DUNS SCOTUS'S ENTANGLED DOCTRINES OF UNIVOCITY, FREEDOM, AND THE POWERS OF THE SOUL

LAS DOCTRINAS ENTRELAZADAS DE DUNS ESCOTO: UNIVOCIDAD, LIBERTAD Y LOS PODERES DEL ALMA

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that that three of Duns Scotus's most controversial philosophical positions, namely, his doctrine of the univocity of the concept of being, his radical voluntarism, and his formal distinction between the soul and its powers, are related in the following way: The latter two depend upon the former, sometimes in obvious ways that Duns Scotus owns, and sometimes in ways that are not licensed by the doctrine of the univocity of the concept of being as Scotus himself claims to employ it. In particular, I argue that in Scotus's development of his theory of freedom and his understanding of the powers of the soul, he makes inferences from God to creatures that the doctrine of the univocity of the concept of being does not allow and that, coupled with inferences that are licensed by that doctrine, result in circularity.

Keywords

John Duns Scotus; Univocity of the Concept of Being; Freedom; Formal Distinction; Powers of the Soul

Resumen

En este artículo, argumento que tres de las posiciones filosóficas más controvertidas de Duns Escoto, a saber, su doctrina de la univocidad del concepto de ser, su voluntarismo radical y su distinción formal entre el alma y sus poderes, están relacionadas de la siguiente manera: las dos últimas dependen de la primera, a veces de una forma obvia reconocida por Duns Escoto, y a veces de formas no autorizadas por la doctrina de la univocidad del concepto de ser – tal y como el mismo Escoto afirma emplearla. En particular sostengo que, en el desarrollo de su teoría de la libertad y su comprensión de los poderes del alma, Escoto realiza inferencias de Dios a las criaturas que la doctrina de la univocidad del concepto de ser no permite y que, combinadas con inferencias

autorizadas por esa doctrina, implican una circularidad.

Palabras clave

Juan Duns Escoto; univocidad del concepto de ser; libertad; distinción formal; poderes del alma

1. Introduction

Chief among Duns Scotus's most controversial philosophical positions are: his doctrine of the univocity of being; his radical voluntarism about the human will; and his formal distinction between the soul and its powers.[1] In this paper, I argue that these three philosophical positions are related in the following way: the latter two are dependent upon the former. This is true sometimes in obvious ways which Duns Scotus owns, and sometimes in ways that are not licensed by the doctrine of univocity of being and result in circularity. In particular, I will argue that Scotus's understanding of divine freedom is obviously derived from his understanding of human freedom by an explicit appeal to the doctrine of univocity of being (hereafter sometimes "the doctrine of univocity" or "univocity"); however, his understanding of human freedom is, in turn, built upon an inference from divine contingency that relies on an implicit and unlicensed appeal to the doctrine of univocity. Similarly, I will show with respect to the powers of the soul that univocity is deployed in an obvious way, to describe God's powers by reference to human powers, and in a non-obvious and illicit way, to infer from the divine essence how human powers are arranged. To make my argument, I will first give an overview of Scotus's understanding of univocity in order to highlight certain relevant parts of the doctrine. Next, I will show how Scotus's understanding of human and divine freedom is shaped by and dependent upon the doctrine of univocity in a way that is circular. Following that, I will show that the same doctrine plays a major role in motivating and shaping Duns Scotus's understanding of the nature of the powers of the soul and their arrangement in both God and creatures. It will be clear that Duns Scotus arrives at this knowledge using the doctrine of univocity in ways that he officially approves, but also that the knowledge Scotus derives about God from creatures ultimately turns upon an appeal to univocity that, by his own lights, he cannot condone.

[1] I am grateful to Robert Pasnau and two anonymous referees for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.

2. Univocity of Being: A Primer

The doctrine of the univocity of being as conceived by Duns Scotus is the doctrine that the same concept of being can be truly predicated of both God and creatures. Such a doctrine flies in the face of the teachings of Scotus's most prominent predecessors, Thomas Aquinas and Henry of Ghent, each of whom taught that there were no terms common to both God and creatures, but terms denoting concepts that apply to creatures can only be applied to God analogically. Though Thomas's and Henry's theories of analogical predication differed, both denied that there could be terms that applied to both God and creatures in the same way, even at the most basic level.

Scotus's response to such theories of analogical predication reveals what appears to be his fundamental motivation for developing a theory of univocal predication: an explanation for how humans can have some knowledge of God in this life. On Scotus's definition, a univocal concept is a concept which:

> is one in such a way that its unity suffices for contradiction, by affirming it and denying it about the same thing; it also suffices as a syllogistic middle term, so that the extreme terms, united by the middle term as one, may be concluded to be united to one another, without the fallacy of equivocation".[2]

That is, a univocal concept is so unambiguous that it cannot be both affirmed and denied of the same being. Furthermore, for any two beings to whom the concept truly applies, that concept is a viable middle term for uniting the extreme terms designating those entities in a syllogism. So, for Scotus to hold that there are univocal concepts between God and creatures means that the relevant concepts must be applied in the very same way to both. Scotus's motivation for adopting the doctrine of univocity is primarily epistemic. Being and, as we will see, other perfections and simple concepts must be univocally predicable of God and creatures, otherwise it would be impossible for humans to have a concept of God.

Scotus's epistemic motivations are clear in his rejection of Henry of Ghent's doctrine of analogy, which he claims would lead to a complete inability to assign univocal concepts to any beings at all.[3] But his positive arguments for the doctrine of univocity reveal an especially important commitment to preserving and explaining the way in which human beings learn about and understand God, and sheds light on how the doctrine of univocity contributes to that process. Consider the following two arguments Scotus gives for thinking that there must be univocally predicable concepts between God and creatures: first, all real concepts in the human mind come from phantasms and the agent intellect.

[2] John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, edited by C. Balić et al, *Opera omnia* vols. I-XIV (Civitas Vaticana: typis Vaticanis, 1950-2013), 1.3.2 26: "ita est unus quod eius unitas sufficit ad contradictionem, affirmando et negando ipsum de eodem; sufficit etiam pro medio syllogistico, ut extrema unita in medio sic uno sine fallacia aequivocationis concludantur inter se uniri." All translations are mine. Citations are given in the format "Book.Distinction.Question paragraph".
[3] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.3.2 30.

But if there are concepts that cannot be impressed upon the human mind by these, then the human mind cannot grasp those concepts, and so humans would have no natural concept a God of whom nothing can be predicated in common with creatures. Since we do have such a concept, Henry's theory of analogical predication cannot be right, and there must be some concept common to God and creatures.[4] Second, if simple perfections are not commonly predicated of both God and creatures, then either they are only predicated properly of creatures, and simple perfections do not belong to God, an absurd result; or they are only properly predicated of God, and what follows is that nothing can be attributed to God, since human concepts, as analogous, would necessarily be imperfect and so unable to be applied to God, of whom only perfections can be rightly predicated.[5] Being, then, must be univocally predicable of both God and creatures, and not only being, but also all simple perfections.

So, univocity of being, for Scotus, entails univocity of perfections, in a way that allows us to meaningfully apply a host of concepts to God that we are capable of understanding. Scotus outlines the process by which we apply these perfections to God in the following way:

> [T1] Every metaphysical inquiry about God proceeds in this way, by considering the formal account of something and removing from that formal account the imperfection which holds in creatures, and by retaining that formal account and attributing to it the altogether highest perfection, and by attributing it in this way to God [...] Therefore, every inquiry about God supposes that the intellect has the same univocal concept which it has received from creatures.[6]

Scotus affirms in this same place that humans attribute an intellect and will and all other perfections to God according to this method. Importantly for my argument, Scotus unequivocally states that every inquiry about God begins with a concept initially found in creatures. Hence, our univocity-based inferences always run in the direction of creature to God. So, on Scotus's view, univocal predication is not only possible, but necessary for discussing God, because all philosophical examinations of God and the attributes we assign to Him depend upon stripping the imperfections from concepts as they apply to creatures. And it is this necessity that will drive Scotus to adopt his particular and divisive views about the nature of freedom, both human and divine. I turn now to discussing Scotus's thought on freedom, in light of his views about and arguments for univocity.

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[4] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.3.2 35. For more on Duns Scotus's rejection of Henry of Ghent's doctrine of analogy, see Giorgio Pini, "Univocity in Scotus' *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam*: The Solution to a Riddle", *Medioevo* 30 (2005): 69-110, especially 73-76.

[5] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.3.2 38.

[6] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.3.2 39: "Omnis inquisitio metaphysica de Deo sic procedit, considerando formalem rationem alicuius et auferendo ab illa ratione formali imperfectionem quam habet in creaturis, et reservando illam rationem formalem et attribuendo sibi omnino summam perfectionem, et sic attribuendo illud Deo [...] Ergo omnis inquisition de Deo supponit intellectum habere conceptum eundem, univocum, quem accepit ex creaturis."

3. Radical Voluntarism

As shown above, for Duns Scotus, univocity of being also entails univocity of perfections. And so freedom, as a perfection in both God and creatures, must be univocally predicable of both. A connection between univocity and voluntarism has been gestured at in recent scholarship, though as far as I know, no effort has been made to clearly establish the link between the two doctrines.[7] In this section, I will argue that Scotus's doctrine of univocity leads to his voluntarism, in an important but obvious way that he is quite explicit about, and in a far more interesting way that he declines to acknowledge. First, though, I will clarify precisely what view I mean to attribute to Scotus when I refer to his "radical voluntarism".

Duns Scotus is a voluntarist in that he holds the will to be a prime mover, its own sole and direct governor. As Thomas Williams puts it, "the will's mode of acting is irreducible and basic; the will is by its very nature (ex se) such as to be able to act or not act, and to do this or that. In particular, Scotus emphasizes that the will's freedom does not derive from its relation to the intellect".[8] The will is not beholden to the governance of the intellect (though it does make its choices in light of it), and it is absolutely undetermined by anything external to itself. This belief about the will is depended upon or alluded to almost anywhere Scotus discusses the will, and Scotus makes it especially clear when, from the Augustinian dictum that "nothing is so in the power of the will as the will itself", he draws the following two conclusions:[9] "First, therefore, an act of the will is more in the power of the will than is any other act; second, therefore, that act is in the power of the will not only mediately but immediately".[10] The will, then, is absolutely free from external determination.

Duns Scotus's voluntarism is radical in part because of its historical context. Writing after the Condemnations of 1277 and following Henry of Ghent's and Peter John Olivi's embrace of the will as a first mover, Scotus is not the first to accept a radical freedom of the will, but he goes further in treating it systematically and making it the

[7] Thomas Williams has noted this alleged connection and the lack of evidence for it in his unpublished paper, "Radical Orthodoxy, Univocity, and the New Apophaticism": "[Catherine] Pickstock also suggests that univocity leads to voluntarism, but we are given no reason to suppose that this is so, and even I – an ardent proponent of both univocity and voluntarism – can discern no connection between the two. I find this a shame, since I would love to have a really good argument for voluntarism". See Thomas Williams, "Radical Orthodoxy, Univocity, and the New Apophaticism", *Unpublished Paper* (2006), 8; and Catherine Pickstock, "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance", *Modern Theology* 21 (2005): 543-574.

[8] Thomas Williams, "Duns Scotus", in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Action*, edited by T. O'Connor and C. Sandis (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 5.

[9] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.1.2 91. Scotus cites Augustine's *Retractationes* and quotes the following: "Nihil est tam in voluntatis potestate quam ipsa voluntas."

[10] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.1.2 92: "Primus, ergo actus voluntatis magis est in potestate voluntatis quam aliquis alius actus; secunda, ergo actus ille est in potestate voluntatis non tantum mediate sed immediate."

centerpiece of the human soul than his predecessors.[11] But the Subtle Doctor is also a radical in the way he chooses to explain the freedom of the will: the will is absolutely free for opposites not just diachronically, but *synchronically*. That is, Scotus does not hold that a will is free by virtue of a diachronic contingency, so that the will is able to will *a* at t_1 and then to will ~*a* at t_2, though this was the prevailing view of Scotus's predecessors.[12] Rather, Scotus taught that the following sort of contingency was necessary for the will's freedom:

> Indeed, in that same instant in which the will has one act of willing, in the same instant and at the same instant it is able to have an opposite act of willing, so that if it is posited that a will should exist only for one instant and that in that instant it willed something, then it is not able to will and will-not successively, and nevertheless for that instant and in that instant in which it wills *a*, it is able to will-not *a*. For to will at that instant and in that instant is not essential to that will nor is it a natural condition of it. Therefore, [willing] follows from that will accidentally.[13]

Since the will is not necessitated toward its object, it must be capable of willing or not willing it. Gesturing at Anselm's thought experiment of the partially composed angel, Scotus concludes from this that a will existing for one moment would be capable of not willing some end, even while it is willing it in that moment, since it wills contingently and not necessarily.[14] These two features, the will's immediate and absolute control over itself and the will's synchronic power for opposites, suffice to explain Scotus's label as a voluntarist. With this view of the will in mind, we can now undertake to see how Scotus's voluntarism and doctrine of univocity are connected.

The bare concepts of univocity and voluntarism are not necessarily related, as nothing in the fact that perfections must be predicated of God and creatures in the same way entails what those perfections must be. But the fact that Scotus has a voluntaristic

[11] For a history of the development of Duns Scotus's theory of the freedom of the will, see Tobias Hoffmann, *Free Will and the Rebel Angels in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), especially chapters 3 and 5. My understanding of this topic has also benefitted from reading a draft of Robert Pasnau's unpublished book on medieval voluntarism.

[12] For more on the origins of synchronic contingency, see Stephen Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency", *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149-167. Dumont argues that while Scotus was in his time the most well-known proponent of the synchronic contingency of the will and developed the view, he was not the first to propose such a model of contingency. It is likely that he was influenced by and received the model of synchronic contingency from his predecessor and fellow Franciscan, Peter John Olivi.

[13] John Duns Scotus, *Lectura*, edited by C. Balić et al, *Opera omnia* vols. XVI-XXI (Civitas Vaticana: typis Vaticanis, 1950-2013), 1.39.5 50: "Nam in eodem instant in quo voluntas habet unum actum volendi, in eodem et pro eodem potest habere oppositum actum volendi, – ut si ponitur quod voluntas tantum habeat esse per unum instants et quod in illo instant velit aliquid, tunc successive non potest velle et nolle, et tamen pro illo instant et in illo instant non est de essential ipsius voluntatis nec est eius passio naturalis; igitur consequitur ipsam per accidens."

[14] For Anselm's thought experiment referenced here, see: Anselm, *De casu diaboli*, edited by F.S. Schmitt, S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi *Opera omnia* vol. I (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946), chapters 12-14.

understanding of human freedom means that freedom as it is predicated of humans must also be predicated in the same way of God. This is the important but obvious way in which univocity leads to voluntarism: namely, the fact that humans are free in a radically voluntaristic way and the fact that perfections must be predicated of God and creatures in the same way jointly entail that God must be free in a radically voluntaristic way. In [T1], Scotus laid out the process of attributing perfections to God by identifying perfections in creatures and removing any creaturely imperfections from them, a process to which I will hereafter refer as Scotus's "method of univocal predication". In his treatment of contingency, we see Scotus's method of univocal predication put to work, most explicitly in his *Reportatio* discussion of the topic:

> Here I say that, by taking what a matter of perfection in our will with respect to its act and rejecting what is a matter of imperfection in it, and by transferring those things which are matters of perfection in it to the divine will, the solution to the question [of how the divine will is the cause of contingency] is clear at once. For our will is contingently indifferent to diverse acts, and through these diverse acts it is indifferent to diverse objects and to many effects. Its first indifference is a matter of imperfection; its second indifference is a matter of perfection and therefore ought to be posited in God.[15]

Scotus painstakingly walks the reader through the method of univocal predication in the case of freedom. Here and elsewhere, Scotus makes the inference from the radical voluntarism of the human will and the doctrine of univocity to the radical voluntarism of the divine will explicit, an obvious outcome of his views on being, perfection, and freedom.[16]

Less obvious, but more interesting, is a trend in Scotus's thought to infer the contingency of the human will from divine contingency. In book V of his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Duns Scotus remarks that:

> in any absolute entity, necessity is a matter of perfection. And with respect to a prior thing upon which something depends, if it were necessary, it would not imply imperfection in the absolute entity. But with respect to something later by nature, [if it were necessary], it would necessarily imply something imperfect in the absolute entity.[17]

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[15] John Duns Scotus, *Reportatio*, edited by A. B. Wolter and O. V. Bychkov, 2. vols, *The Examined Report of the Paris Lecture. Reportatio 1-A*, vol. II (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2008), 1A.39.3 38: "Hic dico quod, assumendo quae sunt perfectionis in voluntate nostra respectu sui actus et dimittendo quod est imperfectionis in ea, – transferendo ea quae sunt perfectionis in ea ad divina, statim apparet propositum. Voluntas enim nostra indifferens est contingenter ad actus diversos, quibus mediantibus est indifferens ad diversa obiecta et ad plures effectus. Prima indifferentia est imperfectionis, – secunda est perfectionis, et ideo ponenda in divinis."

[16] See also various places in *Lectura* 1.39.5 53-54.

[17] John Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, edited by G. Etzkorn et al., 2 vols., *Opera philosophica* vols. III-IV (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997). 5.3 26: "[...] in omni entitate absoluta, necessitas est perfectionis. Etiam in respect ad prius a quo aliquid

Scotus is arguing here in defense of the Avicennian position that *per se* necessary beings have no cause. In particular, he is repudiating the claim that the noblest cause causes what it causes necessarily. And in the last sentence quoted, Scotus makes clear that, though God is Himself necessary, His effects, those things which depend on Him for existence, are not, since for His effects to be necessary would be an imperfection. In proving the contingency of God's effects here, Scotus has not even implicitly referenced creatures, since his conclusions are drawn from the nature of an absolute entity, which no creature is.

This notion of divine contingency, here and elsewhere argued for without reference to human freedom or creaturely contingency, returns in Book IX of the same work.[18] Scotus brings it to bear in the following argument for the contingency of the human will:

> [1]For, without contradiction, a created active principle is capable of that perfection which we have attributed to the will, namely, that it is not only not determined to one effect or act, since it has many effects and acts in its power, but also it is not determined to any of those things for which it has sufficient power. [2]For who denies that something active is more perfect in proportion to how much less it is dependent and determined and limited with respect to its acts and effects? [3]And if this is conceded about unlimitedness toward multiple and contrary effects, although with a natural determination toward any of them, how much more should this be conceded if something is posited with the first indeterminacy and the second? [4]For this contingency is more noble than necessity, as was shown in Book V [...], namely, how it is a matter of perfection in God that He causes nothing by necessity. [5]If, therefore, that perfection, which we have attributed to the will, is not contradictory to a created active principle, and the will is the highest such principle, reason demands that this perfection must be attributed to the will.[19]

In the quoted passage (with its sentences numbered for ease of reference), Scotus makes a quick but crucial move from a fact about the divine will to a fact about created

dependet, si esset necessitas, non poneret imperfectionem in absolute; sed ad posterius natura necessario poneret imperfectionem in absolute."

[18] For another place where Scotus argues for the contingency of God's effects without reference to human freedom, see *Reportatio*, 1A.39.3 31-35.

[19] Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 9.15 44: "Quia principium activum creatum capax est sine contradictione illius perfectionis quam attribuimus voluntati, scilicet quod non solum non determinetur ad unum effectum vel actum, quia multos habet in virtute, sed nec ad aliquem illorum determinatur quos in virtute sufficienti habet. Quis enim negat activum esse perfectius, quanto minus dependens et determinatum et limitatum respectu actus vel effectus? Et si hoc conceditur de illimitatione ad multos et contrarios effectus, cum determinatione tamen naturali ad quemcumque illorum, quanto magis si cum prima indeterminatione ponitur et secunda? Haec enim nobilior est contingentia necessitate, sicut tactum est in V [...] scilicet quomodo perfectionis est in Deo nihil necessario causare. Si ergo ista perfectio, quam attribuimus voluntati, principio activo creato non repugnat, et summum tale est voluntas, sibi rationabiliter est attribuenda." My translation of this passage is in places derivative of Father Allan Wolter's translation, especially in translating "rationabiliter" as "reason demands".

wills.[20] In sentences 1, 2, and 3 Scotus establishes that it is not a contradiction that the created will be undetermined in its acts and effects, and he argues that it is fitting to attribute this sort of contingency to the will. His justification for this, given in sentence 4, is that God has already been shown (in the quoted passage from Book V) to be contingent in this way as a matter of divine perfection. Hence, since it is possible that the will has this perfection, and since it has been shown to be a matter of perfection that active principles are contingent in this way, "reason demands" that the same contingency be attributed to the will as was attributed to God back in Book V. Though Scotus is not explicit about it here as he is when he is employing his method of univocal predication, he is tacitly relying upon the doctrine of univocity here. Duns Scotus's inference from the contingency of the divine will to the contingency of the human will is plausibly motivated by a principle of attributing to a nature what is most noble; this seems a likely candidate for the force of reason necessitating the attribution of contingency to the created will in sentence 5. But such a principle only has force if, as Scotus notes, the perfection-to-be-attributed "is not contradictory" to a nature. And it seems that the only likely reason Scotus has for thinking that the human will could receive a perfection of the divine will, a perfection that was posited in God without using the method of univocal predication, is the doctrine of univocity.

Above, it was shown that Scotus explicitly and predictably infers divine radical voluntarism from human radical voluntarism and his doctrine of univocity. But close examination of his writings on the nature of the will as a rational power show that Scotus ultimately derives his view on the freedom of the human will from prior beliefs about divine contingency that do not originate as beliefs about humans. So, the concept of freedom, univocal to God and humans, seems to have its origin in God. The doctrine of the univocity is implicitly invoked in inferring the human will's contingency from divine contingency, since no other principle would explain why it is possible and (coupled with the principle of positing what is more noble) necessary that a divine perfection be attributed to a creature. And as the initial inference moves from God to creature, it is unlicensed by the method of univocal predication as given in [T1]. So, the following circular pattern emerges, in which the true impact of Duns Scotus's doctrine of univocity on freedom is visible: Contingency, as a matter of perfection, must be attributed to God, the only *per se* necessary being; *by the doctrine of univocity*, it is predicable of both uncreated and created active principles (i.e., wills); this contingency forms the basis of human freedom, characterized by the will's being synchronically free and wholly within its own power; and since freedom is a perfection, it is ultimately predicable of God *by the method of univocal predication*, who is therefore free in a radically voluntaristic way. Hence, the doctrine of univocity of being serves to secure from God an absolute indeterminacy for the human will, whose more easily observed and described freedom, ultimately based on

[20] This is not the only place Scotus establishes the contingency of the will based on divine contingency. For further instances in which Duns Scotus argues for the indeterminacy of the human will from divine indeterminacy, see: Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 9.15 32 and 9.15 62.

this indeterminacy, is attributed back to God by the very same doctrine. This circle of predicating perfections of God and humans univocally, presented ostensibly as an inference from creature to creator, but with the root of the perfection really beginning in God and then being illicitly predicated of creatures, is comparatively easy to observe in Scotus's treatment of divine and human freedom. But, as I will argue, it also appears in other places in Scotus's thought.

4. The Soul and Its Powers

The first case, radical voluntarism, concerned the nature of human and divine freedom, though not the power of the will in particular. In this section, I will show that the same circular pattern I highlighted in the above section, concerning Scotus's uses of univocity, recurs in his theorizing about the powers of the human soul and of the divine essence. Before showing that a covert inference from God to creature, dependent upon univocity, occurs in the case of the powers of the soul, I will begin by laying out an important but obvious way in which Scotus deploys the doctrine of univocity.

That the powers of the divine essence are derived from our understanding of the powers of the human soul is easy to see in Scotus's thought. In the following passage, to which I will return throughout my argument, Scotus asserts that our understanding of the divine intellect and will are attained by the method of univocal predication:

> [T2] Indeed, in this way are intellect and will posited formally in God, and not only absolutely but with infinity, – thus are power and wisdom [posited in God]; thus is freedom of the will [posited in God...].[21]

Intellect and will (along with freedom) are perfections we posit in God, and they are posited according to the method of univocal predication (which Scotus has described in the passages immediately previous to [T2]) and with infinity added. Regardless of the mode (infinite or finite) of the perfection, the concept is the same between God and creatures. Scotus offers a clear example of this elsewhere, when he explicitly equates the divine and human will:

> The will in us, as it is part of the image [of the Trinity], represents the will in God with respect to that act of uniting which is of our will, but with respect to another act, namely, as our will is the principle of producing an act concerning the same object which was the object of our memory and intelligence, since the will in God is the principle of producing love equal to the divine essence, which is the first object of the divine memory, intelligence, and will [...][22]

[21] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.8.3 72: "Ita enim formaliter ponitur in Deo intellectus et voluntas, et non tantum absolute sed cum infinitate, – ita potentia et sapientia; ita ponitur liberum arbitrium [...]"
[22] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.6.1 27: "Voluntas ergo in nobis ut est pars imaginis repraesentat voluntatem in Deo non quantum ad actum istum copulandi, qui est voluntatis nostrae, sed quantum ad alium

Here, Scotus casts the human will as a representation of the divine will and performs the critical operation of removing imperfections from the will so that the term may be properly predicated of God. In the human will, an act of willing toward an object is accompanied by an act of uniting the object to the mind's knowledge of the object. In God, the primary production of the divine will is perfectly adequate to the divine essence, which is grasped completely by God prior to its being an object of willing. As the act of uniting the will's object to the intellect is an imperfection resulting from limitation, Scotus removes it in the case of the divine will and attributes to God the same will as is in humans, albeit perfected. And, though a corresponding explicit comparison of the human intellect to the divine intellect is not available, it is clear that Scotus would endorse such a comparison; indeed, in the very paragraph that Scotus outlines the method of univocal predication, having referenced, intellect, will, and wisdom as examples of the method, he writes: "Therefore, every inquiry about God supposes that intellect has the same univocal concept which it receives from creatures".[23] And so we see that the doctrine of univocity allows Scotus to say a great deal about the divine intellect and will by understanding them as essentially the same as creaturely intellect and will, with imperfections removed. Just as in the case of freedom, Scotus is quite transparent about how univocity of being entails that certain similarities between creatures and God can be inferred from our knowledge of creatures and our knowledge of perfections. However, as in the case of freedom, Scotus's view also depends upon the doctrine of univocity in a way he doesn't acknowledge. The doctrine of univocity of being has significant ramifications for how Scotus understands the human soul's relation to its powers and the divine essence's relation to its powers.

Before discussing the powers of the divine essence and human soul, it will be worthwhile to clarify the nature of the distinction that obtains in each case: the *formal* distinction. For Scotus, the formal distinction is a distinction that is less than real but more than conceptual. This sort of distinction was not in itself radical or original to Scotus, as the concept of some mediate distinction between real and conceptual was well established in the thought of at least one of his predecessors, namely, Henry of Ghent.[24] It was, rather, Duns Scotus's use of the formal distinction to explain the relationship between the soul and its powers, and between the powers themselves, that was controversial. Duns Scotus's theory is in some ways a *via media* between previous

actum, in quantum scilicet voluntas nostra est principium producendi actum circa idem obiectum, quod fuit memoriae et intelligentiae nostrae, quia voluntas in divinis est principium producendi amorem adaequatum essentiae divinae, quae est obiectum primum memoriae divinae et intelligentiae et voluntatis [...]".

[23] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.3.2 39: "Ergo omnis inquisition de Deo supponit intellectum habere conceptum eundem, univocum, quem accepit ex creaturis".

[24] For a summary of the history of formal distinction, see Timothy Noone, "Alnwick on the Origin, Nature, and Function of the Formal Distinction", *Franciscan Studies* 53 (1993): 231-245.

extremes, captured clearly by Marilyn Adams in the following passage:[25]

> Scotus agrees with Aquinas against Henry that soul-powers – both active and passive *per se* and immediate causal principles – are absolutes, not relatives. Scotus agrees with Henry against Aquinas, that such absolutes are not really distinct from the soul-essence itself. Adapting this position to square with pressure from secondary theological authorities, Scotus proposes that intellect and will are distinct formally – in that their absolute formal rationes are mutually exclusive – but (Wadding reads) "unitively" and (Ockham reports) "virtually" contained in the same soul-essence.[26]

The "unitive" or "virtual" containment that Adams mentions are features of Scotus's understanding of the formal distinction, by which he attempts to retain the real identity of the soul and its powers, while also introducing a more robust distinction between the soul and its powers that is grounded not in their relations to their objects, but in the soul and the powers themselves.

Scotus's understanding of the formal distinction changed in subtle but important ways across the course of his life.[27] However, as he holds that the same formal distinction obtains between the divine essence and its power as does between the human soul and its powers, it does not particularly matter which of his formulations we use here. I will, therefore, discuss the formal distinction as Scotus understands it in his *Reportatio*, summarized by Adams as:

> *x* is not formally the same as *y*, if and only if (a) *x* and *y* are really the same, and (b) if *x* and *y* are definable, *y* is not included in the definition of *x*, and (c) if *x* and *y* are not definable, then if they were definable, *y* would not be included in the definition of *x*.[28]

This formal distinction, on which something is really the same as something else but

[25] William of Ockham, writing in response to Scotus, held that the intellect and will are "really the same as and in no way distinct from one another or from the intellectual soul itself" and rejected in general any application of the formal distinction (Marilyn Adams, "Ockham on the Soul: Elusive Proof, Dialectical Persuasions", *Proceedings of the ACPA* 75 [2002]: 44). The views of Scotus's immediate predecessors constitute either extreme between which his view is a middle ground. Henry of Ghent held that "the will is a natural power in the soul and is nothing but the substance of the soul", and so just is identical to the soul's essence, distinguished as will by its relation to an object (and the same is true of the intellect) (see Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta* 3.14). Aquinas understood the soul's powers as "the natural properties of the soul" which "flow from the essence of the soul as from a principle [...]" (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.77.6) For a description of Ockham's rejection of the formal distinction, see Claude Panaccio, *Ockham's Nominalism: A Philosophical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), chapter 2. For an overview of Henry's and Aquinas's views on the soul, and a comparison with Scotus's view, see J. Travis Paasch, "Powers", in *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, edited by R. Cross and J.T. Paasch (New York: Routledge, 2021), 107-125.

[26] Adams, "Ockham on the Soul", 66.

[27] For a history of Scotus's understanding of the formal distinction, see Stephen Dumont, "Duns Scotus's Parisian Question on the Formal Distinction", *Vivarium* 43 (2005): 7-62.

[28] Marilyn Adams, "Ockham on Identity and Distinction", *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976): 40.

does not include it in its definition, holds between the divine essence and the divine intellect and will, as well as between the human soul and its powers. Before going on to show how the arrangement of the divine and human powers are related by the doctrine of univocity, I will first describe the way the formal distinction obtains in each case. In the case of the divine essence and its powers, Scotus's doctrine of divine simplicity will act as both a paradigm case of a formal distinction being put to work, as well as an obvious instance of such a distinction being drawn between the divine essence and powers. Scotus's understanding of divine simplicity will also contain an instance in which the doctrine of univocity appears to be working in a way licensed by the method of univocal predication, though I will later offer evidence against this.

For the sake of conciseness, I will not here lay out the whole of Duns Scotus's theory of divine simplicity, but will instead rely on a relevant argument made by Jeff Steele and Thomas Williams for expositing its relationship to the doctrine of univocity. Steele and Williams have noted that:

> Scotus's view [of divine simplicity] seems like a sneaky reinterpretation of simplicity in order to fit within his unique metaphysical framework, namely, the univocal predication of being with respect to God and creatures. Given that (for example) being, truth, unity, and goodness are not altogether identical, when we predicate being, truth, unity, and goodness of something – whether that something is God or a creature – those predications do not pick out altogether the same thing.[29]

Since "being" must be predicated of all entities in essentially the same way (according to univocity), and as truth, unity, and goodness are proper to but distinct from being in creatures, that means there must exist a distinction even in the divine existence between existence and its proper attributes (here is an apparent inference from creature to God based on univocity). This distinction alone puts Scotus at odds with proponents of absolute divine simplicity, such as Aquinas, for whom it is the case that "God is not only His own essence [...] but He is also His own existence".[30] For, any distinction at the level of existence implies distinction within the divine essence. According to Steele and Williams, Scotus attempts to preserve divine simplicity by employing the aforementioned notion of unitive containment, wherein something holds together other things so that it, as Scotus has it, "contains all things unitively so that that they are not other things".[31] This unitive containment, wherein multiple things are so closely contained as to be inextricable from one another, explains the distinction between God's essence and the proper attributes of being (i.e., truth, goodness, unity) while maintaining His simplicity.

[29] Jeff Steele and Thomas Williams, "Complexity Without Composition: Duns Scotus on Divine Simplicity", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 93 (2019): 630.
[30] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, edited by J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón, 8 vols., Latin/English Edition of the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas vols. XIII-XX (Lander, WY: The Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 1a.3.4: "Deus non solum est sua essential [...] sed etiam suum esse."
[31] Scotus, *Quaestiones*, 4.2. 143: "continet et omnes unitive, sic quod non sunt alia res [...]"

Since truth, goodness, and unity are necessarily co-extensive with being and the four are absolutely inseparable, they are really one thing, and yet truth, goodness, unity, and being do not fall under one another's *rationes*, and so are formally distinct.

So, as Steele and Williams put it,

> For Aquinas, all of God's attributes are identical with each other and identical with God's essence (distinguished only in our minds). In contrast, Scotus argues that the divine attributes must be necessarily coextensive with each other and with God's essence, but distinct from each other (independently of our conception of them.)[32]

The above quote makes clear that, in addition relying on unitive containment to explain how God can have essential distinctions while remaining simple, Scotus also employs the concept to explain the relationship of the divine essence to the divine powers. Scotus affirms that the divine attributes are contained in, but distinct from, the divine essence, when he writes that "the divine 'to be' unitively contains every actuality of the divine essence".[33] They are somewhat distinct from one another, since, as Scotus says, "there is no union without any distinction" and yet they are also not really distinct, since "[really distinct things] are contained multiply or disparately".[34] The unitive containment of God's attributes in his essence calls for "some union which denies any composition or aggregation of distinct things".[35] There is, in short, a formal distinction between the divine essence and the divine attributes. So, as Steele's and Williams's argument goes, the doctrine of univocity combines with the doctrine of divine simplicity in Scotus's thought with the result that God's essence contains His attributes and perfections in such a way that His essence is formally, but not really, distinct from His attributes. And Scotus also holds that God's perfections (the attributes relevant for us) are formally distinct from one another. Consider the following passage:

> [T3] just as in God intellect is not formally will, nor the converse, although one is the same as the other by the truest identity of simplicity, so also justice is not formally the same as mercy, or the converse.[36]

So, among the divine essence and the divine perfections, there is a twofold formal distinction: one between essence and perfection, and one between a perfection and any other perfection. Hence, though formally distinct, God's essence and perfections are all

[32] Steele and Williams, "Complexity Without Composition", 628.
[33] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 4.46.3 74: "divinum 'esse' unitive continent omnem actualitatem divinae essentiae."
[34] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 4.46.3 74: "unio non est sine omni distinction [...]"; "illa multipliciter sive dispersim continentur."
[35] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 4.46.3 74: "talem unionem quae repugnant omni compositioni et aggregation distinctorum [...]"
[36] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 4.46.3 71: "sicut in Deo intellectus non est formaliter voluntas, nec e converso, licet unum sit verissima identitate simplicitatis idem alteri, ita et iustitia non est formaliter idem misericordiae vel e converso."

really identical with one another.

The same twofold formal distinction occurs within the human soul. Scotus writes that "the powers [of the soul] are not formally the same, or quidditatively, neither among themselves nor also with the essence of the soul. Nevertheless they are not other things, but they are the same by identity".[37] Here is present the claim that the powers of the soul are not formally the same as the soul, (although they are really the same), as well as the claim that the powers of the soul are formally distinct from one another, and therefore really the same. Hence, the human soul, the human intellect, and the human will are all formally distinct but really identical. So, in both God and humans, the powers and the soul (or divine essence) stand in the same relationship to one another. This similarity between the human soul and divine essence is not a coincidence, but a product of univocity. In order to show how the two are connected by the doctrine of univocity, it will be helpful to first explain the context in which Scotus discusses the powers of the human soul.

Scotus discusses the formal distinction between the powers of the soul in the context of the following question: Whether there is an image of the Trinity in the three distinct powers of the soul. He ultimately concludes that there is not a perfect image.[38] The reason that he concludes that the human soul is not a perfect image of the Trinity is that the human soul does not represent the real distinction of the persons of the Trinity from one another; rather, "the soul represents through its essence [...] the divine persons with respect to the unity of their essence [...] it is less representative of the persons of the Trinity than of the unity of their essence".[39] The soul, with its formal distinction between itself and its powers, is not suited to be an image of a Trinity of really distinct entities; but it is suited to represent the unity of the divine essence which, as shown above, is really identical with but formally distinct from its powers. Similarly, in human beings, the powers of the soul and the soul itself are formally distinct from one another. This similarity of complex unity between powers and soul/powers and essence is a product of Scotus's commitment to the univocity of being. This is not immediately obvious. Marilyn Adams has described the development of Scotus's position on the powers of the soul as a product of his responses to his predecessors (namely, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Bonaventure) in combination with pressure to yield to the authority of the established intellectual tradition (most notably, that of Pseudo-Dionysius).[40] This is confirmed by Scotus's own words; indeed, the response to the question posed in the *Reportatio* is a summary and refutation of previous views followed by an explicit

[37] Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 18: "Similiter non sunt potentiae idem formaliter, vel quidditative, nec inter se, nec etiam cum essentia animae, nec tamen sunt res aliae, sed idem identitate."
[38] Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 19; See *Ordinatio* 1.3.3.3 596, where Scotus affirms that the soul does not perfectly represent the Trinity, though when taken with its operations it offers in imperfect image.
[39] Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 22.: "anima repraesentat per essentiam [...] personas divinas quantum ad unitatem essentiae... minus est repraesentativa Trinitatis personarum quam unitatis essentiae."
[40] Adams, "Ockham on the Soul", 62. See Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 18.

concession to the established opinion that the powers of the soul are somehow distinct from one another and from the soul. Nevertheless, lurking in the background is another motivation for describing the soul as he does: the doctrine of univocity.

Consider passages [T2] and [T3], which I quote again here:

> [T2] Indeed, in this way are intellect and will posited formally in God, and not only absolutely but with infinity, – thus is power and wisdom [posited in God]; thus is freedom of the will [posited in God...].
>
> [T3] Just as in God intellect is not formally will, nor the converse, although one is the same as the other by the truest identity of simplicity, so also justice is not formally the same as mercy, or the converse.

In [T3], Scotus affirms that intellect and will are formally distinct in God; in [T2], he confirms that intellect and will are posited in God according to his method of univocal predication. This pair of quotes, coupled with Scotus's claim in [T1] that *every* philosophical investigation of God begins with an account of a univocal concept that is located in creatures, imply that the intellect and the will in God are posited according to how they are first found to exist in humans, with imperfections removed, in both nature and arrangement. That is, the powers of the soul exist in God as they are found in creatures, and they relate to the divine essence in the same way as they do to the human soul.

[T2] and [T3] suggest that the powers of the soul and their arrangement are understood of God in the same way as they are understood of humans in virtue of the doctrine of univocity. [T1] makes clear that these perfections must first be found in humans and only then assigned to God. Duns Scotus's explicit claims that the human will represents the divine will and that the human soul represents the divine essence are instances of this univocal predication of perfections. And the peculiarities of Scotus's understanding of divine simplicity (i.e., the complexities in the form of distinctions in the divine essence and among its attributes) suggest that the doctrine of univocity has played a tacit role in shaping Scotus's view of the divine essence and perfections, though one which is licensed by the method of univocal predication outlined in [T1], since the inferences run from creature to God. Here again, we see that inferences from knowledge about creatures to knowledge of the divine, licit according to Scotus's method of univocal predication, abound and are foundational in Scotus's thought. But again, as in the case of the nature of freedom, there are also unlicensed inferences from God to creature that are happening in the background of Scotus's thought on the soul and its powers.

In the first place, *contra* what he states in [T2], Duns Scotus does not rely on the doctrine of univocity to initially posit intellect and will in God. Nor, against what Steele and Williams suggest, is the doctrine of univocity ultimately responsible for Scotus's understanding of the formal distinction of divine essence from divine powers. Early on, in the second distinction of the *Ordinatio*, Scotus sets out an argument for the existence of an infinite being, which he begins by showing " that the first efficient cause has an

intellect and will such that its intelligence is of infinite things distinctly and such that its essence, which essence is indeed its intelligence, is representative of infinite things".[41] Scotus's proofs for the existence of intellect and will in God rest on the first cause's absolute priority and the presence of contingency in the world, and make no reference to creatures, save an invocation of the fact that creatures act contingently as evidence that there is contingency in the world. However, it is the first cause's absolute priority and the fact that there is contingency in the world that Scotus uses to establish the intelligence and voluntariness of the divine action, and the nature of this intelligence and volition, and not any inference from a created intellect and will to the divine intellect and will.[42] Scotus also establishes that the intellect and will of the first cause are really identical with its essence not by reference to the human soul, but by examining the divine powers themselves. Arguing that the intellection and volition of the divine intellect and will are the same (*idem*) as the divine essence Scotus goes on to say that this conclusion has certain corollaries, the relevant ones being: "the will is the same as the first nature", and "the intellect is the same thing as that [first] nature".[43] The proofs of these corollaries do not rely on knowledge of the nature or arrangement of the powers of the human soul, and so the presence of intellect and will in God, and their identity with the divine essence, at least in their most basic forms, are not arrived at by the method of univocal predication, contrary to what Scotus's own words have led us to expect.

Scotus uses this determination that God has an intellect and will identical with His essence to draw conclusions about the human powers and soul in ways that are easy to miss but nonetheless present. And, as they are inferences from God to creature that depend upon the doctrine of univocity, they are unlicensed by the method of univocal predication. A minor example of such an unlicensed inference occurs in Scotus's *Ordinatio* discussion of divine simplicity, in his argument against the opinion that a distinction of reason can be drawn between God's essence and attributes only through an act of the intellect, Scotus recites and endorses the following argument from Henry of Ghent that the opinion is false: "Since true and good in a creature are distinguished by a distinction of reason, from which distinct things, therefore, is this distinction taken? From none, but from true and good in God, which differ by reason".[44] In this brief argument, Scotus accepts that true and good are distinguished by a distinction whose basis is solely in God. Such an argument, which explicitly begins with the divine attributes, can only work if an inference from divine goodness and truth to human goodness and truth is valid. And what else could make this inference valid but an implicit appeal to the doctrine of univocity of being?

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[41] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.2.2 74: "quod primum efficiens est intelligens et volens, ita quod sua intelligentia est infinitorum distincte, et quod sua essentia est repraesentativa infinitorum, quae quidem essentia est sua intelligentia."

[42] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.2.2. 77-81.

[43] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.2.2 94, 96: "voluntas est idem primae naturae [...]"; "intellectus sit idem illi naturae [...]".

[44] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 1.8.4. 172. The editors of the Vatican edition of the *Ordinatio* suggest that Scotus is here arguing against the opinion of Thomas of Sutton.

The above case is evidence that the distinction of being from its proper attributes, which distinction Steele and Williams argued exists in Scotus's theory of divine simplicity as a concession to the doctrine of univocity, is initially found in God and transferred (illicitly) to humans. It is not, as it first appeared to be, a case of inferring something about God's existence from the nature of human existence. The circular pattern of identifying a kernel of a concept in God, inferring its presence in creatures from its presence in God *via* univocity, and then re-predicating of God the same concept, now more fleshed out in creatures because of their epistemic accessibility, was particularly easy to see in the case of freedom, and it presents itself again here. However, the dependency of the distinction between being and its proper attributes on a univocal predication from God to creatures is only a forerunner to a far more important instance of the doctrine's tacit presence in Scotus's though on the powers of the soul. Scotus's *Reportatio* discussion of the arrangement of the soul's powers, already discussed above in the context of the method of univocal predication, contains a more crucial, but subtle, appeal to univocity than any we have yet seen.

As indicated above, *Reportatio* 2.16 is a crucial passage for understanding Scotus's view on the human soul and its powers. Scotus's ultimate position, that the powers of the soul are formally distinct from one another and from the soul itself, is ostensibly a concession to established authority. But an examination of how Scotus arrives at that position and a comparison of his ultimate position with the one he argues for before his concession to authority suggest that the divine powers and essential unity for which he argues in the second distinction of the *Ordinatio* are in his mind and actively shaping the way he views the powers of the human soul. Before settling on the formal distinction, Scotus first makes a case for the absolute identity of the powers of the soul with the soul. Among several other arguments for this view, Scotus advances the following (with sentences numbered again for ease of reference):

> [1]I say to the question that something less should be posited where something more is not necessary; and possibility, where impossibility cannot be proved; and a nobility of nature, where an ignobility cannot be proved. [2]But the immediacy of the first act to the second act is a nobility, as is clear in God, and it is not able to be proved that it is impossible for the second act to follow immediately from the first act in creatures, as is clear, since there are sophisticated arguments that prove this; [3]and so it is all the more necessary to posit something less that makes [human] nature more noble, than something more that is not necessary and does not make [human] nature more noble.[45]

[45] Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 14: "Dico igitur ad quaestionem, quod paucitas est ponenda, ubi pluralitas non est necessaria; et possibililas, ubi non potest probari impossibilitas; et nobilitas in natura, ubi non potest probari imposibilitas. Sed immediatio actus primi ad actum secundum nobilitas est, ut patet in Deo, et non potest probari quod impossibile est actum secundum esse immediate ab actu primo in creaturis, ut patet, cum rationes sint sophisticae hoc probantes; igitur magis est ponenda paucitas nobilitans naturam, quam pluralilas non necessaria, et non nobilitans eam."

The argument against positing something other than a soul, intellect, and will that are entirely indistinct to explain human intellectual and volitional acts relies on Scotus proving that it is more noble for the soul and its powers to be identical (from sentence 1). And the proof for this comes in sentence 2, where Scotus openly appeals to how God's powers are related to His essence. This claim reinforces what I argued for above, that Scotus has decided how God's powers are related to His essence independently of the relationship between the human soul and its powers. And sentence 3 constitutes a clear instance of Scotus predicating of the human soul a nobility in the divine essence, a predication that, as in the case of freedom, can only occur if its motivation of attributing nobility to nature is made possible by an assumption of the univocity of the concepts of existence, intellect, and will in the case of God and humans. Hence, we see again that Scotus finds in humans a perfection initially discovered in God and does so by an inference from God to creatures that is illicit according to the method of univocal predication.

In a final instance of an inference from God to creature that is based on univocity, Scotus proves that a human soul could be absolutely identical with its powers by appealing to this reality in God. The Subtle Doctor writes that:

> That way of arguing [that a single indistinct thing can produce many different effects] cannot be disproved through reason, since just as the first cause, which is always unlimited, is entirely the same thing, and is the immediate principle of diverse things, thus what is unlimited in some respect of its own, though not absolutely so with respect to other things, can be entirely the same really and conceptually, although the things it produces are distinct.[46]

Duns Scotus's claim here is that, since it is possible in the case of God (the first cause) to be one thing while having diverse effects, so is it possible in the case of the human soul. That the human soul's sameness with its powers is possible merely because the same arrangement obtains between the divine essence and its powers is a conclusion that could only be made with the assumption in mind that the being and powers of God and the being and powers of humans are essentially the same, though the divine existence, intellect, and will are infinite.

Scotus ostensibly rejects the view just described in favor of a view that makes the human soul and its powers formally distinct. However, this does not mitigate the fact that Scotus is comfortable with drawing conclusions about human perfections by appealing to divine perfections whose existence and nature were established independently of any reference to their creaturely counterparts. And just how meaningful Scotus's rejection of this view is has been called into question. At least one scholar, John van den Bercken, has suggested that the view Scotus seems to reject and the one he puts forth in its stead are

[46] Scotus, *Reportatio*, 2.16.1 17: "Ista via per rationem improbari non potest, quia sicut prima causa, quae est semper illimitata, est omnino eadem, et est principium diversorum immediate, ita quod est illimitatum suo modo, licet non simpliciter respect istorum, omnino idem re et ratione potest esse, quamquam producta sint diversa."

not actually opposed. Rather, the latter is a qualified version of the former, with the same sense of real identity retained across both.[47] I think van den Bercken is right to suggest this, for a further reason that he does not offer, which is that it resolves an apparent puzzle in *Reportatio* 2.16. Recall that Scotus explicitly argues in other places for a formal distinction between the divine attributes and between the divine essence and attributes. Such a position would be at odds with the passage just quoted, in which the absolute identity of the first cause's powers and essence are used to prove the possibility of the same arrangement in humans, unless a formal distinction is actually consistent with the sort of identity Scotus has in mind. Hence, if the two views are understood as consistent, then though Scotus adds in a qualification where he thinks none is needed, the qualification does not compromise the real identity between the divine essence and its powers, nor between the human soul and its powers.

If it is true that the soul's identity in Scotus's second *Reportatio* view is consistent with the identity of Scotus's first *Reportatio* view, then it is clear from what has been said about Scotus's appeals to the divine essence to establish that identity that the doctrine of univocity plays a role in Scotus's view that is unlicensed by his own standards. For, while Scotus has argued that the univocity of being is essential for us to have a notion of God, and that the method of univocal predication runs in the direction of creature to God, Scotus's treatment of the powers of the soul turns on inferring facts about creatures from facts about the divine, facts that were established independently of any reference to perfections in creatures. The same circularity that emerged in the case of the freedom of the will and the distinction of being from its proper attributes is apparent here: knowledge of the identity of the divine essence, intellect, and will depends on an inference from the identity of the human soul, intellect, and will, according to the method of univocal predication; this knowledge of the human soul and its powers, in turn, rests on conclusions about human being and perfections drawn from divine being and perfections, conclusions that are made possible and necessitated by the doctrine of univocity of being.

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Date of submission: 31/03/2023
Date of acceptance: 11/07/2023

[47] See John Van den Bercken, "John Duns Scotus in Two Minds about the Powers of the Soul", *Recherches de theologies et philosophie médiévales* 82 (2015): 199-240. Van den Bercken argues that, although Scotus presents what appear to be two different views on the soul in *Reportatio*, 2.16.1, and accepts the second, in reality Scotus never abandoned the first view, but only qualified it (by the addition of a formal distinction) out of respect for authority.