 (1993) 109-126. Hereafter abbreviated as Boler, followed by page

I. Preliminary Sketch

A. The Will as Rational Power: Self-Determining Power for Opposites

As Allan Wolter points out, the will for Scotus is the only rational power.⁴ Scotus seems to agree that such a view calls for an explanation, since he is aware that the description of will as rational, let alone as the only rational power, appears to go against the views of Aristotle.⁵ Whether or not this view of the will is actually contrary to Aristotle and whether Scotus successfully reconciles his view with Aristotle's are questions which do not concern this paper. What concerns us is that in the course of his explanation Scotus observes a distinction between active potencies and, based on such a distinction, identifies the will as the 'rational' potency, due to its self-determining power for opposites.

Following the general Aristotelian scheme, 'potencies' or 'powers' should probably be understood as "inclinations or tendencies to affect or be affected by objects of a certain kind."⁶ A further feature of the scheme that most devoted Aristotelians would be compelled to accommodate was Aristotle's distinction between rational and nonrational potencies:

Every potency with reason is capable of causing both contraries, but every nonrational potency can cause only one. For example, heat can cause only

number.

⁴ Allan Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Will as a Rational Potency," in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, ed. Marilyn Adams (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 163-80.

⁵ Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in Metaph. Arist.* q. 15 n.1-14, *Opera omnia* VII (Paris, 1893) 606-617, Wolter 144-172.

⁶ Marilyn Adams, "Dun Scotus on the Will as Rational Power," in *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti*, ed. Leonardo Sileo. (Roma: PAA-Edizioni Antonianum, 1995) 840.

heating, but the medical art can cause sickness as well as health.⁷

While adhering to this general picture, Scotus held that the real division in active potencies was between what he terms ‘nature’ and ‘will.’⁸ According to Scotus, this primary distinction stems from the radically different way in which they elicit their respective operations:

For either (1) the potency of itself is determined to act, so that so far as itself is concerned, it cannot fail to act when not impeded from without; or (2) it is not of itself so determined, but can perform either this act or its opposite, or can either act or not act at all. The potency of the first sort is commonly called ‘nature,’ whereas one of the second sort is called ‘will.’ Hence, the primary division of active potencies is into nature and will.⁹

The contrast is clear. Agents that do not possess this ‘will’ cannot help but act toward the presented object of inclination. For those with will, however, eliciting acts is not inevitable. Even when all conditions hold, they can still refrain from acting. Thus the will in its indeterminacy and capacity not to act is characterized as a rational power, i.e. a power capable of causing opposites. This characterization, however, raises the following question: what reduces such a potency to act, if it is of itself undetermined in regard to acting or not acting?¹⁰ How can it be a *self-determining* power for opposites?

To this question Scotus responds by presenting a positive notion of indeterminacy, one which he calls an indeterminacy of ‘superabundant sufficiency’ (*superabundantis*

⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.2.1046b1-4.

⁸ Note that this claim does not originate from Scotus. As seen in the quotation, it is called ‘common.’ See, for example, Richard Rufus’ exposition of Aristotle’s *Physics* 2.4.196b23 in Rufus, *In Phys.* II, Erfurt Q.312 f.3ra: “Duo sunt principia, natura scilicet et voluntas.” I am indebted to Rega Wood for this point.

⁹ Scotus, *In Metaph.* q.15 n.4, VII: 609, Wolter 150.

¹⁰ Scotus, *In Metaph.* q.15 n.5, VII: 610, Wolter 152.

sufficiantiae / superabundantiae sufficiantia).¹¹ The more familiar form of indeterminacy is insufficiency, based on potentiality coupled with a defect of actuality, in the way that matter without form would be indeterminate as regards the actuation provided by form. However, there is another indeterminacy, that of superabundant sufficiency, which, based on unlimited actuality, can determine itself.

Thus, as “a power that is not exhaustively constituted by any tendency or tendencies towards objects,”¹² the will can determine itself with respect to opposites. And this power is due to the will having superabundant sufficiency.¹³

B. Dual Affections of the Will

Scotus, following Anselm, claims that the will has two affections. They are the affection for the advantageous (*affectio commodi*) and the affection for justice (*affectio iustitiae*). We read,

[Anselm] treats of these extensively in *The Fall of the Devil*, ch. 14, and *The Harmony of God's Foreknowledge, Grace and Predestination*, ch. 19. The affection for justice is nobler than the affection for the advantageous, understanding by “justice” not only acquired or infused justice, but also innate justice, which is the will's congenital liberty [*libertas ingenita*] by reason of which it is able to will some good not oriented to itself. According to the affection for what is advantageous, however, nothing can be willed save with reference to self. And this we would possess if only an intellectual appetite with

¹¹ Scotus, *In Metaph.* q.15 n.5, VII: 610, Wolter 152-4.

¹² Adams 1995, 842.

¹³ As some readers might have noticed, here I am taking the primary character of the will to be the ability not to act even when the conditions for action are met. In doing so, it might be said that I leave the character of the will described as a potency to ‘perform either this act or its opposite’ unaccounted for. The main point would be that performing the opposite of an act is different from not acting at all. In other words, one might argue that my emphasis of the will as the power not to act does not capture all of the intuitions behind Scotus' understanding of the superabundant sufficiency of the will. My reply would be that though this might be a valid point in itself, it is not affect my argument against Boler's interpretation. For Boler too seems to think that the crucial point in voluntary self-movement is “the capacity of the will to refuse to act no matter what the antecedent conditions” rather than “the ability to choose between alternate courses of action” (Boler, 115).

no liberty followed upon intellectual knowledge, as sense appetite follows sense cognition.¹⁴

Scotus adds to this that,

[t]o 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.¹⁵

There are two obvious points that Scotus wishes to convey in this passage. First is that the will has two affections: one, the *affectio commodi* which inclines the will to pursue what is good insofar as they are ordered to the agent's own perfection (the desire of good as *bonum sibi*) ; the other, the *affectio iustitiae* which inclines the will to the intrinsic goodness of things for their own sake, apart from whether or not they are beneficial to the agent (the desire of good as *bonum in se*).¹⁶ The second point is that the *affectio iustitiae* is 'nobler' than the *affectio commodi* in that it can will some good not oriented to itself. What Scotus intends by nobility, is easier to understand in an example, the love of God. For the *affectio commodi* the love of God is due to God's being *our* greatest good, while for the *affectio iustitiae* the love of God results from God's being *the most perfect and adorable of objects*.

Scotus' claim that there is an *affectio iustitiae* in the will appears to have been motivated by the wish to resist explanations of morality couched in strictly eudaimonistic terms. This observation is shared by many interpreters, including Boler and I wish to

¹⁴ Scotus, *Sent.* III d.26 q.unica n.17, XV, 340-341, Wolter 178.

¹⁵ Scotus, *Sent.* III d.26 q.unica n.17, XV, 340-341, Wolter 178.

¹⁶ Adams 1995, 843.

make clear that I do not disagree with Boler on this point.

An ‘Aristotelian’ conception of natures appears to prescribe that all constitutive tendencies pursue individual or species advantage. Though Scotus accepts the general teleological scheme in which natural tendencies aim at one’s own perfection, he also seems to think that were these the only inclinations of the will, there would be no room for morality. Moral good or evil for Scotus consists in the ability of the human will to transcend one’s natural inclinations by appreciating things for their intrinsic worth.

II. John Boler’s Interpretation

The gist of John Boler’s interpretation is “to suggest the advantage of situating Scotus’ claims for the freedom at stake [i.e., congenital liberty, *libertas ingenita*] in the context of his beliefs about the character of morality itself rather than in the metaphysical or psychological presuppositions of moral agency.”(Boler, 110)

For this purpose, he distinguishes two senses of freedom within Scotus’ account: the metaphysical and the moral.¹⁷

‘Metaphysical’ freedom is identified with the will’s self-determining power for

¹⁷ It should be noted that in the paper itself Boler’s intentions are not clear as to whether he is suggesting there to be two ‘accounts’ of freedom in Scotus or two ‘freedoms.’ For instance, while on p. 113 Boler uses the phrase “this metaphysical account of free action,” on p. 116 we find the term “the ‘metaphysical’ freedom of the will.” Through correspondence, Boler has clarified his intention to have been to talk about two *accounts* of freedom rather than two separate *freedoms*. He agrees two freedoms could not have been what Scotus had in mind. He, however, acknowledges in the same correspondence that in the paper a careful distinction between a metaphysical *account* of freedom and a metaphysical *freedom* was not worked out and, moreover, hints at the possibility that his two ‘accounts’ collapse into two ‘freedoms’ or come dangerously close to it. In any event, as the questions I raise against Boler’s interpretation focus on his claim that superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections should be regarded as independent of each other, I do not believe the outcome of this matter will seriously affect my main argument. In other words, even if it turned out that one could successfully defend the view that there are two accounts of one

opposites. Boler states that “this metaphysical account of free action is expressed in Scotus’ claim that (only) the will has the ‘superabundant sufficiency’ necessary for free agency.” (Boler, 113) We are metaphysically free in the sense that we can refrain from following a natural tendency, and no tendency by itself determines us to act accordingly.

‘Moral’ freedom, on the other hand, consists in “the choice of going (or refusing to go) beyond considerations of “happiness” in favor of considerations of *justitia* or *bonum in se*.” (Boler, 125) If metaphysical freedom concerns our general power to choose whether to act or not act in face of natural tendency, moral freedom concerns a special kind of choice, one which overrides considerations of happiness with a view to the good in itself. Such choices, according to Boler, are what constitute the moral dimension for Scotus. This explains why Boler, in accounting for the relation between the two freedoms, suggests that though moral freedom might presuppose metaphysical freedom,¹⁸ they are distinct in that metaphysical freedom is prior to and independent of the dual affections of the will. Later I will focus on the significance of this independence.

Why does Boler think that the accounts concerning superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections should be regarded as two distinct accounts of freedom? His main intuition appears to be that whether the will has dual affections has no bearing on whether one is a voluntary agent with the self-determining power for opposites. We might first suspect that Scotus holds that an appetite must have more than one basic inclination in order to be metaphysically free, but Boler believes this can be misleading. Boler provides interesting reasons.

freedom in Scotus, insofar as it is held that superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections are mutually independent, I think that my main point will remain unaffected.

One main observation is that “the crucial condition for that interruption of the influence of natural causes at the point of voluntary self-movement is not the ability to choose between alternate course of action, but the capacity of the will to refuse to act no matter what the antecedent conditions”(Boler, 115). If voluntary agency consists in the ability to make such a refusal, he continues, there seems to be no reason why this would not be possible for a will with a single basic inclination. From this, he concludes that the dual affections are not necessary for metaphysical freedom.

There is another, perhaps more important observation: the dual affections are not sufficient for voluntary agency either. Boler invites us to envision a “schizophrenic” agent with two affections. Boler observes that

[this agent] would not always have to seek the *commodum* or always have to seek *iustitia*; but its actions could still follow unfreely (and “naturally”) from whatever *affectio* happened to be operative. (Boler, 115)

His idea seems to be that the mere fact that we have dual affections does not show us to be voluntary agents. If the affection for justice were to trigger us to perform just acts, these acts would not be any freer than those determined by the affection for advantage. We would be lacking the self-determining power of superabundant sufficiency. In fact, Boler seems to think that for us to be metaphysically free, we must not be subject to the natural causality of affections but rather be able to transcend all our affections, even that for justice.

III. Some Questions

¹⁸ See Boler 110, 115-116 and 125.

One implication of Boler's interpretation appears to be that an agent could be metaphysically free without being morally free. For if the dual affections are neither sufficient nor necessary for an agent to possess superabundant sufficiency, it would follow that the conditions for metaphysical freedom are independent from those for moral freedom. This would in turn imply that one could have superabundant sufficiency without possessing the dual affections. In fact, I take such a possibility to be one of the core ideas behind Boler's interpretation. With this implication in mind, let us turn to a key passage in Scotus' account of the dual affections.

In this passage, Scotus, following Anselm, invites us to envision a one-willed angel, as it were, which only has the *affectio commodi* while lacking the *affectio iustitiae*.

To the first of these [objections], I say to begin with that the *affectiones commodi* and *iustitiae* are not [distinct] from free will [and], as it were, added to it. Rather, the *affectio iustitiae* is, as it were, the ultimate difference. So that just as *man* is *living substance* and *animal*, although these are not properties of the essence but belong to the essential concept of *man* - so it is possible to conceive first of *appetite* and then of *intellective* and *cognitive* and yet not conceive of the *affectio commodi* and *iustitiae*. **And if there were an angel, who had a cognitive appetite apart from an *affectio iustitiae*, it would lack justice and it would not be a free appetite. Whence if [this intellective agent] were to lack an *affectio iustitiae*, it would thus naturally seek what is suited to the intellect, just as the sense appetite [seeks] what is suited to sense; nor would it be any more free than the sense appetite. Therefore, the *affectio iustitiae* is the ultimate specific difference of the free appetite.**¹⁹

It is clear that this one-willed Angel is not morally free. This is perhaps why Boler refers to it as the Amoral Angel. But is the Amoral Angel metaphysically free? Now as pointed out shortly before, I believe Boler's distinction between the two freedoms allows for the possibility of the Angel being metaphysically free while morally unfree.

¹⁹ Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Reportatio* II, d. 6 q. 2, n. 9, Opera omnia XXII (Paris 1893) 621. My emphasis. The translation is Boler's. See his "An Image for the Unity of Will in Duns Scotus," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 32 (1994) 30-31.

Moreover, there seem to be good reasons for Boler to think that an Amoral Angel might be metaphysically free.

Since Boler argues the dual affections are neither sufficient nor necessary for superabundant sufficiency and since metaphysical freedom is both prior to and independent from moral freedom, I take it that an agent's possessing both affections instead of only one would not render the agent metaphysically free, if it were not so already. Let me elaborate. Boler would agree that the Angel in question would be morally free if endowed with both affections. Now moral freedom is characterized as a special kind of self-determination, and as such, presupposes metaphysical freedom. This, combined with the fact that the conditions for metaphysical freedom are independent from those of moral freedom,²⁰ in turn, implies that one precondition of moral freedom is that the agent be metaphysically free regardless of whether it has both affections or not. In other words, if the Angel were not metaphysically free in the first place it could not be morally free when endowed with the dual affections.

There is a related reason why Boler might want to allow the Amoral Angel to be metaphysically free. If Boler were to argue to the contrary, namely, that the Angel is not metaphysically free, then it would be difficult to dismiss the observation that the possession of the dual affections does seem to have an effect on the status of metaphysical freedom within the agent. For, in this case, the dual affections would not only render the Angel morally free but also metaphysically free. This connection would prompt us to question whether the dual affections are not really necessary and sufficient for superabundant sufficiency.

Therefore, I believe that anyone endorsing the distinction and separation of the two freedoms would naturally be committed to the view that the Amoral Angel is, or at least, could be metaphysically free. In some sense, disallowing the possibility of the Angel being metaphysically free would jeopardize the independence of superabundant sufficiency from the dual affections. Now let us pursue the implications of the Angel being metaphysically free.

The first problem that emerges is textual. Scotus in the cited passage explicitly states that Amoral Angel's appetite is not free. As Scotus does not introduce different notions of freedom himself, it is not clear which of the two freedoms he has in mind. Presuming Boler's distinction to hold, suppose that Scotus had metaphysical freedom in mind in this passage. If so, he then would be directly contradicting the suggestion that the Angel is metaphysically free. And this would provide a reason to question the distinction between freedoms.

The alternative reading is that Scotus had moral freedom in mind in this passage. Unfortunately, this alternative appears no more promising, for it requires us to adopt a rather unnatural reading. Let us see why. Unless Scotus were using different notions of freedom back to back, the freedom in the next phrase '*nor would it be any more free than the sense appetite*' would also refer to moral freedom. But it seems extremely unlikely that Scotus would mention moral freedom in connection with sense appetite. In other words, if Scotus had moral freedom in mind, he would in effect be arguing that the Angel's appetite would not be any more *morally* free than sense appetite. But why would Scotus make such a comparison when it is evident that sense appetite is not even

²⁰ Thus, an agent's being morally free would not influence the status of the agent's metaphysical freedom.

metaphysically free?

The comparison might have been intended to show that the Angel's appetite is similar to sense appetite in that they are both metaphysically free but morally unfree. But this suggestion that Scotus took sense appetite to be metaphysically free is highly implausible. I think it is fairly evident that for Scotus sense appetite is not a self-determining power for opposites. I take it to be more natural and coherent to understand Scotus as using the example to show that the Angel's appetite would be determined by natural tendencies in just the way sense appetite is. To conclude, in whatever way it is understood, Scotus' usage of freedom in the Amoral Angel passage presents a problem for taking the Amoral Angel to be metaphysically free.

Now let us turn to my second point. I believe that if the one-willed Angel is metaphysically free, then it would be responsible for its actions since it is within the Angel's power to do otherwise. In other words, metaphysical freedom is sufficient for imputability. But, according to Boler, because the Angel does not possess the dual affections, its actions would not be morally good or bad but rather amoral.²¹

This, I take it, attributes to Scotus a peculiar understanding of morality - peculiar in the sense that the ability to do otherwise is not sufficient for morality even though it is sufficient for imputability. Going back to the one-willed Angel, Boler's Scotus would be committed to the view that the Angel is not morally responsible for its excessive self-love, even though it could have done otherwise, namely, refrain from self-love. Would Scotus have been comfortable with such a commitment? If imputability is not enough for

²¹ "It is not that in being able to do otherwise (i.e., in its superabundant sufficiency) the will makes it possible for the agent to act morally." (Boler, 123)

morality, what kind of morality does Boler have in mind for Scotus?²²

The following is what I presume to be Boler's position: for Scotus, the criterion for moral phenomena is fairly selective in that only the actions of a metaphysically free agent with a view to the *bonum in se* are to be classified as moral or immoral acts. But, if this is Scotus' view, it brings about the odd result that though the one-willed Angel would be imputable for all of its actions, its actions would be devoid of moral character.

These arguments are based on my suggestion that Boler's separation of the two elements commits him to the view that the Angel could be metaphysically free. It should be noted, however, that Boler never states nor suggests that the Angel is metaphysically free. Rather he points out that the Angel is "a natural rather than a voluntary agent: it has an intellectual appetite (because it has an intellectual nature), but it does not have a free appetite (i.e. a will)." (Boler 114) Therefore, it might seem unfair to charge that his interpretation commits him to a view which he fairly explicitly denies. In other words, Boler could respond by arguing he, too, does not think that the Angel is metaphysically free. His point would be that though there are two independent accounts of freedom in Scotus, there is only one freedom and, as Scotus states, the Angel is not free.

The problem with this response is that if Scotus did indeed take superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections to be independent of each other, there would be no good reason for him to deny the Angel superabundant sufficiency. For on what grounds could Scotus have ruled out the possibility that the Amoral Angel is metaphysically free?

²² It is important to remember that superabundant sufficiency is mainly regarded in this paper, and most probably in Boler's paper as well, as the power to refrain from the natural impulses and *not* the ability to choose alternatives. Therefore, I take it, insofar as an agent possesses superabundant sufficiency she is able to do otherwise and thus is imputable for her actions.

If, as Boler suggests, what it means for two accounts to be independent is that someone could hold one account without accepting another,²³ there is nothing inconsistent in Boler's Scotus taking up the view that freedom of the will is grounded in superabundant sufficiency while at the same time denying the dual affection theory. In other words, if the dual affections are irrelevant to whether an agent has superabundant sufficiency or not, there is no reason why Scotus should not think that the Angel is free despite its having only one affection.²⁴ On Boler's reading, if Scotus were denying the Angel superabundant sufficiency, he would be doing so without good reason. I do not think that Scotus can eliminate, in a non-arbitrary and consistent manner, the possibility of an Angel with only the *affectio commodi* possessing superabundant sufficiency, while at the same time claiming that the dual affections are neither necessary nor sufficient for superabundant sufficiency. By denying any strong connection between superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections, Boler's interpretation cannot explain why Scotus states the Angel not to be metaphysically free.

This brings us to the third and last question I wish to raise in regard to Boler's distinction. Do we really need such a distinction between two freedoms? The motivation behind the distinction, I believe, comes from the aforementioned intuition that affections can have no part in explaining the self-determining power of metaphysically free agents.

²³ This could be the basis for an argument as to why Boler's two accounts of freedom collapses or comes dangerously close to collapsing into two freedoms. If one endorsed a power like superabundant sufficiency while denying dual affections, one could argue that an agent is metaphysically free thus has metaphysical freedom while insisting she is not morally free thus lacking moral freedom.

²⁴ I am not suggesting that any one who bases the freedom of the will on superabundant sufficiency must at the same time hold a dual affection theory. The position that the two elements are independent is plausible in itself, for one could surely endorse some power like superabundant sufficiency while claiming there to be only one affection or perhaps even many. What I am objecting to is the view that Scotus took these two elements to be independent.

If one were to take this view, one would naturally think that the dual affections must be playing a distinct explanatory role within Scotus' account of the free will, a role different from that of superabundant sufficiency. Boler goes on to identify this role as that of explaining the moral character of our agency, and this explanation appears to fit well with the anti-eudaimonistic strand in Scotus.

As pointed out at the outset, I agree with Boler that Scotus wished to resist explaining morality in strictly eudaimonistic terms. And I also agree with Boler that morality for Scotus consists in an agent's having the dual affections. I do not, however, believe that we need to insist on the independent character of the two accounts of freedom to accommodate these key observations. In fact, the distinction between the two freedoms seems to cause more problems than it solves. If we can defuse the motivation for introducing such a distinction without spoiling the consensus that 1) Scotus wished to diverge from the eudaimonistic picture of morality and 2) he thought that positing dual affections justified the divergence, I believe we will be better off without the distinction. Therefore let us reflect on the motivation for the distinction between the two freedoms. Accordingly, I will begin to present some of my views on how we might interpret the relation between superabundant sufficiency and the dual affections.

IV. My Interpretation

The motivation for the distinction between the two freedoms, as mentioned earlier, is that affections cannot play a role in explaining superabundant sufficiency. We remember Boler's schizophrenic case. His main insight was that having multiple affections does not

imply that one has superabundant sufficiency any more than having one does. This observation taken in itself, I believe, is both penetrating and convincing. But what Boler takes to follow from this observation is misleading. Boler may have too hastily concluded that this insight also implies that for Scotus voluntary agency cannot consist in any affection whatsoever. This is the basis of my interpretation.

It is crucial that the dual affections specified by Scotus, are not both ‘generic’ affections on par with one another. Agents with the dual affections are not schizophrenic. As we remember, *affectio iustitiae* is the nobler affection and, by virtue of its being nobler, it is able to restrain the natural inclination for advantage (*affectio commodi*). The two affections are not of equal standing but are hierarchically ordered. Restraining *affectio commodi* with *affectio iustitiae* enables the agent to transcend the desire for his or her own good (*bonum sibi*), and this transcendence, I take it, not only constitutes the moral dimension for Scotus but also grounds the possibility of human freedom. In other words, I wish to suggest that Scotus thought the freedom expressed in our superabundant sufficiency consisted exclusively in the possibility of restraining of the *affectio commodi* with the *affectio iustitiae*.

As one might expect, this proposal has its origin in the view that the ability to do otherwise is enough to render an agent morally responsible. This view could be accommodated if for Scotus superabundant sufficiency is not understood as some general power but rather as a specific ability—namely, the ability to transcend the pursuit of one’s advantage.

Indeed, I believe this reading would enable us to attribute to Scotus a less peculiar understanding of morality, one in which the agent would be responsible for all its actions

insofar as the actions were a result of the agent's voluntary power. The range of free actions would in this case coincide with the range of moral phenomena. Superabundant sufficiency could be viewed as a description of the power the will possesses precisely when endowed with the dual affections of *commodi* and *iustitiae*.

How does this proposal relate to the one-willed Angel passage? I would argue that the Angel is not free in any sense, metaphysical or moral. For the Angel lacks the superabundant sufficiency needed for freedom and this defect be explained in terms of the absence of dual affections.

To this answer, an opponent of my reading might charge that my proposal has the bizarre and perhaps unacceptable consequence that the affection for justice is sufficient for morality. For, since the Angel in question does possess the affection for the advantageous, the absence of dual affections would in effect be reduced to the absence of *affectio iustitiae*. The opponent might go on to question whether actions merely triggered by the *affectio iustitiae* should be regarded as free. If the notion of superabundant sufficiency described by Scotus depicts the power within us to be self-determining, how could an agent merely acting out of the affection for justice be taken as self-determining? The opponent's main point would be that, if one merely had the affection for justice, one could will the just but this would be different from being just. To *be* just, in addition to having the affection for justice, one needs the power of self-determination, the ability to transcend one's affections.²⁵

²⁵Moreover, one could further question my reading by arguing that this interpretation goes against a central Aristotelian insight that praise and blame require voluntary action (See Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 3.5.11109b30-31). My basic response would be that, for Scotus, as seen in the quotation, the liberty innate to the will is the affection for justice. In other words, an action is voluntary when it is performed by an agent with the

I wish to suggest, however, it might be the opponent who is making the bizarre demand. Now according to my opponent's position, to *be* just, that is, to will the intrinsic good freely, not only must I have the desire for *bonum in se*, but I must also be able to overcome that affection for justice. But this means that we are faced with the paradoxical situation in which, to be just one must be able to overcome one's intrinsic desire for justice. Must we be able to transcend our desire for the ultimate good to be just? Is this demand coherent?

According to the interpretation I propose, Scotus does not believe the will loses its freedom by acting in accordance with its *affectio iustitiae*. Rather it is in acting in accordance with *affectio iustitiae* that the will is free. For Scotus, *affectio iustitiae* is the innate freedom of the will.²⁶ We read,

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.²⁷

In other words, I wish to argue that freedom for Scotus does not require the transcendence of all inclinations but rather the particular transcendence of our natural, generic inclination, namely, the *affectio commodi*. If the transcendence of *affectio*

affection for justice. I add that the claim that the affection for justice is capable of functioning as a restraint, of course, does not imply that it *always* restrains the affection for advantage appropriately. At times, the agent endowed with the dual affections pursues his or her advantage excessively and it is because such excessive pursuit of one's own good is possible that the agent's pursuit of the good in itself is praiseworthy.

²⁶ This would also be my response to the objection that my interpretation goes against the key Aristotelian insight that praise and blame require voluntary action (See Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* 3.5.11109b30-31).

²⁷ Scotus, *Sent.* II d.6 q.2 n.8, XII, 386, Wolter 468-470.

commodi is possible when our *affectio iustitiae* functions as a restraint, the will should follow its inclination for the just and not be able to transcend it. There appears to be a significant asymmetry in the possibility of transcendence with regard to the dual affections: while one must be able to transcend *affectio commodi*, one need not be able to transcend *affectio iustitiae*.

This interpretation is corroborated by the fact that it is difficult to find Scotus mentioning the ability to restrain the *affectio iustitiae*. If asked why he did not mention such a need, Scotus might reply, how could one love the good in itself excessively, especially if the object of love is God? Why would there be a need to restrain such a love?

One remaining question about my interpretation is whether it is compatible with the insight I shared with Boler, namely, the view that Scotus wished to resist a strictly eudaimonistic picture of morality. I see no reason why not. The freedom of human agents is explained in terms of the ability to transcend one's natural inclination, which happens to be the desire for one's advantage. My interpretation merely adds that this ability results from our having a nobler affection, an affection for the good in itself. Since all entities possess the natural tendency to seek their own advantage, in this respect we are no different from brutes or even inanimate objects. It is in respect of our having the affection for justice that we really stand apart from other creatures. This is perhaps why, as we recall, Scotus claims that "the *affectio iustitiae* is the ultimate specific difference of free appetite."²⁸

Of course, if the affection for justice is also deemed a 'natural' desire in that it is an

essential constituent of our will, my reading would disallow the possibility of transcending this *natural* inclination, namely, the affection for the good in itself. And this restriction might seem to go against the idea of superabundant sufficiency. But what do we lose from not being able to transcend the affection for the good in itself? Is this affection not a rare part of our nature which resembles the divine?

I will conclude with a brief summary of my interpretation. Freedom for Scotus, I have argued, is a single notion in the sense that the ability to do otherwise is sufficient for imputability and the range of imputable actions coincides with the range of moral phenomena. Moral acts are not in some special subset of free actions. Rather, all free actions have moral character. Why? Because the ability to transcend the affection for advantage through the affection for justice is precisely where the power of freedom has its source. In other words, it is not possible for there to be a free agent who lacks a view to the *bonum in se*. If superabundant sufficiency describes the power of human will to be self-determining, the dual affections are the characteristic desires of a free will that wields such a power. And with such power and freedom, comes moral responsibility.

²⁸ See Scotus, *Reportatio* II, d.6 q.2 n.9 as quoted above.