

*Freedom in Regard to Opposite Acts and Objects
in Scotus' Lectura I 39, §§ 45-54*

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In Duns Scotus' analysis of the notion of contingency in §§ 45-54 of *Lectura I 39* the distinction between freedom of the will in regard to opposite *acts* and freedom of the will in regard to opposite *objects* plays an important and fascinating role. The present article offers an analysis of this role.¹ Before the central issue of my contribution can be formulated, I have to sketch the context of discussion in *Lectura I 39*, §§ 45-54 which is a relatively independent, almost 'monographic' section within *Lectura I 39* as a whole.

1. *Lectura I 39, §§ 45-54*

Distinction I 39 of the *Lectura* discusses some questions concerning God's knowledge of contingent future things. In its central section Scotus observes that there is contingency in things (§§ 39-40) and asks: Where does it come from? His answer is: from God. What, then, in God is the cause of contingency in things? It cannot be God's intellect; it must be God's will (§§ 41-43). But how is the divine will the cause of contingency in things?

In order to understand this, Duns says, let us concentrate on the *human* will (§ 44). Thus, in §§ 45-52 Scotus gives an analysis of the human will and its freedom. Subsequently, he makes the transition to be expected (§§ 53-54) by explicating which structural elements of the will found in the analysis of the human will are also present in the divine will.

¹ Cf. *John Duns Scotus, Contingency and freedom. Lectura I 39*, introduction, translation and commentary by A. Vos Jaczn., H. Veldhuis, A. H. Looman-Graaskamp, E. Dekker and N. W. den Bok, Dordrecht/Boston/London 1994, commentary pp. 109-129, esp. 111, 113, 115, 123. For a short introduction to Duns' theory of synchronic contingency, see H. Veldhuis, *Duns Scotus' theory of synchronic contingency in Lectura I 39 and its theological implications*, in: L. Sileo (ed.), *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti. Atti del Congresso Scotistico Internazionale, Roma 9-11 marzo 1993*, Rome 1995, 571-6. Unfortunately, the diagrams used in this article were mixed up during the printing process. They appear correctly, however, in *Contingency and Freedom*, 24-6.

Scotus starts, in §§ 45-46, by stating that the human will is free in three respects: in regard to opposite *objects*, in regard to opposite *acts* and in regard to opposite *effects*. He immediately remarks that the third aspect, freedom in regard to opposite effects, is secondary. Most likely, he means that willing *effects* is willing objects *being actualized*—which is consecutive to willing the objects itself.² As is clear from § 53 (second sentence), Scotus considers this aspect of freedom to obtain for the divine will too, where it plays the same consecutive (and executive) role. Scotus confines himself to the two remaining aspects: the will's freedom in regard to opposite acts and objects.³

In § 47 Scotus proceeds by stating that from this threefold (or in fact twofold) freedom a twofold contingency and a twofold possibility follow⁴—namely, on the one hand, a contingency and a possibility which can be called diachronic (cf. § 48, first sentence, '*successive*') and, on the other hand, a contingency and a possibility which can be called synchronic (cf. § 50, first sentence, '*non est secundum quod voluntas habet actus successive, sed in eodem instanti*').

We are now able to sketch the main structure of §§ 45-54:

	The divine will cause of contingency in things: how?
§ 45	Studying the human will as cause of contingency in things:
§§ 45-46	(a) Freedom in regard to opposite objects and acts
§§ 47-52	(b) Twofold contingency and twofold possibility
§§ 53-54	Application of (a) and (b) to the divine will.

When we make a close-up of section (b), we can say that Duns successively discusses the four notions involved:

	contingency		possibility	
diachronic	§ 48	→	§ 48	→
synchronic	§§ 51-52	←	§§ 49-50	←

² The same thing can be said of willing or not-willing an effect: It can be reduced to willing or not-willing an object *being actualized*. Cf. E. Gilson's analysis of the internal relations between freedom in regard to opposite acts, objects and effects: '*si cette troisième forme de liberté ne se confond pas avec la première, elle en découle à travers la deuxième, car choisir entre des actes opposés est choisir entre des objets opposés, donc aussi produire des effets opposés. Ainsi, la libertas ad oppositos actus fonde la libertas ad opposita objecta et, par cette dernière, la libertas ad oppositos effectus*', in: *id.*, *Jean Duns Scot. Introduction à ses positions fondamentales*, Paris 1952, 586-7.

³ Willing opposite acts can be formalized as: sWp and s-Wp. Willing opposite objects: sWp and s-W-p. 's' is an individual constant, denoting a subject; 'W' is the operator for willing; 'p' is a constant for the object willed.

⁴ § 47, at the end: "... sed ex hoc quod habet libertatem ad actus oppositos, respectu obiectorum oppositorum consequitur duplex possibilitas et contingentia." To my mind (cf.

2. *Question of the Present Article*

The issue of the present article is Scotus' view on the two aspects of freedom as it can be derived from his analysis in §§ 45-54. How precisely are the notions of contingency and possibility connected with freedom in regard to opposite objects and opposite acts respectively? This connection seems problematic since we can make two observations.

(I) *Systematically*, there are four possible combinations of diachronic and synchronic contingency and possibility⁵ on the one hand and freedom in regard to opposite acts and opposite objects on the other hand⁶:

- (1) When the will at one moment wills something, it can at a later moment not-will that thing
- (2) When the will at one moment wills something, it can at a later moment will its opposite
- (3) When the will at one moment wills something, it can at the same moment not-will that thing
- (4) When the will at one moment wills something, it can at the same moment will its opposite

Scotus considers statements (1) and (2) applicable to the human will (§ 48), but not to the divine will (§ 53). For unlike the human will, the divine

Contingency and Freedom (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 113) 'ex ista libertate' (§ 47) refers to 'in ista totali libertate voluntatis' (§ 46), so to freedom in regard to opposite acts *and* freedom in regard to opposite objects (and even to effects), and not to freedom in regard to opposite objects only. Cf. also § 49: 'illa libertas voluntatis' is, again, both kinds of freedom.

⁵ Contingency and possibility are treated together for reasons of simplicity. Later in this section their respective meanings will be elucidated.

⁶ *Formalized*:

	diachrony	synchrony
freedom in regard to opposite acts	sW_{t_1p} & $Ms-W_{t_2p}$	sW_{t_1p} & $Ms-W_{t_1p}$
freedom in regard to opposite objects	sW_{t_1p} & MsW_{t_2-p}	$sW_{p_{t_1}}$ & MsW_{t_1-p}

In these formulas—unlike those used in *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), n. 46, 49-50, which are also used in some articles published by the *Research Group John Duns Scotus* sofar—in all four cases the time-index is connected with W. For an explanation of this connection, see below, section *Answering from Scotus' text*, especially n. 17ff.

We can see that all four possibilities shown in the scheme are possible (non-contradictory) indeed. In fact, if only the possibilities of the left column were possible and those of the right one were impossible, one can deduce that willing or not-willing p or -p at one moment (and hence at every single moment) must be necessary. In other words, diachronic contingency as such—whether that of various acts and objects or that of various objects grasped by one act (cf. n. 19)—cannot be but reduced to synchronic necessity if synchronic contingency is considered to be impossible. Scotus' analysis does not explicitly show this side of the coin; yet, it is very much at the back of his mind and it is most helpful in elucidating a more complete understanding of the impact of his analysis. Cf. *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), Introduction, p. 20f.

will can have only one act (for this reason it is immutable); therefore, for God's will there cannot be more than one moment.⁷ Statement (3) is most explicitly applied to the human will (§§ 51-52), and implicitly to the divine will (§ 54, see the example: 'nolle lapidem esse'). Statement (4) is explicitly applied to the divine will (§ 54); on its application to the human will Scotus is silent. I conclude that Duns most likely considers all four possibilities to be valid for the human will; for the divine will, however, he considers only (3) and (4) to be valid.

(II) *In the procedure of exposition* Scotus does *not* straightforwardly offer this—correct—systematic result of his analysis. The four possible combinations are subsequently introduced in a rather loose and somewhat indirect way. Initially (§ 48), freedom in regard to opposite acts is only connected with diachronic contingency and possibility. Yet, later on freedom in regard to opposite acts is also connected with synchronic contingency and possibility, for the human will (§ 51), and for the divine will (§ 54, this becomes clear in virtue of the *examples* of divine willing given by Scotus).⁸ Freedom in regard to opposite objects is not only related to diachronic (§ 47, human will), but also to synchronic contingency and possibility (§ 53, divine will). Moreover, during Scotus' analysis freedom in regard to opposite acts and freedom in regard to opposite objects alternate, whereas the rationale for these alternations is not clear.⁹

⁷ Scotus gives a reason for the human will's mutability: It is receptive ('receptiva', § 46). According to Wolter this qualification reflects the fact that the human will is *created*, 'for we are not only the cause of our volition, but the recipient of this immanent action as well'. See *Duns Scotus on the will and morality*, selected and translated with an introduction by Allan B. Wolter, Washington, D.C. 1986, 10.

⁸ See § 54: "voluntas divina unica volitione vult in aeternitate lapidem esse et potest in aeternitate velle lapidem non esse vel potest nolle lapidem esse." The divine will's freedom to opposite acts is illustrated by 'nolle lapidem esse'; its freedom to opposite objects is exemplified by 'velle lapidem non esse'.

⁹ A survey of the occurrences:

Freedom in regard to opposite acts	§ 46	human will
objects	§ 47 (beginning)	" "
acts & objects	§ 47	" "
objects ('via' . . . acts)	§ 48 (first sentence)	" "
acts	§ 48 (last sentence)	" "
acts	§ 50 and 51	" "
objects (and . . . acts)	§ 53 and 54	divine will

For § 48, cf. *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), commentary, 115: in the example of loving and hating Scotus seems to think of opposite acts instead of, as announced at the outset of § 48, opposite objects. For Scotus, however, loving something or hating something can be considered to be an object of the will. In general, 'objectum' in the 13th century is a term primarily derived from a linguistic context; a grammatical object can ontologically be an object *or* an act.

Is there an explanation for these alternations?¹⁰ It seems that Duns could have presented the four possible combinations in a less complicated way; so why does he present them in the way he does? Does he feel unsure about the right connection between contingency and possibility on the one hand and freedom in regard to opposite objects and acts on the other? Or has he discovered the fact that synchronic contingency and possibility can be connected with *both* aspects of freedom *during* his analysis?¹¹ Perhaps it is just a matter of exposition? Or may be there is still another explanation?

Before I can formulate my answer to these questions I need to clarify the central notions just mentioned as used by Scotus. What does he mean by the *contingency* of things? For Duns, something is contingent when it is factual but can be non-factual.¹² So the question 'What is the cause of contingency in things?' obviously asks 'What is the *cause* of the *factuality* of things that can be non-factual? *Diachronic* contingency means that when something is factual, it can be non-factual at a *later* time. *Synchronic* contingency means that when something is factual, it can be non-factual at the *same* time.¹³ Instead of 'something' we can write, for example, 'the will having an act' or 'the will having an object'.

¹⁰ Textual alternation not necessarily entails systematic shifts or switches in the discourse. The alternations and their possibly problematic nature are pointed out by W. A. Frank, *John Duns Scotus' Quodlibetal Teaching on the will* (Ph.D. dissertation) Washington, D.C. 1982, and by A. Vos, *Thomas en Duns over de goddelijke wil*, in: *Jaarboek van het werkgezelschap Thomas van Aquino* 1983, Utrecht 1983, 17-20. Cf. *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 109, 111 and 115.

¹¹ In this last case the text of *Lectura* I 39, §§ 45-54 would show the idea of synchronic contingency in *statu nascendi*. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that in his other works Scotus does not recur to the alternations between freedom in regard to opposite acts and opposite objects as advanced in *Lectura* I 39. One could interpret this by assuming that the 'final' view of the *Lectura* on this matter, most clearly emerging in § 54, appears to have become their startingpoint. Moreover, in texts earlier than the *Lectura* Duns even explicitly denies synchronic contingency; see *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 5f. As we shall see in section 3 below, my interpretation entails that synchronic contingency is indeed present in *Lectura* I 39 (and may be for the first time), but probably not 'in statu nascendi'.

¹² For contingency and factuality, see *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), Introduction, 29. In the *modern* notion of contingency factuality is *not* included.

¹³ See for instance § 50: "... in eodem instanti in quo voluntas habet unum actum volendi, in eodem et pro eodem potest habere oppositum actum volendi..." The terms 'diachronic' and 'synchronic' are coined by A. Vos, *On the philosophy of the young Duns Scotus. Some semantical and logical aspects*, in: E. P. Bos (ed.), *Mediaeval Semantics and Metaphysics. Studies dedicated to L.M. de Rijk, Ph.D. on the occasion of his 60th birthday*, Nijmegen 1985, 195-220. (The first time Vos proposed this terminology was in his *Thomas' en Duns' theorie over de*

What is meant by the *possibility* mentioned by Scotus? Both Scotus and most of his contemporaries and predecessors agree on the idea that something cannot simultaneously be both factual and non-factual. Unlike many of them, Scotus does not conclude from this that diachronic contingency and possibility are the *only* possible kind of contingency and possibility. Diachronic contingency and possibility are possible indeed, for when the will has an act or object at one moment, it is *possible* that the opposite (act or object) is *factual* at a later moment. Scotus, however, is convinced that there is still another contingency and possibility. If something is the case at one moment, its opposite *can* be the case at the very same moment. Applied to the will: If the will has an act or object at one moment, it *can* not-act or have the opposite object at the same moment. When something (act or object) is factual, the simultaneous possibility—not: factual-ity—of its opposite (act or object) is a genuine possibility.¹⁴

3. *Answering from Scotus' Text*

In order to explain the particular succession in introducing the four possible combinations of freedom in regard to opposite acts/objects and diachrony/synchrony we should realize, first of all, that freedom with regard to opposite acts or objects is not the central theme of §§ 45-54.

goddelijke alwetendheid, in: Jaarboek van de werkgroep Thomas van Aquino, Utrecht 1982, 59-60.) S. Knuutila also published on Scotus' innovation of the notion of contingency, but independently of Vos. The former uses different, more 'phenomenological' terms (like 'statistical' instead of 'diachronic'). See his *Time and modality in scholasticism*, in: S. Knuutila (ed.), *Reforging the great chain of being. Studies in the history of ideas*, Dordrecht/Boston/London 1981, 117-37. Cf. also S. Knuutila, *Modalities in medieval philosophy*, London/New York 1993, 1ff. and 139-49.

In an earlier stage of Scotus-research Duns' specific insight in the simultaneity of factual and possible volition *seems* to have been noticed by e.g. E. Gilson (*Jean Duns Scot*, 587: "Une volonté est donc capable de vouloir le contraire de ce qu'elle veut de causer le contraire de ce qu'elle cause, dans le temps même où elle le veut et cause.") However, the expression 'capable de' in this sentence is still ambiguous. Moreover, such a sentence appears to be a paraphrase, not a clarifying interpretation of what can be read in Scotus' text. Last but not least, Gilson does not show that he realized the systematic impact of what is meant in such a sentence; in fact, he explicitly says that he did *not* find a specific system in Scotian thought (see his *Introduction*).

¹⁴ Scotus demonstrates this possibility in two ways: (a) by an analysis of the statement 'The will willing at one moment can not-will at the same moment' using the grammatical-logical distinction of 'sensus divisionis' and 'sensus compositionis' (see further *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 115, 121f.); (b) by showing that willing and not-willing are non-essential properties of the will (see further *Contingency and Freedom*, 119f.).

This distinction is not studied for its own sake; it is adduced in order to analyze the notion of contingency involved in (free) willing.

Of course, this does not explain the particular succession in question. There may be a very plausible reason for it, however. I have already remarked that Scotus, explaining the cause of *contingency* in things, searches for the rationale of a specific property: their non-necessary *factuality*. Considering this point of departure it seems a matter of course that he, after having introduced the twofold freedom, primarily thinks not only of two *factual* acts of willing, both for the human will (§ 46) and for the divine will (§ 53), but also of two *factual* objects of willing, again both for the human will (§ 46) and for the divine will (§ 53). In between (§§ 49-52) and at the end (§ 54) Duns shows the compatibility of one *factual* act and its *possible* opposite, as well as that of one factual object and its possible opposite—again, both for the human will and for the divine will. Thus, the *opposites*, act and object, are in fact introduced as being *factual*, whereas only later does it appear that they can also be *possible*.

This departure from factuality introduces a complication in the analysis, which seems to be responsible for some alternations in Scotus' exposition. Starting the discussion of the human will in §§ 45-47 and of the divine will in § 53 Scotus immediately observes an *asymmetry* between freedom in regard to opposite acts and that to opposite objects with respect to the factuality of these acts and objects respectively. In freedom in regard to opposite acts, he says, there is some 'imperfectio', whereas in freedom in regard to opposite objects there is not. What does he mean by this? A 'perfectio' is, generally, a quality or property that makes something more complete. In § 53 it is clearly suggested, in particular, that if a will needs two factual acts, willing and not-willing, in order to will all that it wills, the will is less 'perfect' than a will which can will all that it wills by one factual act. A will is more complete if it is capable of grasping all its objects in one act. Thus, the asymmetry is that the possibility of *factually* having an *object* and *factually* having its opposite (by *one* act) as such is a completing feature for the will (see § 46), whereas the possibility of *factually* having an *act* of will and *factually* having its opposite is not.

A will *complete in all respects* is immutable (with regard to its act) and infinite (with regard to its objects).¹⁵ Such a will is the divine will, which

¹⁵ For § 46 the interpretation of 'autem' is of some importance. How exactly is freedom in regard to opposite objects opposed to freedom in regard to opposite acts? My reconstruction of Scotus' train of thought would be that the distinction of one-many objects

is capable of factually willing both an object and its opposite—and in fact an infinite number of objects and its opposites—by one act (see § 53).¹⁶ The human will, however, which can factually will one object by one act, needs *another* act for factually willing its opposite.

We might add that the distinction of diachrony-synchrony, which Scotus connects with the distinctions of immutability-mutability and infinity-finitude, shows *per implicationem* (Duns does not explicitly say it), another completing feature of the will: the possibility of having a *factual* act or object while *simultaneously* having the *possibility* of its opposite. This ‘perfectio’ is an essential feature not only of the divine will, but also of the human will.

Now it is remarkable that *systematically* the extra distinctions of immutability-mutability and infinity-finitude do not really complicate the correct view on diachrony-synchrony in relation to freedom in regard to opposite acts and objects. Concerning freedom in regard to opposite acts there is no complication, since both for the divine will and for the human will the opposite of one factual act is synchronically possible and hence, that factual act itself is synchronically contingent.

Concerning freedom in regard to opposite objects there *seems* to be a complication, but it can easily be solved. Discussing the divine will, in § 53 Duns thinks of an object and its opposite *both of which are factually willed* by the one act of the divine will. In § 54, however, he thinks of an *object* that is *factually willed* by the one act of the divine will whereas its *opposite* is *possible* and *can be* willed. So Duns has two different *kinds* of opposite objects (‘objectum oppositum’) in mind: The opposite mentioned in § 53 is factual, whereas the one mentioned in § 54 is possible.¹⁷ As we have

comes to Scotus’ mind first, accompanied by the notion that factually willing objects and their opposites is in itself something perfect. It would *not* be perfect, however, if willing many objects would necessarily entail many acts of the will, and hence mutability. Conversely, if willing an object and its opposite *is* not imperfect in itself, it must be possible that willing many objects can be willed by one act of the will.

¹⁶ § 45: “Voluntas enim nostra . . . mediantibus actibus oppositis est libera ad obiecta opposita. . . .” This ‘mediation’ entails that the human will which can only have two factual opposite acts at successive moments (§ 46), can only have two factual opposite objects at successive moments too (§ 47). We may ask whether the human will is capable of comprising more than one object in one volition; anyway, unlike the divine will the number of objects which the human will can grasp is limited.

¹⁷ We can observe that Scotus, thinking of an object of the divine will, thinks of a specific object, like the existence of a stone (see his example in § 54). Obviously he does not think of all that is willed by the divine will as one object corresponding to the one act, since for such an object its opposite *cannot be factually willed* by that one act (of course, willing *that* opposite at the one moment of eternity is still *possible*).

seen in the paragraphs above, for an object and its *possible* opposite there is no problem: Because of synchronic contingency they can both be willed.

With regard to an object and its *factual* opposite, Scotus makes clear that because of the infinity of God's will they both can be willed at one moment by one act of the will. But we must be careful here: although an object and its opposite can both be *factually willed* at the same time, they cannot both be *factual* at the same time. Does this make their factual existence non-contingent after all? This problem, however, can consistently be solved if we take the objects to be 'time-indexed'.¹⁸ Duns' way of putting things is unproblematic, because *his* 'time-index' obviously only refers to the moment at which the divine will factually wills an object and its opposite, and not to the moments at which they themselves will be factual. We can extend his analysis by applying a time-index to the objects themselves as well. We will have to maintain that at one moment an object and its opposite cannot simultaneously be factual. This can consistently be done; for if the object and its opposite are both to exist because God factually wills both of them, this is possible only if the *object* is to exist *at one moment* and *its opposite at another*. So although in this case both an object and its opposite are factually willed at the same moment (the one moment of eternity), the object is willed *for* one moment (of time) and its opposite is willed *for* another moment (of time).¹⁹ At each moment for which an object is willed its existence is synchronically contingent since for that very moment its opposite can be willed. The same obtains for each moment for which the existence of its opposite is willed.^{20 21}

¹⁸ Cf. *Contingency and Freedom* (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), commentary, 125 (esp. n. 52).

¹⁹ In order to show this I recapitulate some possibilities and impossibilities proper to human and divine willing. In formulas:

(1) $M (sW_{t_1}p \ \& \ s-W_{t_1}p)$

is invalid for both the human and the divine will.

(2) $M (sW_{t_1}p \ \& \ sW_{t_1}\neg p)$

is indeed invalid for the human will, whereas taken in a specific respect it is valid for the divine will, namely, when p and $\neg p$ themselves have a time-index for successive moments. In this case p_{t_1} means: p being actual(ized) at moment 1 (p factually existing at moment 1). We can reformulate (2) as

(3) $M sW_{t_1}(p \ \& \ \neg p)$

which is valid for the divine will if it means

(4) $M sW_{t_1}(p_{t_1} \ \& \ \neg p_{t_2})$.

²⁰ In formulas: not only

(5) $sW_{t_1}p_{t_1} \ \& \ M sW_{t_1}\neg p_{t_1}$,

but also

(6) $sW_{t_1}\neg p_{t_2} \ \& \ M sW_{t_1}p_{t_2}$

is valid. These formulas are in fact variants of the two possibilities mentioned in the right column of the scheme in n. 6.

²¹ There is still another complication to be mentioned—a terminological one. As we

So for the structure of God's willing with respect to the contingency of its objects there is no systematic problem. All objects and their opposites factually grasped by the one act of the divine will are synchronically contingent. Scotus has answered his main question; for of course, created things are factually willed objects of the divine will. Their contingency, their non-necessary factuality, is caused by God's executive power which follows the determination of his will. Since God's will can have only one act, their contingency can only be synchronic contingency.

4. *Conclusion and Two Extrapolations*

Searching for the cause of contingency in things Scotus turns to the divine will and introduces a twofold freedom of the will, namely freedom in regard to opposite acts and freedom in regard to opposite objects; he states that from this twofold freedom a twofold contingency and possibility follow, namely a diachronic and a synchronic one. When checking the possible combinations of freedom in regard to opposite acts and objects on the one hand and diachrony and synchrony on the other, Scotus' exposition is not very perspicuous, mainly because he introduces the aspects of immutability and mutability, infinity and finitude. The reason for this introduction most likely is his notion of contingency which includes factuality.

We are now in a position to derive two interesting extrapolations of Scotus' view on freedom in regard to opposite acts and objects: con-

ave seen, Scotus' view is that both the human will and the divine will can have an act of willing while simultaneously having the possibility of the opposite act. However, this (correct) systematic parallel is not expressed in parallel terms, for he does *not speak of* the divine will as having the possibility of an *opposite act* ('actum oppositum'). This term is used only for the human will; see § 50 (quoted in n. 13), § 51 (last part of last sentence: "oppositos actus de voluntate absoluta accepta cum nota possibilitatis") and § 54 (first part of first sentence: "potest nolle illud et potest habere actum oppositum"). The same expression is also applied to the human will only in *Quaestiones in metaphysicam* IX, q. 15, cited from *Duns Scotus on the will and morality*, 150: "... potest agere hunc actum vel oppositum actum, agere etiam vel non agere". For God he only speaks of 'volitio' and 'nolitio' or 'velle aliquid' and 'non velle aliquid'. Things are slightly different in the case of opposite objects. In § 54, studying the divine will, Duns does *not speak of* 'objectum oppositum' taken synchronically, although from a systematic point of view he very well could have done so. However, he does not speak of a synchronic 'objectum oppositum' with respect to the human will either. So for some reason Scotus does not apply the terms 'objectum oppositum' and 'actus oppositus'—both taken as opposites which are synchronically possible—to the divine will. The reason cannot be that 'actus' connotes factuality, so that 'actus oppositus' must refer to a *factual* opposite act. If this were the reason, 'actus oppositus' could not be applied to the human will either.

cerning the simplicity of the divine willing and concerning univocity of the concept of will.

(1) In § 54 there is a remark put between brackets. Here Duns says that the divine will 'is identical with' ('eadem cum') his (one) volition.²² Since he explains this remark by saying that God's will cannot have both an act and its opposite, the identity or simplicity meant cannot be a strict one: It obviously allows for at least two important distinctions.²³

(a) There must be some complexity inasmuch as the divine will factually grasps many objects and their opposites. Scotus' identification apparently refers to the subject-side of the divine will ('it is the same will that wills various objects'), not to its object-side (the objects and opposites themselves are not the same as the will). We can also say that for Duns 'will' refers to potency and act of willing, not to 'that which is willed'.

(b) Although there can only be one divine act of will ('unica volitio', §§ 53-54), its alternative is synchronically possible and hence, there must be two 'levels' in divine willing, a contingent and a necessary one.²⁴ For what God wills can be not-willed, but he cannot be without will. So the act of will is contingent, but the (potency of) the will itself is necessary.²⁵ This means that the identification Scotus refers to allows for a non-necessary relationship (between the will and its act), so that not even strict equivalence of the properties to be identified is required for the identity he has in mind.²⁶

(2) Scotus' analysis entails that there is a univocal core in the concept of human and divine willing. Both the human will and the divine will

²² § 54: "... ita voluntas divina, licet non possit habere actus oppositos (quia voluntas est eadem cum sua volitione), ..."

²³ Duns would probably call them 'distinctiones formales a parte rei'.

²⁴ Cf. § 54: will 'in actu primo' and 'in actu secundo' (see *Contingency and Freedom (op.cit., above, n. 1)*, commentary, 127f.).

²⁵ This distinction between two levels or dimensions of willing, a necessary and a contingent one, obtains for the subject-side of God's willing. Yet, it must have its counterpart in its object-side too, for although many objects of God's will are (synchronically) contingent, there certainly are necessary objects of his will as well (for instance, the divine essence). Necessary objects cannot be not-willed.

One has to find another explanation of the identity involved ('eadem cum') if it turns out to be true that for Scotus willing *necessary* objects is not *termed* 'willing'. Such an explanation could be, for instance, that the divine will 'is (present in)' the one synchronically contingent act of willing (in *this* sense 'one with' or 'the same as').

²⁶ If Scotus' notion of identity as used in this context ('eadem cum') were interpreted as strict identity (in the modern sense), the will necessarily existing in God as one of His essential properties would necessarily produce its volitions. Then there would not be synchronic contingency in (created) things after all.

can be defined as a potency that while having an act can synchronically have the opposite act and while having an object can synchronically have the opposite object. If 'will' is defined in this way, we can say that both God and man have a will, or that having a will (in this sense) is a property common to God and man.

There are incommunicable features of divine and human willing too. In human beings one object of the will requires one act of the will, but in God one act of the will can comprise numerous objects, opposites included. Moreover, the divine will can have only one act of will (is immutable, eternal), whereas the human will can have many acts of will (is mutable, successive).²⁷

²⁷ See for some observations concerning the history of both the term and the concept 'freedom in regard to opposite acts/objects' in Augustine: Nico den Bok, *Freedom of the will. A systematic and biographical sounding of Augustine's thoughts on human willing*, in: Augustiniana, 44 (1994), 237-70, esp. section II (2), VI and VII (3); in Bernard of Clairvaux: *id.*, *Human and divine freedom in the theology of Bernard of Clairvaux. A systematic analysis*, in: Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie, 54 (1993), 271-95, esp. section II; in Ockham: *id.*, *Scotus' theory of contingency from a (post)modern perspective: Some important developments of the notion of contingency after Duns Scotus*, in: Silco 1995 (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 431-44, section II; in Suárez and Molina: E. Dekker, *The reception of Scotus' theory of contingency in Molina and Suárez*, in: Silco 1995 (*op.cit.*, above, n. 1), 445-54.