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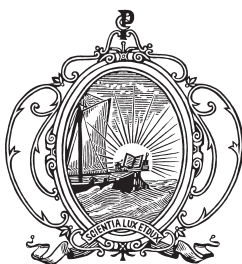
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**Durand of Saint-Pourçain and
His *Sentences* Commentary**

Historical, Philosophical, and
Theological Issues

Edited by

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SINE QUA NON CAUSALITY AND THE CONTEXT OF DURAND'S EARLY THEORY OF COGNITION

Jean-Luc SOLÈRE

1. ON INEFFICIENT CAUSES

1.1. *One Way Causality*

In the first redaction of his commentary on the Sentences, Durand adopts a radical stance regarding our knowledge of material things: he denies these things any active role in the cognitive process.¹ His avowed reason is what I will call the “downwards only causation” (DOC) principle.² According to that axiom, that which is ontologically superior can act upon that which is inferior, but not the reverse. Consequently, material objects of cognition cannot imprint any information on the mind — either directly or through the intermediary of species. Even though, in the Aristotelian theory, material substances are supposed not to act on the senses through their matter, but through some of their accidental forms, which in addition are “spiritualized” by the process of becoming intentional species, this still contradicts the DOC principle because the sensible qualities of things, even *qua* forms, are ontologically inferior to the sensory faculty. The same goes for intelligible species: although they are presumed to be completely de-materialized by the agent intellect, the fact that they originate from the object makes them inferior to the intellect.³ Thus, Durand does not take issue only with some kind of crass

1. DURANDUS DE SANCTO PORCIANO, *Scriptum super IV libros Sententiarum. Distinctiones 1-5 libri Secundi*, d. 3, q. 5 (red. 9), ed. F. RETUCCI, Leuven / Paris / Walpole, MA 2012, pp. 146-170.

2. The present contribution completes an earlier article: J.-L. SOLÈRE, “Durand of Saint-Pourçain’s cognition theory: its fundamental principles,” in: R.L. FRIEDMAN – J.-M. COUNET (eds.), *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle’s De Anima*, Leuven / Louvain-la-Neuve 2013, pp. 185-248, in which I had labeled this principle the “asymmetry principle” (p. 192).

3. DURAND, *Super Sent.* (9), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 13, p. 152, 163-171: “[...] oportet uniuersaliter agens quantum ad principium quo agit esse prestantius et nobilius patiente quantum ad illud quod patiens patitur [...] set qualitas sensibilis per quam sensibile agit

materialism which would contend that material things act directly on the soul. He does not want them to act at all on the soul, even just as a remote cause and through immaterial intermediaries. The DOC requirement is not merely that only something immaterial can act as a proximate cause on the soul; it is that no material being can originate a chain of actions that end up effecting something in the soul. In that respect, Durand opposes the part of the Aristotelian cognition theory that supposes passivity in the soul with regard to sensible things on the ground that the soul still has to be actualized, perfected, completed, by an external object, as far as cognition is concerned.⁴ Durand, on the contrary, thinks that the soul cannot “receive” anything whatsoever that comes from the things. His argument against the Aristotelian account is not based on some pre-Cartesian dualism between material and immaterial substances that could be obviated if one admitted bridging entities such as the intentional species.⁵ Rather, the question is: is the soul at any point passive in the process of knowing about material beings? And the answer is: no, because of the DOC principle — a principle that Durand says he borrows from St Augustine,⁶ and that he understands as Augustine does.

In order to emphasize this last clause, it is important to contrast the Augustinian understanding of the DOC principle with Aristotle’s statement, in the *De anima*: “the agent is worthier than the patient.”⁷

in sensum, ut isti dicunt, non est aliquid nobilius et perfectius potentia sensitiva et idem intelligitur de obiecto intellectus et potentia intellectiva; ergo obiectum sensus et intellectus non potest causare in sensu et intellectu sentire et intelligere.”

4. Cf. AQUINAS, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, II, d. 3, p. 2, q. 3, a. 1, corp., ed. P. MANDONNET, Paris 1929, p. 114: “illud vero in quo est potentia, non poterit intelligere nisi perficiatur in actu per aliquid receptum ab extrinseco”; ID., *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 55, a. 2, corp.: “[...] inferiores substantiae intellectivae, scilicet animae humanae, habent potentiam intellectivam non completam naturaliter; sed completur in eis successive, per hoc quod accipiunt species intelligibiles a rebus.”

5. Durand does in fact admit physical species in the *medium* that have an “intentional” or “weak” being. But these species are not received in the soul. See J.-L. SOLÈRE, “Durand of Saint-Pourçain’s cognition theory,” pp. 218-228.

6. In support, Durand (*Super Sent.* [2], II, d. 3, q. 5, § 13, p. 152, 172-179) quotes AUGUSTINE, *De musica*, VI, 5, 8, ed. M. JACOBSSON, Stockholm 2002, p. 24, 19-24: “Sed perabsurdum est fabricatori corpori materiam quoquo modo animam subdere. Numquam enim anima est corpore deterior, et omnis materia fabricatore deterior. Nullo modo igitur anima fabricatori corpori est subiecta materies. Esset autem, si aliquos in ea numeros corpus operaretur.”

7. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, III, 5, 430a18-19.

Aristotle seems to hint at a similar principle of descending causality, but the resemblance is in reality superficial, because what matters is not the formula taken in isolation, but the way it is employed in a system that includes other principles. Aristotle's statement obviously cannot mean that sensible objects do not act on the soul, as the opposite clearly is another tenet of his epistemology. As a consequence, Aquinas has to qualify Aristotle's statement: he explains that an agent is not necessarily superior to the patient in each and every respect (*absolute*), but can be viewed as superior to the sole extent that it is already in actuality what the patient is potentially.⁸ In other words, if a certain accidental form *F* is actual in *x* and potentially in *y*, *x* can actualize *F* in *y* (that is to say, be an agent and act on *y*), and in that respect be superior to *y*, notwithstanding the fact that, as far as their natures or essences are concerned, *y* stands higher than *x*. In this way, a material thing can be viewed as superior to the senses, since it has in actuality the quality that the sensory faculty is going to receive from it. In every other respect, however, the sense, faculty of the soul, is evidently superior to the material thing.⁹ According to Durand, on the contrary, the hierarchical principle brooks no

8. On the other hand, Aquinas is happy to apply unreservedly that principle to intellection, from which he draws an argument for positing an agent intellect. AQUINAS, *Summa theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 6, corp.: "Et ideo ad causandam intellectualem operationem, secundum Aristotelem, non sufficit sola impressi sensibilibium corporum, sed requiritur aliquid nobilius, quia agens est honorabilius patiente."

9. See AQUINAS, *Summa theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 6, ad 2: "corpus sensibile est nobilium organo animalis secundum hoc quod comparatur ad ipsum ut ens in actu ad ens in potentia, sicut coloratum in actu ad pupillam, quae colorata est in potentia"; ID., *Sententia libri de anima*, III, c. 4 [lect. 10, n. 733] (ed. Leon. 45.1), Roma / Paris 1984, p. 220, 85-86: "[...] agens non est nobilium patiente et materia nisi secundum quod est in actu"; *ibid.*, II, c. 27 [l. III, lect. 3, n. 612], p. 185, 209-219: "[...] non tamen sensus proprius est nobilium quam sensus communis, licet mouens sit nobilium moto et agens patiente; sicut nec sensibile exterius est nobilium quam sensus proprius, licet moueat ipsum: est enim secundum quid nobilium, scilicet in quantum est actu album uel dulce, ad quod est sensus proprius in potentia, set sensus proprius est nobilium simpliciter propter uirtutem sensitivam, unde et nobilium modo recipit, scilicet sine materia: omne enim recipiens recipit aliquid secundum modum suum." The same applies to the intellect. See ID., *Quaestiones disp. de veritate* (= *De verit.*), q. 10, a. 6, ad 8 (ed. Leon. 22.2), Roma 1972, p. 314, 292-302: "[...] quamvis intellectus possibilis sit simpliciter nobilium quam phantasma, tamen secundum quid nihil prohibet phantasma nobilium esse, in quantum scilicet phantasma est actu similitudo talis rei quod intellectui possibili non convenit nisi in potentia; et sic, quodam modo potest agere in intellectum possibilem virtute luminis intellectus agentis, sicut et color potest agere in visum virtute luminis corporalis."

amendment. The soul cannot be *in any respect* inferior to a material being. That is why, as we shall see, Durand has to grant the soul another way of attaining sensory cognition than being actualized by its object. The manner in which Aquinas and Durand respectively explain why we can suffer burns illustrates the difference between the Aristotelian and the Augustinian principles. For Aquinas, although the human body is, absolutely speaking, higher than fire in the hierarchy of beings, fire is nonetheless superior in that it is heat in actuality, which the human body is not, and that is why fire can act on the body.¹⁰ For Durand, on the other hand, if fire can burn, it is because that which acts, in fire, is superior *in nature* to that on which it acts. One should not look at the subjects (*supposita*) themselves — for, from that point of view, it is true that fire is inferior to the human body — but at the active principle in the agent and its counterpart in the patient. From the latter point of view, the active principle of fire, heat, is intrinsically superior to that, in the human body, on which it acts, namely, dryness and moistness, principles of passivity.¹¹ By “intrinsically,” I mean that its superiority does not reside in the status of actuality versus potentiality, but in a superiority of nature without qualification, such as there is in that which is by nature active, with respect to that which is by nature passive even if it is actual (dry and moist are not forms in the state of potentiality, they are qualities possessed in effect by the body). True, fire eventually makes the body hotter than it was, that is to say, actualizes in it a potentiality. But this is possible only because, intrinsically, the agent’s principle is superior to the patient’s principle and was able to modify it. In other words, in Durand’s eyes, Aquinas has it backwards. For Aquinas, *x* can be

10. See AQUINAS, *Super Sent.*, IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3, ed. M.F. MOOS, Paris 1947, p. 33: “Agit enim ignis vel ferrum in corpus humanum, quod est simpliciter nobilior, quo tamen ignis est nobilior in quantum est actu calidus, et secundum hoc agit in corpus humanum.”

11. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (2), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 13, p. 152, 162-164 and 166-167: “[...] quamvis agens non semper sit prestantius patiente quantum ad illud quod est secundum suppositum, puta ignis non est prestantior homine in quem agit [...] nobilior est caliditas ignis per quam agit quam sit siccitas uel humiditas hominis per quam ab igne patitur.” According to Aristotle, heat and cold are the two active elementary qualities, whereas dry and moist are the two passive qualities (cf. *Meteora*, IV, 1, 378b12-16). That is why Durand says that the action of fire on the body is the action of heat on the dryness and moistness of the latter (heat draws the moistness out of the body, which provokes the burning; cf. *Meteora*, IV, 2, 380a5; 3, 380b15-19).

said to be superior to y because x actualizes F in y ; for Durand, x can actualize F in y if and only if x is in effect intrinsically superior to y , or at least something in it is intrinsically superior to something in y . But in a material thing there is nothing that is intrinsically superior to anything in the soul. Therefore, the DOC principle holds entirely and a material thing can act in no respect on the soul.

This impossibility entails, in its turn, that the soul *alone* is the active, efficient cause¹² of its cognition of material objects. And this is true not only of intellection, but also of sensation although a large part of passivity appears to be included in it. As a matter of fact, our body is affected, in its sensory organs, by external bodies. But sensation does not result from the transmission of that affection to the soul. What happens is that, as Augustine phrases it, through the permanent attention it gives to the body, the soul notices the physical modifications of the organs caused by the sense objects.¹³ It is this noticing (which is an action) that constitutes perception properly said, and it is therefore exclusively an activity of the soul. To that extent, Durand takes up a fundamental tenet of Augustine's philosophy of mind.¹⁴

12. That which the change comes from (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς; ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, II, 3, 194b29, *Metaphysica*, V, 2, 1013a30), the doer of what is done (τὸ ποιῶν τοῦ ποιουμένου, *Metaphysica*, V, 2, 31-32), that which carries out the changing of what is changed (τὸ μεταβλητικὸν τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος) (*Metaphysica*, V, 2, 1013a32).

13. DURAND (*Super Sent.* [2], II, d. 3, q. 5, § 29, pp. 161, 424 – 162, 429) again quotes Augustine's *De musica*, VI, 5, 10, p. 28, 19-23: "[...] uidetur mihi anima, cum sentit in corpore, non ab illo aliquid pati sed in eius passionibus adtentius agere, et has actiones [...] non eam latere, et hoc totum est, quod sentire dicitur." "Vult dicere," Durand comments, "sicut apparet ex hiis que dicuntur in eodem VI, quod sensibile non agit in potentiam sensitivam, set in organo ratione qualitatum disponentium ipsum, que actio, cum sit presens sensui, non latet ipsum, et ideo sentitur, nec est aliud sentire nisi sensibile presens non latere sensum" (*Super Sent.* [2], II, d. 3, q. 5, § 29, p. 162, 430-434).

14. P. HARTMAN, *Durand of St.-Pourçain on cognitive acts: their cause, ontological status, and intentional character*, PhD diss., University of Toronto 2012, p. 40, demurs at calling Durand an "Augustinian." He argues that Durand, in the prologue of his commentary on the *Sentences*, disowns any human authority. But, as we have seen (above, footnotes 6 and 13), Durand twice quotes Augustine in his question on cognition, and the classical passages of the *De musica* he cites are precisely, as if by chance, also quoted by all those who say that they side *with Augustine* against any type of reduction of the soul to passivity (whether they try to reconcile, in different ways, Augustine's position with Aristotle's, or not). See for instance PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum* (= *Qq. in II Sent.*), ed. B. JANSEN, 3 vols., Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi) 1922-1926, q. 58, vol. II,

1.2. *Accidental and Essential Potentiality*

Translated into Aristotelian terms, this thesis, however, seems to entail a problematic consequence: what is in potentiality (a cognitive potency, in this instance) can pass by itself into actuality, contrary to Aristotle's well known axiom according to which everything that changes is changed by another.¹⁵

Durand tries to make that consequence acceptable thanks to a distinction between essential and accidental potentiality. In fact, that distinction is derived from the distinction that Aristotle himself makes, in the *De anima*, between being in first actuality and being in second actuality, that is to say, between, on the one hand, a capacity or operating power that is fully formed but is not being put to use, and, on the other hand, the exercising of that power. The insight that appeals to Durand is that the passing from first to second actuality is, according to Aristotle, immediate and does not necessitate the action of an external agent as is the case for the passing from pure potentiality to first actuality. Such is, for instance, the difference between a child who could become a grammarian but still has to be taught grammar by a teacher, and a grammarian who is not using his knowledge at the time being but can actualize it at will.¹⁶ Besides the obvious reference to this famous passage of the *De anima*, one should also turn to *Physics*, VIII, 4, which elaborates on the same idea. When commenting on that chapter, Averroes introduces the terms that Durand uses,

p. 437, q. 72, vol. III, pp. 13-17, and also hereafter note 104; JOHN PECKHAM, *Tractatus de anima*, c. III, ed. G. MELANI, Firenze 1948, pp. 10-11; and what is said hereafter about Kilwardby (p. 217). Referring to these passages of the *De musica* is anything but insignificant because conflicting interpretations of Augustine's thought were clashing in Durand's days. Even thinkers who stand at the other extreme of the spectrum (that is to say, who admit passivity in the soul) try to have Augustine on their side by appealing to other texts (for instance the *De Trinitate*: see below p. 215 at footnote 99). One cannot imagine that Durand is unaware of these debates, and quoting the *De musica* is tantamount to choosing one's camp and making a statement. This is all the more true if nothing obliged him to quote Augustine, given his disclaimer in the prologue. See also below footnote 67, on "vital operations." When such references, which are the marker of a well-defined trend of thought, are discounted, Durand may be rendered fashionable and seen out of context as for instance a proponent of "physiological functionalism" (P. HARTMAN, *Durand of St.-Pourçain on cognitive acts*, p. 227).

15. See ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VII, 1; VIII, 4-5.

16. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, II, 5, 417a22-29.

namely, “essential potentiality” and “accidental potentiality.”¹⁷ That which is in essential potentiality to a form, Averroes explains, has to be actualized by an external agent. On the contrary, that which is already in first actuality is in accidental potentiality towards second actuality, that is to say, can pass by itself to second actuality.

However, if the actualization of an accidental potentiality is not contingent upon the intervention of another agent, one might wonder why beings that are in accidental potentiality are not *always* in second actuality (which is a *telos* for their nature). Well, there may be obstacles to the actualization of an accidental potentiality. These obstacles may consist of adverse agents (producing a constraint or “violent” movement, for example), but the mere absence of a certain condition also constitutes an impediment. In the trained grammarian, the lack of any desire to think of grammar in this moment qualifies as a hindrance to the actualization of his knowledge, just as would sleep, a distraction or a disease. Peter of John Olivi aptly explains that an accidental potentiality is called “accidental” because it is merely accidental for that potentiality not to be fully actualized, and that happens when some condition “without which its actualization does not obtain” is not fulfilled.¹⁸

So the central idea of this theory is the spontaneity of the action when some condition is fulfilled. As soon as the impediment is removed,

17. AVERROES, *In libros Physicorum commentaria*, VIII, 4, Venezia 1550 (Juntina prima), fol. 168va: “Et quia altera istarum est essentialis, et alia accidentalis, assimilavit essentialem potentia<m>, quae est in addiscente, ut fiat sciens, et potentiam accidentalem, quae est in sciente, quando non utitur scientia, propter aliquod impedimentum. [...] potentia essentialis indiget, in hoc quod exeat in actum, agente essentialiter, secunda autem <i.e. potentia accidentalis> non indiget agente in hoc quod exeat in actum, nisi propter impediens, aut propter defectum subiecti in quo agit. Verbi gratia, quoniam ignis est comburans in potentia, quando non invenit materiam quam comburat. Cum igitur invenit materiam quam comburat, tunc fit comburens in actu sine indigentia motoris extrinseci.” *Ibid.*, fol. 168vb: “quando sciens fuerit sciens in actu, tunc non indiget motore extrinseco in actu, sed aget sua actione, nisi aliquid impediatur”; “proprium est essentiali potentiae ut non fiat in actu nisi propter motorem essentialem, et quod non venit ad actum nisi quando duo congregantur, scilicet recipiens et agens; e contrario potentiae accidentali quae non indiget ad hoc quod exeat in actum motore extrinseco nisi per accidens, et est recessus impedimenti.” Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VIII, 4, 255a30-b23.

18. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 57, vol. II, p. 347: “esse vero in potentia accidentali seu per accidens non sumitur ab eo nisi in potentiis activis quae per accidens dicuntur esse in potentia, propter defectum scilicet alicuius sine quo non possunt exire in actum.”

the accidental potentiality exercises its power in effect, like a spring that has been compressed uncoils. For his part, Aristotle exemplifies this process by the natural movement of bodies upwards or downwards.¹⁹ Water, which, in the cyclical transformation of the elements, is changed into air, is heavier than air but is potentially light. When it becomes in effect air, its lightness is actualized (first actuality). However that volume of air might be, for instance, enclosed in some container under the water and prevented to be above water as its nature would have it. Therefore, its lightness is still in potentiality with respect to the full actualization of its nature, which would send it higher up (second actuality). This potentiality is an accidental potentiality, which will spontaneously and immediately start actualizing in an upwards movement when the obstacle is suppressed, that is to say, when the air is released. It is the nature of the air to do so, and it does not need to be acted upon or to act on something in order to achieve its *entelecheia*.

Durand applies this idea to the cognitive faculties of the soul. Once they exist (that is to say, when the soul is created), these faculties are immediately in their first actuality. They will pass into second actuality — that is to say, they will cognize — without any other agent concurring, in particular not material objects, which cannot act on them, as we saw.²⁰ The mind moves towards its *entelecheia*, knowledge, with the same spontaneity as the air ascends. Aquinas himself had followed that line of thought as far as angels are concerned. Their intellect, he says, can be in potentiality with respect to intelligible objects other

19. See ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VIII, 4, 255b8-11: “[...] what is light is generated from what is heavy, for instance air from water: the light is first potentially, and then is in effect light <primary actuality>, and it will at once realize its proper activity <i.e. moving upwards, its secondary actuality> unless something prevents it” (transl. R.P. HARDIE – R.K. GAYE, in: *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. BARNES, Princeton, N.J. 1995, vol. 1, p. 427, modified); *ibid.*, 255b17-24: “As we have said, a thing may be potentially light or heavy in more ways than one. Thus not only when a thing is water is it in a sense potentially light, but when it has become air it may be still potentially light; for it may be that through some hindrance it does not occupy an upper position, whereas, if what hinders it is removed, it realizes its activity and continues to rise higher. The process whereby what is of a certain quality changes to a condition of actuality is similar: thus the exercise of knowledge follows at once upon the possession of it unless something prevents it” (*ibid.*, p. 427). See also *Metaphysica*, IX, 5, 1048a17-20.

20. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (Q), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 27, p. 160, 378-380: “[...] Illud quod est solum in potentia accidentali non est in potentia ad nouam formam nec indiget ad hoc ut reducatur in actum agente dante nouam formam.”

than themselves, but it is not actualized by some other agent. As it is in accidental potentiality, it can initiate a cognitive act just by itself.²¹ Durand uses the same solution for human cognition. In doing so, he can invoke the following sentence of Aristotle, which explicitly compares, on the one hand, the apparition of the sensitive faculty to the possession of a science by the intellect (both being a state of first actuality), and, on the other hand, sensing in effect to the exercising of that science (both being a state of second actuality):

In the case of what is to possess sense, the first transition is due to the action of the male parent and takes place before birth so that at birth the living thing is, in respect of sensation, at the stage which corresponds to the possession of knowledge. Actual sensation corresponds to the stage of the exercise of knowledge.²²

Durand seems to echo that exact sentence when he affirms that the sole external efficient cause of our cognition is the one that has caused our whole being with its faculties,²³ and that once these faculties are established, they by themselves reach their final actualization.

Notwithstanding these Aristotelian references, Durand is being — it is hardly necessary to underline it — un-Aristotelian. Admittedly, when he puts to use the *Physics*' theory of accidental potentiality, Durand may be following Aristotle's hint:

The process whereby what is of a certain quality changes to a condition of actuality is similar <to the movement of the air>: thus the exercise of knowledge follows at once upon the possession of it unless something prevents it.²⁴

21. See AQUINAS, *De verit.*, q. 8, a. 6, ad 7, p. 239, 218-229: "[...] respectu autem aliorum intelligibilium potest esse in potentia. Nec tamen sequitur quod, quando intellectus est in potentia, quod per aliud agens reducatur in actum semper, sed solum quando est in potentia essentiali, sicut aliquis antequam addiscat; quando autem est in potentia accidentali, sicut habens habitum dum non considerat, potest per seipsum exire in actum, nisi dicatur quod reducitur in actum per voluntatem qua movetur ad actu considerandum."

22. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, II, 5, 417b16-19. This idea is also present in *Physica*, VIII, 4, 256a1, where Aristotle says that the cause of the movement upwards or downwards of what is light or heavy is the generative and efficient cause of their lightness or heaviness.

23. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (9), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 27, p. 159, 356-358: "De secundo dicendum quod intelligere et sentire sunt in nobis per se a dante sensum et intellectum, quod est creans uel generans." Same answer in HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl.* III, q. 14, Paris 1518 (repr. Louvain 1961), I, fol. 70rC; *Quodl.* V, q. 14, *ibid.*, fol. 176rL; *Quodl.* XI, q. 5, *ibid.*, II, fol. 451rV.

24. ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VIII, 4, 255b21-23.

Nevertheless, for Aristotle the state of accidental potentiality, regarding knowledge, presupposes that some cognitive content has already been acquired and is, so to speak, in store. It is the *habitus* present in the grammarian that enables him to use his knowledge immediately and at will. Likewise, for Aquinas, angels already possess the cognition they can actualize by themselves: they benefit from innate intelligible forms. But that is far from being true in our case.²⁵ The human mind being a blank slate, cognitive contents, according to Aristotle and Aquinas, have to be imprinted in the first place by the action of sensory objects. That is why Aristotle immediately specifies, after the passage about the apparition of the sensitive faculty (first actuality) that we have just read,²⁶ that, in the case of sensation, the external objects are the “agents” of the second actualization.²⁷

On the contrary, because of the DOC principle, Durand is adamant that not only is the object not the main efficient cause of the cognitive episode, but it is not even a secondary cause, an auxiliary cause, a partial cause, or any kind of collaborating, active cause, as it just cannot act on the soul at all. Therefore, the faculties must have, through the “attention” of the soul, the active power to grasp their object (something akin to intentionality), which is tantamount to self-actualizing. That is why Durand grants us, contrary to Aristotle, the state of accidental potentiality at the very beginning of the cognitive process, that is to say, when we still have everything to learn.

25. Cf. AQUINAS, *De verit.*, q. 11, a. 1, ad 12, p. 353, 493-499: “[...] unde ad huiusmodi cognoscenda, antequam habitum habeat, non solum est in potentia accidentali sed etiam in potentia essentiali: indiget enim motore qui reducat eum in actum per doctrinam, ut dicitur in VIII *Physicorum*, quo non indiget ille qui iam aliquid habitualiter novit.”

26. ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, II, 5, 417b16-19.

27. See ARISTOTLE, *De anima*, II, 5, 417b20: “[...] the agents of the act <of sensation> are outside <the soul> [τὰ ποιητικὰ τῆς ἐνεργείας ἔξωθεν].” In the same vein, Aristotle had previously explained (417a7-9) that the combustible never ignites itself spontaneously, but requires an agent which has the power of starting ignition — which is the exact opposite of Durand’s view as far as operations of the soul are concerned. Olivi complains that Aristotle contradicts himself (*Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 74, vol. III, p. 111).

1.3. *The Notion of “Causa Sine Qua Non”*

However, our knowledge is obviously conditioned and bounded by its objects. Otherwise, we could perceive what we want, when we want. So, objects do have an essential part in the cognitive process; but how, then, is their role to be construed?

Durand’s answer is that an object is merely a “*causa sine qua non*” of the cognitive episode.²⁸ What he calls a *sine qua non* cause is not just a necessary cause, as in ordinary parlance, but more specifically a cause that removes an obstacle to the (self)actualization of an accidental potentiality.²⁹ Let us go back again to *Physics* VIII, 4. As we saw earlier, even when no adverse agent is thwarting the actualization of an accidental potentiality, the mere absence of a certain required condition is a hindrance to that actualization. Existing fire (fire in first actuality), Averroes explains, is only potentially a burning agent when there is no material to be burned. Bring some dry wood, and the fire will start being a burning agent (second actuality) without any further condition (that is to say, without the need of the fire itself being further actualized by another cause, as was the case when the fire was engendered from another, actual fire). Durand seems to recall that passage of Averroes when he writes that:

ad hoc enim quod aliquid sit calefactuum, sufficit quod possit habere calefactibile, set ad calefacere requiritur actualiter presens calefactibile.³⁰

An action is needed for bringing something heatable close to the potential heater (which is already hot, but not yet heating in effect since there is nothing to be heated), so that it becomes a heater in actuality. Likewise, some action is needed for releasing the air enclosed in a receptacle under the water. But these actions that precede and condition the actualization of the accidental potentiality do not act on the subject that is in accidental potentiality (the fire, the heater, or the air). Their scope is limited to the impediment that is to be suppressed (the lack of wood or of something to be heated, or the forced confinement of the air). Aristotle compares this to the pulling away of a pillar that

28. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (¶), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 27, p. 159, 358: “<intelligere et sentire sunt in nobis> ab obiecto autem sicut a causa sine qua non.”

29. See also Peter Hartman’s article in this volume, pp. 229-256.

30. DURAND, *Super Sent.* (¶), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 28, p. 161, 404-406.

prevented something from falling: the removal of the support does not act on the body that was supported and does not add anything to its tendency to go downwards; it just sets it free to achieve spontaneously its second actuality.³¹

In the same way, the 'natural state' of our mind is to cognize. Such is its essence and that is why it does not need to be brought to that state by any external agent. But, of course, it cannot attain its *entelecheia* when there are no objects to be cognized. Their absence is an impediment to its self-actualization, and an object's becoming present to it removes that impediment. As far as perception is concerned, an object becomes present to the mind by acting on the bodily sense organs. This is not acting on the mind; it is just suppressing the obstacle to the mind's exercising its power of knowing (namely, noticing the sensory organs' affections and, thanks to them, grasping the object). As far as intellection is concerned, the intelligible content is made present to the intellect in the phantasms. The phantasms do not act on the intellect; they just remove the hindrance by providing the intellect with something to work on.³²

Therefore, the object is merely a necessary circumstance: it does not effectuate anything beyond being present to the faculties. Still, the object makes it possible for the cognitive faculty to reach its second actuality. The object thus has an indispensable role, albeit a limited one. A cognitive faculty (primary actuality), Durand notes, and its operation (secondary actuality) are not perfections in an absolute way, that is to say, just taken in themselves, but only in relation to something knowable, the presence of which is required.³³ That relational dependency entails that, although the object does not act, it can be called a cause of the cognitive process: a *sine qua non* cause, one that does not imprint anything and only provides the occasion for an accidental potentiality to self-actualize, just by removing an obstacle to this self-actualization. As Olivi remarks, that which is required for the production of something is not necessarily an efficient cause of

31. ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VIII, 4, 255b25-26.

32. See J.-L. SOLÈRE, "Durand of Saint-Pourçain's cognition theory," section 2, pp. 212-217.

33. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (91), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 28, p. 161, 419-421: "[...] Obiectum autem presentatum uel presentans obiectum est causa sine qua non pro eo quod intelligere non est perfectio mere absoluta, set in comparatione ad alterum."

that thing. Otherwise, the patient, in any physical action, would be also an efficient cause, given that the action would not take place if the agent did not have a patient to act on.³⁴ Olivi, again, elsewhere claims that since a material cause does not act, and yet is thought to be a real cause, likewise, even though it does not actively imprint the cognitive faculty, the object of cognition can legitimately be considered as a cause, since it is necessary to the process.³⁵

However, Olivi's remark may spark off an objection that will hit Durand's theory. True, a material cause is not active; but the cognized object is not really a material cause, since the cognitive episode does not have any effect on the thing out there. So, other than *sine qua non*, what kind of cause is the object, if it is neither an efficient cause nor a material cause? According to Durand, it is not a formal cause either,³⁶ nor probably is it a final cause.³⁷ The object, therefore, does not fit in any of the four canonical genres of causes. But if so, how can it be a cause at all? ³⁸ Granted that it is merely an obstacle remover, it seems that it still should fall into one of the recognized sorts of causality for removing the obstacle. Conversely, the four genres of causes are supposed to suffice for thoroughly explaining any natural process whatsoever. Duns Scotus (who, as we shall see, discusses a theory similar to Durand's) objects that either one has to

34. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 419: "[...] dicendum quod non omne quod necessario praexigitur ad productionem alicuius est causa effectiva ipsius. Alias patiens, in quantum patiens, esset causa effectiva effectuum quos in se recipit, quoniam patiens, in quantum patiens, praexigitur ad productionem ipsorum, non tamen praexigitur ad efficiendum eos aut ad coefficientum aliquid in ipsis, sed solum ad recipiendum ipsos."

35. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, pp. 36-37: "Sicut enim causa materialis habet vere rationem causae respectueducti ex ea vel recepti in ea, quamvis non sit proprie causa efficiens eius: sic causa terminativa habet vere rationem causae, quamvis non sit proprie causa efficiens actionis terminatae in ipsa."

36. See J.-L. SOLERE, "Durand of Saint-Pourçain's cognition theory," section 2.4, pp. 235-243.

37. It would be hard to maintain that a material object is a final cause of our cognitive faculties. Olivi admits, though, that the object can be considered as belonging to the genre of final causes (*Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 77, vol. III, p. 36). But that is because the object is, literally, an end, a *terminus* (*causa terminativa* is its adequate name, as we will see). Besides, why would Durand need to give it a special label (*causa sine qua non*) if that cause turned out to be one of the traditional non-efficient causes? Why wouldn't Durand just say that the object is a final cause, as opposed to an efficient cause?

38. Cf. ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, II, 3, 195a3-4: the fourfold division "exhausts the number of ways in which the term 'cause' is used."

create a fifth, *sui generis* and *ad hoc*, category of cause, or that, more plausibly, the *causa sine qua non* is reducible to one of the four causes. For instance, it is likely an efficient cause that removes the obstacle, or simply brings the patient at the right distance from the agent.³⁹ In fact, Aristotle does name the cause that suppresses an impediment in the case of air or fire: it is a cause that acts as a mover, that is to say, an efficient cause; and in a sense, this cause can be called a moving cause of the air itself, although, strictly speaking, it only moves the obstacle.⁴⁰ But Durand would not say as much of the object of cognition, namely, that *in a sense* it is the moving or efficient cause of the cognitive episode.

Then, must Durand bite the bullet and posit the *causa sine qua non* as a *sui generis* cause, a fifth genre of cause, since the object must be a non-efficient cause and is none of the three recognized kinds of non-efficient causes (material, formal, final)? That would not work: the definition we have extracted from Durand's indications makes it impossible to juxtapose it with the four Aristotelian causes. We are told that the *sine qua non* cause is a non-efficient cause that suppresses an impediment to self-actualization. But this does not define a distinct type of cause, since, as we have just seen with Olivi, as much can be said of a material cause. There is no room for the *causa sine qua non* within the Aristotelian framework, and that is why Scotus considers it ill-formed and superfluous.

However, the assumption of the foregoing objection is that the Aristotelian causal doctrine is unchallengeable. But Durand does not feel bound by Aristotle's teaching, and we have here another instance where he definitely thinks outside the Aristotelian framework. In fact, the notion he draws on comes from an alternative division of causes: that provided by Cicero in his *Topics* and transmitted by Boethius in his commentary on that work.

As a matter of fact, Cicero opposes, as the *two main genres* of causes, efficient causes, on the one hand, and *sine quibus non* causes, on the

39. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, in: *Lectura in librum primum Sententiarum. Prologus et distinctiones a prima ad septimam*, ed. COMMISSIO SCOTISTICA, Città del Vaticano 1960, p. 388; *Lectura*, II, d. 24, q. un., n. 58, in: *Lectura in librum secundum Sententiarum. A distinctione septima ad quadragessimam quartam*, ed. COMMISSIO SCOTISTICA, Città del Vaticano 1993, p. 248.

40. ARISTOTLE, *Physica*, VIII, 4, 255b24-25. Aristotle wrote this whole development in order to maintain the principle that nothing moves by itself.

other hand. In other words, being *sine qua non*, which for Aristotle is not a distinctive characteristic of any kind of cause, constitutes for Cicero a whole category that is contra-distinguished from efficient causes — which is exactly the sense in which Durand takes it.

Efficient causes (EC), Cicero says, are causes that, by their own power, never fail to produce a specific effect, at least when all conditions obtain.⁴¹ For instance, fire produces necessarily a flame; or (Boethius' example) the sun necessarily emits light. Two things should here be considered. First, as Boethius comments, an efficient cause is that in which the principle of change is contained, and, therefore, it "explains" the very nature of its specific effect.⁴² Second, it inevitably causes that effect when it acts. Though, only certain of these efficient causes (EC1) are able to cause their effect just by themselves, without any help. In other words, they are sufficient causes, which necessitate their effect, so much so that, from the existence of those causes, one may deduce the existence of their effect.⁴³ Other efficient causes (EC2) would not produce their effect without auxiliary causes.⁴⁴ But when they are granted these helping causes, they don't fail to produce their specific effect.

The second broad category is constituted by the causes that are characterized by two features: (i) they do not have the power to produce an effect — they are therefore not causes as efficient causes are —, but (ii) without them the effect of EC could not be produced — they are therefore *sine quibus non* causes (SQNC).⁴⁵ Among these causes without

41. See CICERO, *Topica*, XV, 58, ed. H.M. HUBBELL, Cambridge, MA / London 1949, pp. 424-426: "Causarum igitur genera duo sunt, unum quod ui sua id quod sub ea subiectum est certo efficit, ut ignis accendit." The background of this division of causes is probably Stoic. Stoicism restricted the proper sense of cause to things that effectively *do* something, as opposed to factors the presence of which is merely required (cf. SENECA, *Epistula LXV*, 4 and 11). The opposition may date back to Plato (*Phaedo*, 99A-B). See M. FREDE, "The original notion of cause," in: M. SCHOFIELD – M. BURNYEAT – J. BARNES (eds.), *Doubt and Dogmatism. Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, Oxford 1980, pp. 217-249.

42. See BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, in: PL 64, col. 1147A: "Earum uero omnium quae Tullius statuit in alterutra diuisione causarum, illa quidem quae ui sua explicant ea quorum causae sunt [...]."

43. See CICERO, *Topica*, XV, 60, p. 426: "Quare cum in disputationem inciderit causa efficiens aliquid necessario, sine dubitatione licebit quod efficitur ab ea causa concludere."

44. See *ibid.*, XV, 59, p. 426.

45. See CICERO, *Topica*, XV, 58, p. 426: "[...] alterum <genus>, quod naturam efficiendi non habet, sed sine quo effici non possit."

which an effect cannot be produced, some (SQNC1) have no action of their own at all — they are, so to speak, inert. Such are for example the place and the time of an action, the material (for instance the bronze of the statue), the tools.⁴⁶ Although they do not act, Boethius adds, they are nevertheless causes, provided that an agent includes them in its operation.⁴⁷ SQNC1 are necessary even to EC1, because no efficient cause can act without, for instance, a place and a time. It is clear, however, that SQNC1 are not auxiliary causes, since EC1 do not need any help.

Other causes (SQNC2) in some way prepare the production of an effect by bringing about circumstances that help a causal process. For instance a crime was provoked by love and love was aroused by an encounter. So they are not inert, but they do not have the productive power to engender the specific effect in question.⁴⁸ Presumably, they can concur with EC2, which are the efficient causes that require

46. See CICERO, *Topica*, XV, 59, p. 426: “Huius generis causarum, sine quo non efficitur, alia sunt quietia, nihil agentia, stolidia quodammodo, ut locus, tempus, materia, ferramenta et cetera generis.”

47. See BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, col. 1146C: “Atque haec quidem sunt quae nihil agentia, tamen causae sunt, si his efficiens operatio superveniet.” Cf. *ibid.*, col. 1149A-C: “Parentes enim et maxime masculini sexus efficiens causa est sed non sine femina, id est non sine materia quadam [...] Parentes namque tam masculini sexus quam feminini esse dicuntur, quorum quidem masculini sexus ea causa est quae efficiat sed non necessaria, feminini uero ea quae non efficiat sed sine qua effici non possit.”

48. Boethius wonders why they are not to be considered as efficient causes, and provides the following solution: “Sed mirum uideri potest cur congressionem amoris causam non inter ea enumeravit quae habent efficiendi uim, sed inter eas posuerit causas sine quibus effici non potest, cum tamen agat aliquid atque moueat. Nam ipsa congressio aliquid uidetur efficere, similisque est ei causae quae ipsa quidem habet efficiendi uim sed sine adminiculo non potest [EC2], ueluti cum quaeritur de sapientia an sola beatum possit efficere. Sed Merobaudes rhetor ita disseruit, earum causarum [EC2] quae efficiendi uim habent, eam esse facultatem ut, etiamsi adiumentis extrinsecus indigeant, effectus tamen earum ad id spectet quod efficiendum est. At in his causis quae sunt praecursoriae, etiamsi eis antecedentibus aliquid existit, non tamen id quod existere intelligitur praecursio principaliter operatur. Sed ista quidem ueluti sub quadam occasione praecurrit, illa uero res quae existeret dicitur, aliis operantibus nascitur, uelut in congressione solum est fieri. Fortasse enim non propter amorem quisque congrederit sed praecedente congressione amor existit, quem non congressio principaliter appetebat. Itaque quoniam praeter congressionem amor existere non potuit, recte inter eas causas congressio locata uidetur sine quibus non efficitur; quoniam uero non efficitur ui sua, quandoquidem nec principaliter ut efficiat, spectat sed tantum ea ante aliquid existit, recte inter praecursorias, ac non inter efficientes causas est collocata” (BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, col. 1147B-D).

auxiliary causes. But they do not necessitate, that is, they do not contribute to producing inevitably a specific effect.⁴⁹ More generally, as Boethius notes, EC2 and all SQNC have in common that they are not necessitating causes, as opposed to EC1.⁵⁰

According to Boethius, who tries to reconcile Cicero with Aristotle, while all EC fall into the Aristotelian genre of moving causes,⁵¹ all SQNC fall into the genre of material causes broadly construed — that is to say, they refer to matter, or to causes that, being conjoined to matter, are subservient to the agent's faculty.⁵²

Nevertheless, the notion of non-efficient, but necessary cause, that is to say, of *causa sine qua non* in Cicero's sense, and especially the notion of SQNC1, has been used in the Middle Ages without being necessarily linked to matter or material circumstances.

Anselm of Canterbury obviously has Cicero's text in mind when he writes that place, time, and similar parameters are causes of an action inasmuch as, without them, the action would not happen.

49. CICERO, *Topica*, XV, 59, p. 426: "(...) alia autem praecursionem quandam adhibent ad efficiendum, et quaedam adferunt per se adiuventia, etsi non necessaria, ut amor congressio causam attulerat, amor flagitio." However, it is the concatenation of these preparing causes, Cicero notes (*ibid.*), which constitutes fate according to the Stoics (cf. CICERO, *De fato*, XVIII, 41).

50. See BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, col. 1148A-C: "Ac primum de ea loquitur causa quae efficiendi vim tenet, eius enim ea pars cui efficiendi necessitas adest, statim secum conclusionem comitem trahit; dicta enim causa, quae necessario ac quid efficit, effectus etiam nec esse est consequatur, ueluti si solem adfuisse quis dixerit, lucem quoque adfuisse monstrabit, aut cum alicui ad esse sapientiam dixerimus, sapientem nec esse est fateamur. At in his causis efficientibus quae extraposis indigent adiumentis, non eadem ratio est; neque enim ut quaeque huiusmodi causa dicitur, ita nec esse est affectum sequi. Non enim huiusmodi causa necessario efficit quod uult, nisi extraposis auxiliis adiuuetur; idem est etiam in ea causa quae ipsa quidem efficiendi vim non habet sed sine ea non prouenit effectus. [...] Ex quo aliarum causarum partitio nascitur. Aliae namque causae sunt necessariae, aliae minime. Non necessariarum aliae sunt efficientes, aliae sine quibus non efficitur."

51. See BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, col. 1147A: "illa quidem quae uis sua explicant ea quorum causae sunt, omnia tam per se ad efficiendum ualentia quam quaesiti extrinsecus iuuaminis indigentia, in ea Aristotelicae diuisionis causa locabuntur, quae est principium motus." However, "moving cause" must be understood in the strict sense of "source of motion." Although tools could be considered as moving causes because they transmit motion (instrumental causes), they are in fact SQNC1, as we saw.

52. See BOETHIUS, *In Topica Ciceronis commentaria*, col. 1147A-B: "Eius uero causae quam Tullius refert, sine qua non fit aliquid, materia quidem, tempus et locus, id est, ex quo fit uel in quo fit quae sunt efficienti substantia naturae: ut uno intellectu comprehendantur, uel materia sunt, uel materiae uice supposita."

He concludes that, more generally, some causes are causes by doing, and some other causes by not doing (and some, even, by not being).⁵³ Robert of Melun, in the 12th century, is also a witness to the persistence of the Ciceronian opposition of EC and SQNC.⁵⁴ But the most egregious example, particularly interesting because it clearly does not reduce SQNC to matter, comes from Peter Lombard. In effect, Lombard uses that concept for elaborating a thesis on God's knowledge: neither is divine prescience the efficient cause of contingent futures, nor contingent futures the efficient cause of divine prescience; they are just *causae sine quibus non* for each other.⁵⁵ Naturally, this is of special importance regarding what we have read in Durand. Lombard wants to establish that there would be no divine prescience if there were no future objects to be known in advance; but these objects do not act on or determine God's intellect (that would be unbecoming). In that respect, Lombard's thesis has a strong structural similarity with Durand's view about human cognition.

Bonaventure does not use the concept of *causa sine qua non* in the context of cognition theory, but it is nevertheless worth noting that,

53. ANSELM OF CANTERBURY, *Fragmenta philosophica*, fragm. 2, ed. R.W. SOUTHERN – F.S. SCHMITT, in: IID., *Memorials of Saint Anselm*, London / New York 1969, p. 339: "In unius quippe hominis occisione causa est ille qui occidit et qui hoc iubet et hoc propter quod occiditur, locus quoque et tempus sine quibus non fit, et alia plura. Dicuntur etiam causae facere, aliae faciendo, aliae vero non faciendo, aliquando quoque non solum non faciendo, sed etiam non existendo. Quomodo enim ille qui non cohibet mala dicitur facere illa esse, et qui non facit bona facere illa non esse pronuntiat, ita etiam disciplina, sicut cum est, facit esse bona et non esse mala, sic, quando non est, affirmatur per absentiam facere mala esse atque bona non esse."

54. See ROBERT OF MELUN, *De Epistula ad Romanos*, cap. 5, in: *Œuvres de Robert de Melun*, t. II: *Quaestiones de epistolis Pauli*, ed. R.M. MARTIN, Louvain 1938, p. 89: "Delictum enim causa est sine qua non fieret, non efficiens; sed donum ita est causa ad remittendum sive actuale sive originale peccatum, ut efficiat illud. Quantum igitur interest inter causam sine qua non fieret et causam efficientem, tantum inter delictum et donum."

55. See PETER LOMBARD, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, I, d. 38, cap. 1, n. 8, ed. PP. COLLEGI S. BONAVENTURAE, Grottaferrata 1971, t. I, pars II, p. 277: "[...] dicimus res futuras nullatenus causam esse praescientiae uel scientiae dei, nec ideo praesciri uel sciri, quia futurae uel factae sunt, ita exponentes quod ait Origenes: 'Quia futurum est, ideo scitur a deo antequam fiat', idest: quod futurum est, scitur a deo antequam fiat, neque sciretur nisi futurum esset, ut non notetur ibi causa, nisi sine qua non fit. Ita etiam dicimus scientiam uel praescientiam dei non esse causam eorum quae fiunt, nisi talem sine qua non fiunt, si tamen scientiam ad notitiam tantum referamus. Si uero nomine scientiae includitur etiam beneplacitum atque dispositio, tunc recte potest dici causa eorum quae deus facit."

for him also, this notion does not necessarily refer to material causes. For instance, the natural appetite that the soul has for the body is not the efficient cause of the original sin but is the cause without which the soul would not have contracted that infection.⁵⁶ Likewise, Bonaventure specifies that, in a loose sense, a cause is only that without which something would not occur, whereas in the strict sense, a cause is that which produces the effect. As a consequence, one should say that sin is merely a *sine qua non* cause of the punishment, but not a cause in the strict sense.⁵⁷

So Durand's appeal to the concept of *sine qua non* cause is in line with an established practice⁵⁸ of using Cicero's classification of causes. While the presence of an object conditions the production of a cognitive act, the object does not have an efficient power regarding this specific effect, and thus its contribution does not infringe on the DOC principle. More precisely, an object is strictly nothing else than a SQNC1 regarding cognition (as much can be said of the bodily affections that result from its action on the sense organs), as it does not act at all on the soul, even by the intermediary of the body.

In summary, for specifying the relation between mind and cognitive objects, on the assumption that the latter cannot act on the former, Durand resorts to the Aristotelian-Averroistic theory of accidental potentiality, with which he justifies the idea of self-actualization of a faculty. He obviates the need to locate in one of the four Aristotelian genres of causes the obstacle remover required by that theory by

56. See BONAVENTURE, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, II, d. 31, a. 2, q. 2, corp., ed. PP. COLLEGII S. BONVENTURAE, Quaracchi 1885, p. 753, col. 1. Cf. *ibid.*, II, d. 21, a. 2, q. 2, ad 6, t. II, p. 501, col. 2: "non potest <diabolus> aliquem tentare, nisi quando habet vertibilitatem liberi arbitrii et est in statu merendi vel demerendi, et in quo potest seduci. Et hoc solum est, quando spiritus rationalis est coniunctus carni mortali. Ex illa tamen ratione non concluditur, quod caro in tentatione diaboli sit causa *praecipua*, sed solum causa *sine qua non*."

57. See BONAVENTURE, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, IV, d. 15, pars 1, dubia circa litteram, dubium 3, Quaracchi 1889, p. 359, col. 2: "Dicendum quod causa dupliciter dicitur, scilicet proprie et communiter. Communiter et sic dicitur causa sine qua non. Accipiendo igitur causam large pro causa sine qua non, sic omnis poena dicitur venire ob meritum culpae originalis, quia nisi peccatum praecessisset, nulla esset poena. Si autem accipiatur proprie pro causa meritoria, vel finali, sic non meruit Iob illam poenam."

58. Although a rather marginal one, as I will emphasize in the second part of this paper. This makes Durand's use of that notion an important clue for exploring the context and sources of his theory.

identifying this remover with a Ciceronian *causa sine qua non*. In the alternative categorization of causality he takes up, this kind of cause is sufficiently described as one that is a necessary condition of a certain process but is opposed *simpliciter* to causes that are productive. Thus, Durand can analyze the cognitive faculty as a capacity that is able to self-actualize (in second actuality) but only when an object is present and provides, as a non-active cause, the occasion for a cognitive act.

2. ON THE CONTEXT OF DURAND'S THEORY

On the grounds of the DOC principle, Durand was naturally bound to oppose Godfrey of Fontaines's 'passivist' stance.⁵⁹ In the question of his commentary on the *Sentences* we started with, he specifically targets Godfrey's *Quodlibet IX*, q. 19, in which Godfrey maintains that the object directly (that is to say, without the intermediary of any representing species) moves our cognitive faculties. What is remarkable, however, is that, in the same question of the same *Quodlibet*, that is to say, around 1292-1294, the first view that Godfrey rejects is exactly the 'activist' theory Durand will later adopt. In other words, Durand knowingly takes up a conception that had been refuted by Godfrey. Here is how Godfrey expounds this opinion:

[...] videtur aliquibus quod virtute obiecti nec species nec actus intelligendi fiunt in intellectu, sed ipse intellectus habet esse in actu intelligendi se ipso, si adsit obiectum huiusmodi sui actus. Omni formae enim debetur aliqua actio; intellectus autem quaedam forma est; ergo aliqua actio debetur. Hoc autem non videtur nisi intelligere. Quare, et cetera. Et hoc declaratur per simile, cum enim alia entia imperfectiora habeant formas secundum quas se ipsis sunt in actu primo, scilicet semper, et secundo etiam si adsit obiectum vel materia talis actionis. Puta: ignis semper est calidus actu primo, quo scilicet secundum se calet; et ex hoc etiam semper est in actu secundo, scilicet calefaciendi si adsit materia; quae quidem materia vel obiectum talis actionis, ad hoc quod ignis sit in huiusmodi actu, nihil penitus facit in ipsum ignem, sed ignis per primum suum actum, hac materia praesente, exit in hunc secundum actum. Ita etiam videtur in proposito

59. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (¶), II, d. 3, q. 5, §§ 11-20, pp. 151-156.

quod intellectus secundum se sit aliqua res et natura secundum formam et actum, secundum quem semper est in suo actu primo, et etiam ex se ipso ex huiusmodi actu primo nata est exire in actum secundum, qui est intelligere in actu, praesente obiecto non quidem ut agente aliquid in ipsum, sed ut id in quod terminatur actio intellectus. Et secundum hunc modum ponendi posset dici quod, licet obiectum sic per se nihil faciat in intellectu, est tamen ut causa sine qua non fit ipse actus intelligendi (...).⁶⁰

The conclusion of this passage is the same we have just seen Durand drawing: the object is a mere “causa sine qua non” of the cognitive act. The rationale and the implicit reference to *Physics*, VIII, 4 and Averroes are also the same: what is in first actuality is in accidental potentiality toward its second actuality; and an existing form is by definition in first actuality. Fire is always hot by virtue of its first actuality and passes spontaneously to its operation, to wit, warming something, as soon as a thing is around. Likewise, the intellect is always ready to know, and does know as soon as an object is presented to it. This object is not an agent that would actualize an essential potentiality, and by no means does it impinge upon the intellect; it is only a *sine qua non* cause. Moreover, Godfrey specifies that those who advocate this position apply the same argument to the senses,⁶¹ which Durand also does.⁶²

Thus, it seems that Durand, in the years 1308-1310, purely and simply endorses a view that had been criticized by Godfrey around 1292-1294, that is, way before Durand was old enough to be part of the discussion. Who had initially set this view forth?

60. GODFREY OF FONTAINES, *Quodl. IX*, q. 19, ed. J. HOFFMANS, Louvain 1924, pp. 270-271.

61. See GODFREY OF FONTAINES, *Quodl. IX*, q. 19, p. 272: “Item si hoc dicatur de intellectu, dicetur etiam de sensu, sicut etiam isti dicunt.”

62. In addition, a little farther down Godfrey ascribes to the same adversary the following idea: “Et secundum istos intelligere non est species aliqua proprie dicta ad modum alicuius qualitatis per modum inhaerentis et informantis se habens, nec etiam ad ipsum intelligere requiritur aliqua alia species vel forma ultra actualitatem naturalem ipsius intellectus, sed est intelligere actio exercita” (*Quodl. IX*, q. 19, p. 272). This also matches another aspect of Durand’s position: no perfecting form is added when the intellect knows in actuality, the intellection is just the exercising of the property included in the first actuality of the intellectual form, in the same way as heat does not receive any extra form when heating. Cf. J.-L. SOLÈRE, “Durand of Saint-Pourçain’s cognition theory,” section 1.1, pp. 188-191.

2.1. *James of Viterbo*

The first personality one might think of is James of Viterbo. In fact, according to the anonymous author of the *Tabula super novem quodlibet magistri Godefridi*, in parts of the 19th question of his *Quodlibet IX*, Godfrey has in his cross-hairs James of Viterbo. More precisely, q. 19 is supposed to target James's ideas on the status of species, and on sensation properly speaking not consisting in the change that occurs in the organs, but only in the change that happens in the sensory faculties.⁶³ This report should be handled with some caution, for the *Tabula* is sometimes inaccurate, as Wippel has pointed out.⁶⁴ Moreover, the *Tabula* does not *explicitly* ascribe to James the first view criticized by Godfrey. Nonetheless, it is true that in his *Quodlibet I* James writes that:

Est enim [potentia intellectualis sensitivaque] quaedam actualitas incompleta, pertinens ad secundam speciem qualitatis, quae est potentia naturalis, considerata secundum exordium et praeparationem quamdam respectu actus ulterioris. Unde dicitur aptitudo et idoneitas naturalis ad completum actum. Illud autem, quod sic est in potentia secundum actum quamdam incompletum, movetur ex se ad completum actum, non quidem efficienter, sed formaliter.⁶⁵

The reason why James believes that a potency can move itself to reach its complete actuality is that he upholds the fundamental Augustinian stance on the activity of the soul. Those who imagine that the soul is passive, like a mirror, are unable to explain why knowledge is an operation *of the soul* and a "vital act."⁶⁶ One calls "vital," James explains, the operations of a being that come from its intrinsic active principles. Cognitive or volitional acts are operations of that kind: they originate in no other principle than the soul.⁶⁷ Moreover, the fact that the

63. See J. HOFFMANS, "La Table des divergences et innovations doctrinales de Godefrid de Fontaines," in: *Revue Néoscholastique de Philosophie* 36 (1934), pp. 412-436, at 433.

64. See J. WIPPEL, "The Dating of James of Viterbo's *Quodlibet I* and Godfrey's of Fontaines' *Quodlibet VIII*," in: *Augustiniana* 24 (1974), pp. 348-386.

65. JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 12, ed. E. YPMA, Würzburg 1968, pp. 166, 330 – 167, 336.

66. JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 7, p. 92, 410-417.

67. JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 12, p. 165, 286-301. This notion of "vital act" is in fact traditionally part of the Augustinian demonstration of the superiority of the soul over matter. Durand himself appeals to it in *Super Sent.* (21), II, d. 3, q. 5, § 7, p. 149, 74-79: "[...] ridiculum est dicere quod actus uite in quantum huiusmodi sit principaliter uel totaliter ab eo quod nichil est uiuentis, set aduenit ab extrinseco; set intelligere et

cognitive act remains immanent to its subject and perfects it means that the subject is purely active with respect to it.⁶⁸ As a consequence, James pushes for making, in the case of the soul and its faculties, an exception to the Aristotelian axiom that affirms that potentiality cannot self-actualize.⁶⁹ There are, he says, two sorts of motion.⁷⁰ One results from the action of an efficient cause that has a complete form — e.g., heating as an effect of fire. The other one results from an agent that has an incomplete form, that is to say, which has not yet reached all its perfection — e.g., the downward movement of a body. The first kind of motion is always “ab alio in aliud,” and within that framework nothing is self-moved. The second kind is “ab eodem in idem”; within this framework a thing can move itself.

There is no question, then, that James held a theory close to the one refuted by Godfrey and that his views have some affinity with those that Durand would later hold. Basically, one finds in James the same idea that a faculty which is in first actuality is in accidental potentiality to its second actualization and is therefore able to self-actualize when certain required conditions obtain.⁷¹ However, Durand

totaliter cognoscere est actus uite, species autem nichil est ipsius uiuentis, set aduenit ab extrinseco; ergo inconueniens est quod intelligere sit totaliter uel principalius a specie quam ab intellectu.” Cf. PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 479: “sentimus enim expresse quod [videre et audire] actus vitales sunt et in genere cognitionis [...]” Accordingly, Duns Scotus reports an argument set forth by those who think that the soul alone, without the object acting upon it, engenders knowledge. This argument, quite similar to the one Durand uses, runs as follows: “operatio non est perfectior quam principium operativum; sed intelligere est operatio vitalis; igitur eius principium erit vivum, quod est anima” (JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, q. 2, n. 316, p. 352). Thus, in using this type of argument Durand is operating within a well-defined tradition.

68. See JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 12, p. 166, 321-324.

69. James writes: “Cum enim primo dicitur quod omne quod movetur ab alio movetur [...], dicendum est quod hoc indubitanter est verum de illa motione qua aliquid movetur efficienter [...] Posito autem quod aliquid moveatur ex se formaliter per se et primo, sequitur quidem quod idem secundum idem sit in potentia et in actu, sed non eodem modo; [...]” (*Quodl. I*, q. 7, p. 99, 656-659 and 664-666).

70. JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 7, p. 95, 517-526. On this aspect of James’s theory, see A. CÔTÉ, “Simplicius and James of Viterbo on Propensities,” in: *Vivarium* 47 (2009), pp. 24-53, at 41-46, and J.-L. SOLÈRE, “James of Viterbo’s cognition theory” (forthcoming).

71. See JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 7, p. 95, 530-540: “Cum enim aliquid habet formam incompletam, naturaliter inclinatur ad sui complementum et movet se ipsum formaliter per huiusmodi formam incompletam, in quantum ad talem formam sequitur naturaliter motus ad perfectionem. Immo de se semper esset in tali perfectione nisi aliquid prohiberet. Sicut enim agens habens formam completam, sufficienter et debite coniunctum proprio passivo, propter ordinem quem habet ad ipsum, statim agit et sequitur actio in alio, sic aliquid habens formam incompletam per quam alio modo est actu, non tamen

does not at all share James's innatist thesis, according to which the intelligibles are contained within the intellect.⁷² In addition, James does not appear to employ the characteristic expression of *causa sine qua non* for describing the role of the object.⁷³ And, as we read in the quotation above, he says that the faculty determines itself only formally, and not as being an efficient principle for itself.⁷⁴ His position seems to be less radical than the one that Godfrey examines⁷⁵ and that Durand will defend.

2.2. Henry of Ghent

Another personality we might think of is one with whom Godfrey often debates: Henry of Ghent. Henry, to a certain extent, does share several epistemological premises with James or Durand: the impossibility for bodies to be efficient causes of an action on the soul,⁷⁶ the theory of accidental potentiality,⁷⁷ the notion of vital

in actu ultimo propter naturalem inclinationem quam habet ad sui perfectionem, statim sequitur actualis motio in ipso, nisi aliquid prohibeat. Et hoc est moveri ex se formaliter."

72. See JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 7, pp. 92, 425 – 93, 470.

73. The farthest he goes is to say that the object is a cause "in a certain way": "Et ideo, causa scientiae principaliter in nobis est Deus et ipsa anima. Res autem sensibiles sunt causae, non principaliter, sed aliquo modo" (JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 12, p. 175, 616-618). Moreover, regarding the will, James distances himself from Henry of Ghent's thesis that the object of a volition is a "causa sine qua non" in the sense that it does not act at all (*Quodl. II*, q. 7, ed. E. YPMA, Würzburg 1968, p. 108, 109 and p. 110, 174-177. On Henry, see hereafter pp. 209-210). James sees the object as a cause in a secondary sense ("causa ex consequenti"), which prepares, induces, attracts, etc. (*ibid.*, p. 110, 179-183).

74. Cf. JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 7, p. 95, 540-541, about the immanent action of the soul, by which the soul moves itself *formaliter*: "Et est huiusmodi motio alterius modi, quam illa quae ad causam efficientem pertinet, quae dicitur principium".

75. In his *Quodlibet XII*, q. 1, Godfrey refutes a theory according to which precisely the subject is an efficient cause of its own acts (see GODFREY OF FONTAINES, *Quodl. XII*, q. 1, ed. J. HOFFMANS, Louvain 1932, p. 82).

76. See quotations and references in: J.-L. SOLÈRE, "Durand of Saint-Pourçain's cognition theory," p. 193, n. 25, and additionally HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. II*, q. 6, ed. R. WIELOCKX, Leuven 1983, p. 31, 36-39: "[...] quamvis obiectum per speciem suam agit imprimendo se organo, ex hoc tamen non vidit vel audit homo nisi vis visiva vel auditiva ad percipiendum obiectum per motum speciei se convertat ad obiectum [...]"; ID., *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, Paris 1518 (repr. Louvain 1961), t. II, fol. 451rV: "[...] existente <specie> in ipso <organo> non in hoc adhuc existit sensatio ut visio vel auditio, quia talem operationem virtus sensitiva in organo existens non elicit nisi excitata et inclinata et determinata ad actum respectu determinati obiecti."

77. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa (Quaestiones ordinariae)*. Art. 31-34, a. 33, q. 2, ad 3, ed. R. MACKEN, Leuven 1991, p. 151: "Actus enim primus est esse quod est a forma,

operation,⁷⁸ the interpretation of the notion of immanent action⁷⁹ and the limitation of the Aristotelian act-potency axiom.⁸⁰

Furthermore, the expression “causa sine qua non” is central in Henry’s conception of free will.⁸¹ For Aquinas and those who relate to the Aristotelian conception of this faculty, the will, although oriented toward the good in general, is undetermined in itself, as any potency is. The specific nature of a particular object, inasmuch as it is recognized as good by the intellect, triggers the choice. According to Henry, that thesis amounts to an outright repudiation of the freedom of our will. As early as in his *Quodlibet I* (1276), Henry opposed conceiving of the dynamism of the will as an inclination that automatically follows the apprehension of an object by the intellect. This reduces, he protests, our will to a natural inclination or a brutish appetite.⁸²

actus vero secundus est operari, qui egreditur ab habente formam per ipsam formam. De potentia igitur ad actum primum qui est esse, nihil educitur nisi per formam, non eius quod est in potentia, sed alterius quod est in actu per illam formam. [...] Potentia enim calidum actu non fit calidum nisi per aliquid praecedens calidum in actu. [...] De potentia vero ad actum secundum qui est operari, educitur res per formam suam [...].” See also above, n. 21.

78. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, fols. 450vR, 451rT, 451vA; *Summa quaestionum ordinariarum*, q. 39, a. 1, Paris 1520, t. I, fol. 244 C.

79. See e.g. HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, fol. 451rT: “Motus enim omnis est actus siue dispositio imperfecti secundum quod imperfectum est, et tendit ad aliquid aliud causandum [...] et sic omnis mutatio proprie dicta, et similiter motus, ordinantur ad aliud ut ad finem, et non habent in se rationem finis, et non habent rationem nisi actionis transeuntis in aliud secundum quod est aliud. [...] Operatio autem est actus siue dispositio perfecti secundum quod est perfectum et non ordinatur ad aliud, sed est finis et perfectio ultima eius cuius est. [...] Actiones autem vitales quae sunt sensatio et intellectus, non sunt mutationes aut motus, sed sunt proprie operationes sensus et intellectus, et habent rationem actionis manentis in agente [...].”

80. HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XII*, q. 26, ed. J. DECORTE, Leuven 1987, pp. 154-157. Cf. R. TESKE, “Henry of Ghent’s Rejection of the Principle: ‘Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur’,” in: W. VANHAMEL (ed.), *Henry of Ghent. Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)*, Leuven 1996, pp. 279-308.

81. See e.g. O. LOTTIN, *Psychologie et morale aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, Louvain / Gembloux 1954, t. I, pp. 225-389; R. MACKEN, “Heinrich von Gent im Gespräch mit seinen Zeitgenossen über die menschliche Freiheit,” in: *Franziskanische Studien* 59 (1977), pp. 125-182; J.F. WIPPEL, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, Washington, D.C. 1981, p. 184.

82. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. I*, q. 16, ed. R. MACKEN, Leuven 1979, p. 99: “Ut in tali puncto actus voluntatis sit inclinatio quaedam naturalis sequens formam intellectam, sicut appetitus naturalis est inclinatio quaedam naturalis consequens formam naturalem et appetitus brutalis est inclinatio quaedam consequens formam delectabilis

If our will is free, it cannot be bound to respond to the appeal of the object. Therefore, our will has to determine itself entirely, instead of being determined by the object. In other words, our will must be the only efficient cause of its own act. Thus, this debate too is about the possibility for a potency to actualize itself.

Naturally, Henry must face the same question we have already encountered: if the will does not have to be brought to complete actualization by an object, why is it not *always* in second actuality, given that it is already in first actuality. Why do we not unceasingly want (or perceive and think)? It will not come as a surprise that, in the next question of *Quodlibet I*, that is, q. 17, Henry introduces the notion of *sine qua non* condition.⁸³ He describes its role in the exact terms of removal of an impediment, implicitly quoting Aristotle's example of the pillar in *Physics VIII*, 4: a faculty naturally and by itself tends to its own actualization exactly as a stone tends to move downward unless prevented by an obstacle. Remove the obstacle, and the stone will start falling, without the removal having in any way done something to the stone as an efficient cause would do. *Mutatis mutandis*, the will is ready to enter into action as soon as an object, as a sort of occasional cause, is presented. The object does not have an influence on our free will. It does not act, attract or transmit anything. But it still has to be present and is thereby a necessary condition of the actualization of the will.

Thus, Henry of Ghent did promote the concept of *sine qua non causa* and employed it throughout his career, at least until his *Quodlibet XIII*, in 1289 — which brings us closer to Godfrey's *Quodlibet IX*.⁸⁴

apprehensam a sensu." Cf. AQUINAS, *Summa theol.*, I, q. 82, a. 1, corp., and GILES OF ROME, *Quodl. IV*, q. 21, Leuven 1646, p. 256b: "tota inclinatio appetitus nostri est a forma apprehensa, quia ita se habet appetitus in nobis ad formam apprehensam sicut se habet inclinatio gravis ad formam gravis. Si ergo tota causa quare sic vel sic inclinatur voluntas sit forma apprehensa in intellectu cum ipsa inclinatur libere, tota libertas voluntatis erit ab intellectu."

83. HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. I*, q. 17, p. 125: "Quod bonum apprehensum determinat voluntatem ad volendum tamquam id sine quo nihil potest velle, indubitanter verum est [...]. Sed quod iudicium rationis sic determinat voluntatem, ut omnino aliud non possit velle quam determinatum ab ipsa, et quod illud non possit non velle, hoc omnino est inconveniens [...]."

84. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XIII*, q. 11, ed. J. DECORTE, Leuven 1985, p. 88, 28-36 (references to many other passages are given by J. Decorte in: *ibid.*, q. 10, p. 82, *apparatus fontium* to ll. 43-44).

However, Henry appears to limit his use of that concept to the topic of the will and not to apply it to cognitive issues. On the contrary, he avoids setting the volitional object on a par with the cognitive object. In fact, in his *Quodlibet XI*, q. 5, Henry says that, in order to achieve their respective operations, the senses and the intellect need to be *inclined* by their object (which, mysteriously enough, does not amount to their being acted upon by it).⁸⁵ He would certainly not say as much of the will with respect to the volition object. In the following years, Henry constantly contrasts the complete self-determination of the will with the necessity that the senses and the intellect be determined by an object:

Omnis autem alia vis [other than will] ab obiecto determinatur in se ipsa. Vis enim sensitiva quaecumque non elicit actum sentiendi, nisi sit determinata in se quadam alteratione ab obiecto sensibili; neque similiter vis intellectiva, nisi alteratione quadam determinata fuerit ab obiecto intelligibili; similiter neque vis appetitiva sensibilis elicit actum appetitionis, nisi determinata per passiones irae et concupiscentiae [...]. Vis autem volitiva habet ex se determinativum ad actum.⁸⁶

For a volitional act, all that is required on the side of the object is its *ostensio* (the intellect shows the object to the will).⁸⁷ In contrast, to ensure cognition a mere *ostensio* of the object does not suffice. As we just saw, the object must incline the cognitive power. While the faculty enters by itself into operation, it nevertheless does so as a response

85. HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, fol. 452rE and *ad 1*. See also *ibid.*, fol. 451vC: “obiectum enim similitudinem suam generat in toto medio usque ad organum; et deinde medium immediate tangens organum, per speciem qua informatur congenerat speciem consimilem in organo; tertio autem species in organo existens, *inclinando* vim visivam facit esse intentam ad percipiendum, et tunc demum formatur in composito ex vi sensitiva et organo specie informato ipsa operatio, quae dicitur sensitio, quam vis sensitiva elicit principaliter, sed organum informatum specie, instrumentaliter;” *ibid.*, fol. 452rD: “Sed quemadmodum in sensu species existens in organo sive organum per illam speciem immutat vim sensitivam ipsam *inclinando* ad percipiendum per actum sensationis ipsum obiectum sensibile; sic in intellectu intelligibile praesens sub ratione obiecti universalis, vel in phantasmate, vel in habitu, immediate immutat vi sua activa ipsum intellectum inclinando ipsum ad se percipiendum per actum intellectionis, et dispositione illa qua sic est inclinatus, est dispositus ultimate ad eliciendum intellectionem tamquam suam propriam operationem [...].”

86. HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XIII*, q. 11, pp. 98-99.

87. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XIII*, q. 11, p. 89: “[...] nihil requirit voluntas ad eliciendum actum volendi in ipsa nisi solam obiecti ostensionem.”

to a solicitation or excitation which comes from the object.⁸⁸ Henry even goes as far as saying, at times, that the intellect is passive and moved by the object.⁸⁹ It seems to me, therefore, that the Henrician cognitive object cannot be labelled *causa sine qua non* in the purest, non-active sense that suits only the volitional object.

It appears, then, that whoever held the first view expounded by Godfrey (and endorsed by Durand later) shifted to cognitive matters what Henry was asserting exclusively about the will, especially the conception of the object as a *sine qua non* cause. Who did so?

2.3. *The Franciscans*

In a context that concerns the problem of knowledge specifically (not the will), John Duns Scotus provides us with valuable information that hints at a group of thinkers who employ Henry's vocabulary but are much less willing than the latter to compromise on cognition.⁹⁰ These thinkers are the most Augustinian of the Franciscan masters in the years stretching between Scotus's own day and Bonaventure's.

88. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XIV*, q. 5, Paris 1518 (repr. Louvain 1961), t. II, fol. 565rB: "[...] intellectus non movetur ad exercitium actus nisi prius motus ad actum intelligentiae simplices per actus primi intelligendi determinationem ab obiecto [...]. Voluntas autem movetur ad actum primum nec mota nec determinata ab alio [...] libertas voluntatis est facultas qua potest in suum actum quo acquirit bonum suum ex principio intra se ultraneo, et absque omni impulsu et retractione ab altero. Et in hoc deficit intellectus quia [...] impellitur ab obiecto [...]." Hence the conclusion (*ibid.*), that although the intellect is free, the will is much freer than the intellect.

89. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Summae quaestionum ordinariarum*, a. 45, q. 2, Paris 1520, t. II, fol. 17 rR-S: "[...] nullo tamen modo ad huiusmodi actum eliciendum habet voluntas moveri a bono nisi metaphorice, aut pati ab ipso. [...] intellectus dicitur virtus passiva, quia non agit eliciendo actum intelligendi, nisi moveatur a re obiecta quae sit in ipsa ut forma eius secundum esse spirituale [...] voluntas et in Deo et in aliis simpliciter debet dici virtus activa et non passiva, e contrario intellectui [...]. Intelligere enim est quasi motus circularis aut reflexus incipiens a re intellecta in intellectum et ab intellectu iterato terminatur in rem intellectam. Velle vero e contrario est quasi motus circularis aut reflexus incipiens a voluntate in obiectum et ab obiecto iterato terminatur in voluntate."

90. On Henry and the Franciscans, see S.P. MARRONE, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, Leiden / Boston 2001, part III. On the Franciscans, see: R. PASNAU, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 130-134, 168-179, and 146-148; H.M. BEHA, "Matthew of Aquasparta's Theory of Cognition," in: *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1960), pp. 161-204, and 21 (1961), pp. 1-79, and 383-465; A. PATTIN, *Pour l'histoire du sens agent. La controverse entre Barthélemy de Bruges et Jean de Jandun. Ses antécédents et son évolution*, Leuven 1988, pp. 392-394 (with further references).

In fact, Scotus presents a useful panorama of the different positions held on the epistemological question of whether knowledge is engendered by the object or by the soul. The first position, he says, is “attributed to Augustine” by its supporters and this view asserts that:

sola anima vel aliquid animae, quidquid sit, est causa activa gignendi notitiam, — et non obiectum.⁹¹

With this inviolable rule (resulting from the DOC principle) as a common foundation, those who hold this first theory explain the contribution of the object in different manners:

est vel ut terminans actum intelligendi, vel excitans potentiam intellectivam, vel inclinans eam ad actum intelligendi, vel est causa sine qua non <anima> intelligit, sicut diversi diversimode ponunt, hoc tamen salvo quod sola potentia intellectiva elicit actum intelligendi, nec concurrunt aliquid aliud in ratione principii elicitive.

Although the Friars Minor did not have a monopoly on these different expressions, since James of Viterbo makes use of some of them,⁹² they can be traced back to several Franciscans.

The first formulation of the object’s function, to be “terminans,” was proposed by Peter of John Olivi.⁹³ According to him, the objects

91. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, pars 3, q. 2, n. 313, p. 350. The second position, which is Godfrey’s, ascribes all the activity to the object and a total passivity to the soul. The third and the fourth ones are Henry’s — as, according to Scotus, he changed his mind and contradicted himself (*ibid.*, nn. 339-340, pp. 359-360). Scotus quite accurately describes the third position (Henry’s first solution, that is) as an attempted “middle way” between the first opinion, which denies any passivity in the soul, and the second one, which denies any activity to the soul.

92. See JAMES OF VITERBO, *Quodl. I*, q. 12, pp. 171, 502 – 172, 504: “licet intellectus moveatur ex se, nihilominus tamen movetur a fantasmatis, *per modum excitationis et inclinationis*”; *ibid.*, p. 175, 611-618: “[...] illud principaliter est causae scientiae in nobis, quod principaliter animam movet ad cognoscendum. Anima autem movetur principaliter, a Deo quidem efficienter, qui ipsam producit, a se ipsa vero formaliter; a sensibus vero et a sensibilibus movetur non principaliter, sed *per modum excitationis et inclinationis* cuiusdam, ut dictum est”; *ibid.*, p. 177, 663-668: “A rebus vero causatur scientia in nobis dupliciter. Uno modo, in quantum mediantibus potentiis sensitivis, ipsae res sensibiles *excitant* intellectum ad hoc ut se moveat. Alio modo, in quantum anima movetur, ut ipsis rebus assimiletur et conformatur in actu. Et sic sunt causa cognitionis *per modum termini*, et inde sequitur quia anima assimilatur rebus, non autem res assimilantur.”

93. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, pp. 474-477; q.72, vol. III, p. 10, pp. 26-27. Cf. PETER OF TRABES, *II Sent. dist. 24*, ed. E. LONGPRÉ, in: *Studi Francescani* 8 (1922), pp. 267-290, at 281: the object is the *terminus* of the cognitive act, and therefore cannot be its principle, “cum efficiens et finis non coincident in numero idem.” However, see hereafter pp. 224-225, at n. 133-136.

shape the cognitive faculty (the *intentio, adspectus* of the soul), in the same way as a room shapes the light shed in it. Thus, the object can be dubbed *causa terminativa*.

The second formulation, to be “excitans,” was widely employed by Peckham.⁹⁴

The third one, to be “inclinans,” was used by Matthew of Aquasparta (maybe after Henry of Ghent).⁹⁵

As to the fourth one, to be “causa sine qua non,” which is of particular interest for us, I was unable, unfortunately, to detect a reference in the same milieu.⁹⁶ Many texts are not yet easily accessible, especially the works of Franciscan masters at the end of the 1280’s, such as Raymond Rigaud or James of Le Quesnoy who could have characteristically employed the *sine qua non* notion in an epistemological context.⁹⁷ All I was able to find is that Gonsalvus of Spain pronounced these words around 1302:

[...] secundum Augustinum, IX *De Trinitate*, cap. ultimo, obiectum reducitur ad causam agentem, sed est agens sine quo non; nihilominus est causa per se coassistens imprimenti, sed nihil imprimit, nec oportet propter hoc quod sit causa per accidens, sed est causa per se.⁹⁸

94. See JOHN PECKHAM, *Tractatus de anima*, c. IV, p. 16 (with, *ibid.*, p. 148, *In Sent.*, I, d. 3, q. 3); JOHN PECKHAM, *Quodl. I*, q. 3, ed. G.J. ETZKORN, Grottaferrata 1989, p. 10.

95. See MATTHEW OF AQUASPARTA, *Quaestiones de cognitione*, q. 3, ed. PP. COLLEGI S. BONAVENTURAE, Quaracchi 1957, p. 265. Cf. also HENRY OF GHENT, *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, corp. and ad 4, fols. 451S-T, 452I; q. 6, ad 2, fol. 455Z-A.

96. In the passage of his *Quodlibet IX* I have quoted earlier (above, pp. 204-205), Godfrey says that for the theory he contests, the object is “id in quod terminatur actio intellectus.” So one might think that after all he is aiming at Olivi, maybe among others, and has conflated his view with another that uses the concept of *causa sine qua non*, or has ascribed him this expression on the basis of another source with which he finds a resemblance, perhaps Henry of Ghent. However, as I will show towards the end of this paper (below, pp. 224-225), Olivi’s theory somewhat differs from what is entailed by the notion of *sine qua non* cause.

97. I exclude John of Murro, who, according to Gonsalvus of Spain, held that the object introduces species in the cognitive power and dispositions or affections in the will (GONSALVUS OF SPAIN, *Quaestiones disputatae et de quodlibet*, q. 3, ed. L. AMOROS, Quaracchi 1935, pp. 30-31). See also John’s third disputed question on the will in: E. LONGPRÉ, “L’œuvre du cardinal Jean de Murro,” in: *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer*, Louvain 1947, pp. 467-492, at 490-491. Peter of Falco readily accepts the species theory (see PETER OF FALCO, *Questions disputées ordinaires*, q. 4, a. 2, ed. A.-J. GONDRAS, Louvain / Paris 1968, p. 162; *ibid.*, q. 5, p. 211).

98. GONSALVUS OF SPAIN, *Quaest. disp.*, q. 3, ad 2, p. 46. Roger Marston faced an objection that states that if the thing outside is only the occasion of the sensation, not its cause, then, since an occasion is an accidental cause, every *sensatum* will be a *sensibile per*

Gonsalvus characterizes the object as an *agent* cause, albeit a *sine qua non* one, because, in this response to an opening argument, he has to take into account the passage of St Augustine generally quoted by those who want to ascribe an active role to the object:

[...] liquido tenendum est quod omnis res quamcumque cognoscimus congenerat in nobis notitiam sui; ab utroque enim notitia paritur, a cognoscente et cognito.⁹⁹

Gonsalvus does what he can to defuse the force of that sentence and reduces the contribution of the object to being a *sine qua non* cause. But, his *sine qua non* cause looks more like a SQNC2¹⁰⁰ than the SQNC1 Scotus's report seems to be hinting at (and which is Durand's), since he describes it as a cause that does not itself imprint anything, but nevertheless actively "assists" the efficient cause, namely, the agent that imprints the cognitive content. The latter is the intellect itself, and on the whole it is clear that Gonsalvus supports the idea that the faculty alone elicits its own action.¹⁰¹ But he does not go as far as saying that nothing else concurs in this action, as do the thinkers Scotus has in mind.¹⁰²

Anyway, someone used the expression "causa sine qua non" in cognitive context at least a decade before Gonsalvus, since, as we saw

accidens, which is false (ROGER MARSTON, *Quaest. disp. de anima*, q. 8, obj. 12, ed. PP. COLLEGII S. BONAVENTURAE, Quaracchi 1932, p. 379). Marston replies that the occasion presented by the object is a *sine qua non* condition for the sensation. However, in the same answer he labels the object an efficient cause, although a remote one, the soul being the immediate efficient cause (see *ibid.*, p. 403: "[...] sensibile est causa efficiens speciei in anima, efficiens, inquam, non immediate, sed remota, anima vero est efficiens proximum. — Et quod obicitur de occasione non valet, maxime quia haec est occasio sine qua non posset fieri.")

99. AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, IX, 12, 18, ed. W.J. MOUNTAIN – F. GLORIE, Turnhout 1968, p. 309, 29-31.

100. As according to the Ciceronian classification we analyzed above, these *sine qua non* causes are not inactive and are auxiliary causes of efficient causes that are not sufficient causes.

101. See GONSALVUS OF SPAIN, *Quaest. disp.*, q. 3, p. 31: "Alii vero dicunt quod omnis talis potentia ad praesentiam obiecti statim efficit actum suum in se ipsa, absque tali dispositione praeducta, saltem voluntas; et haec opinio videtur probabilior, scilicet, quae dicit potentiam in se efficere actum suum;" *ibid.*, ad 7, p. 48: "[...] totus actus intellectus causatur ab ipso intellectu ut est ens naturale [...]." Along the same lines, he supports the limitation of the act-potency axiom (*ibid.*, resp., pp. 41-45; ad 5, p. 47).

102. As a matter of fact, they all say that: "sola potentia intellectiva elicit actum intellegendi, nec concurrat aliquid aliud in ratione principii elicitive" (quoted above, at n. 91).

above, it appears in the opinion refuted by Godfrey in his *Quodlibet IX*, that is, around 1292-1294. As I said, I presently cannot suggest a name for that period. But as Scotus's panorama shows, the culprit had for the least a very strong affinity with the strict Augustinian stance of a particular group of Franciscans, since the "sine qua non" characterization is only a variation on the fundamental theme of the non-passivity of the soul with respect to the cognized objects. This stance is quite distinctive, even among the Franciscans. Bonaventure, William de la Mare, or Richard of Mediavilla do not have issues with a relative passivity in cognition and readily accept the notion of *species recepta*, although it is of course not a sufficient explanation of sensation, which requires also an action (*conversio, adspectus, iudicium*) of the soul.¹⁰³ On the contrary, Olivi, Peckham, Aquasparta and their disciples stiffen Augustinian psychology and epistemology to the point of making the objects unable to act *at all* on the soul, either mediately or immediately.¹⁰⁴ The position that both the author Godfrey has in

103. See BONAVENTURE, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, II, d. 8, p. 1, a. 3, q. 2, ad 7, p. 223; *ibid.*, d. 39, a. 1, q. 3, corp., p. 903; ID., *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, cap. II, n. 4, ed. PP. COLLEGII A S. BONAVENTURA, Quarrachi 1891, p. 300a; ID., *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, cap. 8, *ibid.*, p. 322a; WILLIAM DE LA MARE, *Scriptum in secundum librum Sententiarum*, d. 3, q. 9, corp. and ad 2, ed. H. KRAML, München 1995, p. 71, 97-111 and 119-120; ID., *Correctorium Fr. Thomae*, a. 1, ed. P. GLORIEUX, Kain 1927, p. 3; RICHARD OF MEDIAVILLA, *Super Quatuor libros Sententiarum [...] Quaestiones subtilissimae*, II, d. 24, a. 2, q. 1, ad 4, and a. 3, q. 1, corp., Brescia 1591, t. II, pp. 301b and 306b. In a question written probably later, in the 1290s, Richard comes very close to the strict Augustinian position and uses some of its characteristic arguments (such as the "omni formae debetur aliqua actio" reported by Godfrey), but I think that he still only wants to establish that the soul is the main efficient cause, while the object is a secondary but active cause (see ID., *Questions disputées*, q. 11, a. 3, ed. A. BOUREAU, Paris 2012, pp. 116-161 — in particular a. 3, pp. 130-132, and p. 134: "virtus viva non tantummodo recipit similitudinem per quam videt [...]").

104. Olivi stages the issue as a choice between Christianity and pagan philosophy. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 437: "Quidam autem innitentes dictis Augustini potius quam paganorum philosophorum dixerunt quod ab obiectis, saltem corporalibus, nullo modo potest fieri aliqua talis impressio in potentiis nostrae mentis. VI enim *Musicae* vult Augustinus quod nulla species fiat in anima ab aliquo corpore tanquam ab agente [...]." Article 122 in Tempier's list (*Charularium* numbering, in: D. PICHE, *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, Paris 1999, p. 116) denounces the following thesis, which makes the intellect, in its cognitive act, dependent on the body: "Quod intellectus possibilis est inseparabilis a corpore simpliciter quantum ad hunc actum qui est specierum receptio, et quantum ad iudicium, quod fit per simplicem specierum adaptionem, vel intelligibilium compositionem. — Error, si intelligatur de omnimoda

view and Durand adopt is definitely similar to that held by the latter group of Franciscans and is as distinctive.

2.4. Robert Kilwardby

However, there is one author who, although not a Franciscan, does employ unrestrictedly and unequivocally the expression “*causa sine qua non*”: Robert Kilwardby. He does so, though, in a work that is much anterior to those we have examined so far: the *De spiritu fantastico*, written in the 1250s or 1260s.¹⁰⁵

Kilwardby’s rationale is also based on the DOC principle and on Augustine’s authority. The soul cannot be affected by material objects or by their species.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the passivity that characterizes perception takes place in the body only, not in the soul. Sense organs are acted upon by the species generated by the object, but these species are not impressed on the soul.¹⁰⁷ The only cognitive action is that of the soul, when it takes notice of the bodily affections and assimilates itself to the object at the occasion of the changes in the body.¹⁰⁸

receptione.” In a parallel manner, the passivity of the will is also targeted in aa. 157-164 (*ibid.*, pp. 126-128).

105. That is to say, during Kilwardby’s Oxford period. In any event, Kilwardby died in 1279. On Kilwardby’s cognition theory, see J.F. SILVA, “Robert Kilwardby on sense perception,” in: S. KNUUTTILA – P. KÄRKKÄINEN (eds.), *Theories of Perception in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, Breinigsville, PA 2008, pp. 87-99; J.F. SILVA – J. TOIVANEN, “The active nature of the soul in sense perception: Robert Kilwardby and Peter Olivi,” in: *Vivarium* 48 (2010), pp. 245-278.

106. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 54, ed. P.O. LEWRY, Oxford 1987, p. 67: “Ex hiis omnibus constat Augustinum intendere quod spiritus sensitivus dum sentit non recipit ymagines sensibilibus a corpore tanquam patiens ab agente”; “cum sentit anima, non recipit aliquid a corpore, set facit in ipso.” Naturally, Kilwardby refers to Augustine’s *De musica*, VI, 14: “[...] sentire in corpore non est aliquid pati a corpore, set in eius passionibus attentius agere” (*De spiritu fantastico*, n. 54, p. 67).

107. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 103, p. 77: “Actio sensibilis uel ymaginis eius non ascendit ultra limites corporalis nature, set peruentia ad intimum organi, ibidem stat.”

108. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 102, p. 76: “Hinc est quod, cum instrumentum sentiendi patitur ab obiecto sensibili, huic passioni qua afficitur instrumentum occurrit spiritus sensitivus attentus in omnibus que instrumento accidunt”; *ibid.*, n. 113, p. 80: “Fit autem ipsa a spiritu sensitivo complectente et conuolvente secum speciem in organo inuentam. Et sic est intelligenda doctrina phisica de modo sentiendi, et tunc concordabit cum Augustino.” Concerned about the risk of subjectivism, however,

Of course, it is necessary that the object has this action on the sense organs and thus become noticeable by the soul.¹⁰⁹ As a result, Kilwardby takes up the Ciceronian opposition between efficient cause and *sine qua non* cause for characterizing the function of the object:

Est autem ymago in organo uel organum ymagine formatum causa sine qua non fieret ymago in spiritu sentiente, set causa eius effectiua non est.¹¹⁰

[...] tam cognitio intellectiua quam sensitiua causatur a rebus sensibilibus sicut a causa sine qua non fieret, non tamen sicut a causa principaliter et per effectiua cognicionis et informatiua anime, set sicut ab instrumento necessario uel occasione necessaria.¹¹¹

Thus, Durand shares with Kilwardby several crucial theses, and Kilwardby is the only other author I could find who uses also the very expression “causa sine qua non” in the cognition field and in the sense of a SQNC1 or occasional cause.

This raises interesting questions: what was the extent of Kilwardby’s influence 1) within the Dominican order, 2) on the continent, 3) as late as the 1290s and maybe 1300s (Godfrey and Durand)? Alas, I am not able to answer, positively or negatively, these questions, which would require an extensive investigation.¹¹² I would just like to remark

Kilwardby specifies that, by doing so, it is the external objects that the soul perceives, because its attention is directed towards the things out there (*De spiritu fantastico*, n. 103, p. 77: “[...] sic enim spiritus sensitiuus se conuertendo attentius ad suum organum specie sensibili informatum facit se ei similem, et in se propriam aciem reflectendo uidet se talem. Et sic sentit sensibile forinsecum per ymaginem quam in se formauit”; *ibid.*, nn.110-111, p. 79: “Set adhuc dices: Si spiritus sentiens primo conuertit aciem in se et deinde in suum organum, quare non dicitur sentire se et organum? Responsio. Quia non conuertit aciem in hec nisi in quantum sunt informata a sensibili, nec in hiis sistit acies, set transit in sensibile; nec in hiis terminatur intencio sentiendi, nec actio ipsa, set sensibile et finis quod extra est. Et ideo illud solum recte dicitur sentiri”).

109. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 124, p. 83 “Quamuis enim spiritus sensitiuus formet in se ymaginem rei sensibilis, non tamen potest facere nisi data oportunitate per debita adminicula, cuiusmodi sunt quod sensibile sit presens immutansque medium et organum sensitium.”

110. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 103, p. 77.

111. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 123, p. 82.

112. As José Filipe Silva has pointed out to me, only one manuscript of the *De spiritu fantastico* is known today, and it is in Oxford. However, Kilwardby has written extensively, and it is not necessarily through that work that his conception of the object as *causa sine qua non* might have been spread. I also notice that copies of the *De tempore*, edited in the

that the syntagma “causa sine qua non” is quite infrequent. A query in the *Library of Latin Texts* of the Centre “*Traditio Litterarum Occidentalium*” shows that it was not in use at all in the patristic age, and as for the Middle Ages up to the first decade of the 14th century, it seldom shows up.¹¹³ The rare attestations of its use in the Ciceronian sense are mostly the ones I provided above. In the other occurrences, the Ciceronian sense is criticized by Scotus or by Aquinas,¹¹⁴ or the syntagma is used in a non-Ciceronian sense, that is to say, as in ordinary language, for designating just a necessary condition.¹¹⁵ Even in the Ciceronian sense, the syntagma was mostly employed in a theological context (sacraments doctrine,¹¹⁶ or, as we saw, divine science and moral theology), and not in the context of cognition theories. So, given the scarcity of attestations, one should certainly keep on the list any author who employs the syntagma in the same sense and for the same purpose as Durand, until evident proof of the impossibility of

same volume by P.O. Lowry, were kept by Dominicans in Bruges and in Chartres, which indicates that the circulation of his work was not limited to England or the Pontifical library.

113. 2012 edition, retrieved on www.brepolis.net, 12/15/2012. Admittedly, the *Library of Latin Texts*, as of today, does not contain all the relevant medieval texts (contrary to the Patristic period), but it has a respectable number of major texts and can give some indication of the importance of a term in that period. In the 14th century, the number of occurrences goes up because of Ockham. On the latter’s use of that concept, see A. GODDU, “William of Ockham’s distinction between ‘real’ efficient causes and strictly ‘sine qua non’,” in: *The Monist* 79/3 (1996), pp. 357-367.

114. For Scotus, see above pp. 197-198. Aquinas considers that, since it does not contribute anything to the effect, the alleged “causa sine qua non” is nothing other than a “causa per accidens”, in the same way as whiteness is the cause of a building when the builder happens to be white (see *Super Sent.*, IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, p. 31: “Causa enim sine qua non, si nihil omnino faciat ad inducendum effectum vel disponendo vel meliorando, quantum ad rationem causandi, nihil habebit supra causas per accidens; sicut album est causa domus, si aedificator sit albus”). Or, the alleged “causa sine qua non” is just a sign that has a symbolic function, exactly as the handing over of the crozier causes someone to receive the dignity of abbot, or as a lead coin causes the handing over of goods that are much more valuable than the lead of the coin, because of the nominal value arbitrarily given to the coin (*ibid.*, and *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 4, corp., p. 522).

115. As, for instance, respiration or food are not the primary causes of life but are required as “concausae” (AQUINAS, *In XII libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, V, lect. 6, ed. M.-R. CATHALA – R.M. SPIAZZI, Torino / Roma 1964, n. 827, p. 225). Albert the Great defines the *sine qua non* cause as a necessary but incomplete cause, as opposed to a sufficient cause (*Analytica posteriora*, II, tract. III, cap. VI, ed. A. BORGNET, Paris 1890, p. 203A).

116. Cf. AQUINAS, *Super Sent.*, IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 1, p. 31; *id.*, *De verit.*, q. 27, a. 4, corp., p. 522.

any influence on Durand is offered. In any event, when taking up the concept of *causa sine qua non* and applying it to cognitive issues, Durand was placing himself in a very specific and marginal trend, which was met with a lot of opposition.

3. DURAND, HENRY, AND OLIVI

Notwithstanding the similarities just noted, one should also highlight a very important difference between, on one hand, Durand and, on the other hand, Kilwardby and several of the Franciscans I have earlier mentioned.

For the latter, the mind produces in itself a similitude of the external thing.¹¹⁷ In other words, they maintain a mental species — not a received or impressed species, but a produced or expressed species. On the contrary, Durand suppresses such mental species — and this is the other significant move Durand makes in cognition theory. As he puts it, even if no sensible species is the efficient cause of the mental act, still, one might argue that, for representing an external thing, a species is required, that is to say, a form inherent in the soul as an accident.¹¹⁸ That is the second function traditionally ascribed to species (the first function being to actualize the potency): to inform the cognitive faculty, that is, to be a form present in the faculty. However, Durand has good reasons for suppressing species as mental copies of the objects (albeit copies not received from the object but produced by the mind itself). Not only are they unnecessary, but, even worse, they could not perform the task they are supposed to and would be obstacles rather than aids.¹¹⁹ As a consequence, Durand rejects the principle of formal assimilation that is the basis of, for instance, Aquinas's epistemology:

117. See ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 117, p. 81: “[...] spiritus ipse sciens in se formet corporalium et sensibilibium ymagines”; *De spiritu fantastico*, n. 68, p. 70: “Set ipse spiritus mouens et sibi applicans et secum inuoluens illam ymaginem in organo repertam efficit se ei similem et in se facit ymaginem illi similem, que postea uocatur fantasia.” For Peckham, Marston, Aquasparta, see below, n. 120.

118. See DURAND, *Super Sent.* (2), II, d. 3, q. 5, n. 29, p. 162, 437-442.

119. On these reasons, and on Durand's indebtedness to Henry, see J.-L. SOLÈRE, “Durand of Saint-Pourçain's cognition theory,” sections 2.1 and 2.3.

omnis cognitio fit per assimilationem cognoscentis ad cognitum, sed talis assimilatio est per speciem quae est in cognoscente et est similitudo rei cognoscibilis.¹²⁰

The mind, according to Durand, does not need to be informed by an accidental form in the same way a material thing is. The cognitive faculty is by itself able to apprehend the object. In other words, for Durand, the distinctive property of cognitive faculties is to refer to objects or to be “about” objects, as we say today, that is, to make them objects of cognition. Durand replaces the ontological composition of the cognitive subject with a form by the “objective presence” of the known object. On that count, Durand owes a lot to Henry of Ghent. It was one of Henry’s innovations to distinguish the presence of a form *in* a subject (hence, its “subjective” presence), and its presence *to* a cognizing entity as a cognitive object (hence, its “objective” presence). Becoming present to a cognitive faculty does not mean that the object has to be imprinted in that faculty, as in the reception model. As a result, Henry outright eliminates intelligible species. The intelligible object has to be present to the intellect, not as a form in a subject (which an impressed intelligible species is, according to the species theory), but as an intelligible content¹²¹ — and such intelligible content is sufficiently given in the phantasms present in the imagination.

120. Reported by DURAND, *Super Sent.* (C), IV, d. 49, q. 2, § 12, Venezia 1571 (repr. Ridgewood, N.J. 1964), fol. 413ra.

121. See HENRY OF GHENT, *Summa*, a. 33, q. 2, ad 3, p. 146: “Penes vero secundum dictorum modorum potentia intelligens non educitur effective in actum per aliquam formam sibi impressam, sed solummodo ab ipso intelligibili objective praesenti intellectui, sicut cognoscibile cognoscenti [...]”; ID., *Quodl. IV*, q. 21, Paris 1518 (repr. Louvain 1961), t. I, fol. 137vH: “[...] intentiones imaginatae non movent ut obiecta intellectum materiam nisi quando efficiuntur in actu universales postquam erant in potentia, et per hoc fiunt in intellectu possibili non sicut in subiecto, sed sicut in cognoscente, ut sic componantur intellectus materialis et intentio intellecta ita quod compositum non sit tertium ex eis sicut de aliis compositis ex materia et forma.” Similarly, regarding imagination, Henry draws a distinction between the subjective presence of the image, with its bodily foundation in memory, and the objective presence of the imagined object. See *ibid.*, fols. 126vI-127r: “[...] in virtute imaginativa sunt tria: scilicet species ipsa a specie existente in memoria, sine qua nihil potest percipere, propter esse suum organicum et materiale; et ipse actus imaginandi; et tertium est ipsum obiectum imaginatum. Quorum species est imaginativa ut forma accidentalis in subiecto. Actus imaginandi sicut motus in moto. Imaginatum sicut obiectum in cognoscente.”

Henry's view on mental sensible species is less clear-cut, however.¹²² On the contrary, Durand not only categorically eliminates intelligible species as mental entities, but also sensible species.¹²³ This move makes Durand's theory look very close to Olivi's. In fact, it seems that Olivi alone maintains both of these ideas that Durand also endorses: the complete lack of passivity in the soul *and* the total absence of species (either intelligible or sensible). That conjunction is quite distinctive.¹²⁴ As a matter of fact, passivity versus activity, on the one hand, and species versus no species, on the other, are two separate issues. Therefore, four distinct positions are possible:

- As Aquinas, one can assert the passivity of the soul and the necessity of representative species.
- One can assert the activity of the soul and the necessity of species, as did Henry (at least likely for the *species sensibiles*), Kilwardby, Peckham, Peter of Trabes, Aquasparta or Marston (for both intelligible and sensible species).¹²⁵ According to them the

122. On the one hand, Henry writes in *Quodl. XI*, q. 5, ad 1, fol. 452rF: “[...] quia est <obiectum sensibile> extra animae essentiam et non in ipsa per aliquam impressionem, etiam si sit intra per praesentiam sub ratione obiecti moventis, dicitur movens extra [...]” On the other hand, he says in *Summa*, a. 33, q. 2, p. 151: “potentia sentiens educitur in actum per formam sensibilis, alterando sensitivum ut formam sibi similem ipsi imprimat [...]”; in *Quodlibet IV*, q. 7, fol. 95rB: “Secundo modo dicitur species similitudo formae rei naturalis, informans impressivae partem sensitivam, non dico intellectivam”; in *Quodl. IV*, q. 21, fol. 136vH: “sensus ab obiecto habet speciem receptam impressivam qua deducitur per transmutationem naturalem sensus de potentia in actu, non solum ut, in potentia formatum, actu informetur receptione speciei impressivae in subiecto, ut ibi sit status, sed ut ulterius potentia sentiens fiat actu sentiens receptione speciei expressivae, non ut in subiecto sed in cognoscente.”

123. Not the physical species (that is to say, the species in the medium and in the sensory organs), but the alleged copies in the mind. As Godfrey or Henry, Durand *does* believe that species, as accidental forms, are received in the physical reality and in our sense organs. What he rejects is the idea that these species, being dematerialized, are also subjectively received in the soul.

124. However, contrary to Durand (cf. previous footnote), Olivi rejects in addition the physical species.

125. Cf. JOHN PECKHAM, *Sent.*, I, d. 3, q. 6, and *Quodlibet Florentinum*, q. 3, in: *Tractatus de anima*, pp. 135, 147; PETER OF TRABES, *II Sent. dist. 24*, q. 4, p. 278 (“intelligere non est speciem suscipere sed eam agere ad obiecti praesentiam in se vel in sua specie in memoria retenta”). Cf. ROGER MARSTON, *Quaest. disp. de anima*, q. 8, p. 396: “sensitiva facit in se speciem, quae tamen aequaliter est ab extra”; *ibid.*, p. 397: “potentia sensitiva, talem immutationem advertens, moveat se contra corporis passiones applicando et conformando se ipsis, et haec est species prima facta in potentia sensitiva”; *ibid.*, p. 401: “Ad octavum dicendum quod anima, in se formando speciem, proprie loquendo non agit in se ipsam, sed conformando se speciei in organo existenti [...] facit similitudinem in se ipsa,

species are formed by the soul itself (not impressed) under the prompting of the body.

- One can, as Godfrey did, maintain the passivity of the soul but avoid positing mental species.¹²⁶
- Finally, one can deny any passivity in the soul but also deny that the soul produces any species. This is what Durand did,¹²⁷ and Olivi alone (among the authors I know) had done before him.¹²⁸

	Species	No species
Passivity of the soul	Aquinas	Godfrey
Activity of the soul	Peckham / Marston / Aquasparta	Olivi / Durand

ad quam quidem actionem consequitur quaedam passio sicut effectus eius, veluti si cera conformaret se sigillo, ageret simpliciter cera, ad quam quidem actionem consequeretur quaedam passiva impressio in eadem.” Regarding the intelligible species, against Henry of Ghent, see *ibid.*, q. 9, p. 414: “Non enim video qualiter intellectus simplices intentiones possit apprehendere, nisi potentia intellectiva per aliquam speciem fiat actu similis rei cognitae, cum omnis cognitio fiat per aliquam assimilationem; ergo cognitio intellectiva fiet per speciem informantem intellectum.”

126. In addition to GODFREY OF FONTAINES, *Quodl. IX*, q. 19, see *Quodl. I*, q. 9; *Quodl. X*, q. 12.

127. P. HARTMAN, *Durand of St.-Pourçain on cognitive acts*, pp. 47-48, thinks that I misrepresent Durand as being a “self-affectionist.” I am afraid that he has misread me. Given that Hartman defines “self-affectionism” as the theory according to which “the mind is the efficient cause of the mental act and affects itself in the mere presence of the object, *impressing upon and receiving into itself the ‘form’ of an object*” (*ibid.*, p. 47, emphasis mine), it is clear that Durand is not a self-affectionist. If I place Durand amongst Augustinian-Franciscans other than Olivi (namely, Marston, Peckham, and some others), it is only with respect to the DOC principle (see J.-L. SOLÈRE, “Durand of Saint-Pourçain’s cognitive theory,” pp. 193, 206, 206, 207). However, if one retains only the first part of Hartman’s definition (namely, that the mind is the efficient cause of the mental act), then I would probably say that Durand is a self-affectionist. The mental act is a certain event that appears at a certain moment; no event is without an efficient cause; if the object is not that efficient cause, it has to be the mind (leaving aside another mind, angel or devil, or God). As we have seen, Durand (*Super Sent.* [2], II, d. 3, q. 5, § 29, p. 161, 427) adheres to Augustine’s conception, for which sensation is nothing but the soul paying attention to bodily affections (“in eius <corporis> passionibus attentius agere” — AUGUSTINE, *De musica*, VI, 5, 10, p. 28, 20).

128. Regarding the non-passivity of the soul, see above pp. 213-214. Regarding the non-formation of species, against Henry or contemporary Franciscans, see PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, pp. 461-463, and q. 74, vol. III, p. 114: “In acie potentiae non formatur species ab anima per quam producat actum cognitivum. [...] Quod nulla species aciei informative est ad actum producendum necessaria, et multo minus est ibi necessaria species corporalis.”

Thus, Olivi's fundamental position is quite close to Durand's. In addition to that which I have just highlighted, one should also recall that Olivi appeals to the distinction accidental/essential potentiality, as we saw above.¹²⁹ Interestingly, the syntagms "potentia accidentalis" and "potentia essentialis" are infrequent too. As an indication, another query in the *Library of Latin Texts* yields only a handful of references before the 14th century, the majority of them being from Olivi himself.¹³⁰ So, given that the concept of accidental potentiality is one of the linchpins of Durand's theory, it is rather important, I believe, to note that Olivi, before him, wrote (paralleling freedom and cognition):

Quod autem obiectum, in quantum obiectum seu in quantum terminans, exigatur ad productionem et continuationem ipsius actus absque hoc quod aliquid in ipso efficiat: patet non solum ex sufficientia nostrae libertatis ad ipsum efficiendum, sed etiam ex hoc quod ipsimet philosophi supponunt, quod scilicet voluntas et intellectus, postquam sunt per suos habitus in primo actu constituti, non sunt in potentia essentiali ad ipsos actus, sed solum in potentia accidentalī.¹³¹

However, Olivi does not use the expression "causa sine qua non" when speaking of objects of cognition. Furthermore, when he says that, inasmuch as it merely is the end point of the act of attention of the cognitive faculty, the object is not an efficient cause of this act,¹³² he adds that, nevertheless, the object can be considered to be an efficient cause broadly construed, because the cognitive potency depends on it for being determined, and the object is not playing a role in the capacity of a patient, but rather in virtue of its actuality. It is *as if* (though it is not really the case) the object was imparting something to the faculty, in the same way as a cause imparts something to its

129. See p. 191 at n. 18.

130. The others are those from Aquinas I quoted above (notes 21 and 25; only two occurrences in the whole corpus), Alexander of Hales (only one occurrence; see ALEXANDER OF HALES, *Summa theologica*, II, pars I, inquisitio IV, tractatus I, sectio II, quaestio III, titulus I, membrum II, cap. II, art. III, problema III, n. 375, ed. PP. COLLEGII S. BONAVENTURAE, Quaracchi 1928, p. 455), Peter of Auvergne in the context of physics (in his continuation of Aquinas's commentary on the *De Caelo*) and quite incidentally John Peckham, in a response to an argument about mixtures.

131. PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 419.

132. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, p. 10. *Ibid.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 477, he declares: "potentiae habent per se sufficientem virtutem activam suorum actuum absque aliqua cooperatione seu coefficientia facta ab obiectis vel a speciebus."

effect.¹³³ As a consequence, the object is “*coefficientis*,” inasmuch as the cognitive potency could not act without it.¹³⁴ Admittedly, it has a very little active role, which is simply comparable to that of a receptacle shaping its content, as we saw.¹³⁵ But Olivi follows a different path from Durand for characterizing the object. Instead of the laconic “*causa sine qua non*,” he multiplies epithets in order to circumscribe its paradoxical causal status.¹³⁶ In addition, whereas Durand endorses it, Olivi criticizes Augustine’s thesis that perception consists in the first place in the soul’s noticing the affections of the organs.¹³⁷ Rather, Olivi attributes to the soul a power of turning directly its faculties to the external objects.¹³⁸ This part of his theory is very different from Durand’s.

133. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, p. 10: “[...] nihilominus potest [obiectum] large connumerari inter causas efficientes; tum quia obiectum, in quantum est talis terminus vel terminans, non habet rationem patientis aut entis possibilis seu potentialis, immo potius rationem actus et entis actualis; tum quia virtus activa potentiae cognitivae sic necessario eget tali termino et eius terminatione ad hoc quod producat actum cognitivum, acsi praedictus terminus influeret aliquid in ipsam vim cognitivam et in eius actum.”

134. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, p. 10: “Tale autem efficere non est ibi secundum rem aliud quam vim activam absque tali termino et terminatione non posse agere suum actum et posse hoc cum ipso, ita quod intrinseca et formalis terminatio virtutis activae est vere coefficientis actionem ipsius virtutis; quia virtus absolute sumpta non est sufficiens activum, nisi cum est sufficienter terminata per obiectum seu in obiectum.”

135. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, p. 36: “Sicut enim actualis irradiatio vasis sphaerici vel quadrati fit sphaerica vel quadrata ex hoc solo quod lux generat illam cum conformitate ad figuram sui suscipientis et continentis; sic, quia vis cognitiva generat actum cognitivum cum quadam informativa imbibitione actus ad obiectum et cum quadam sigillari et viscerali tentione obiecti, idcirco eo ipso quod sic gignitur, fit ipsa similitudo et sigillaris expressio obiecti.”

136. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 72, vol. III, p. 35: “Circa quartum vero principale, quomodo scilicet obiectum, in quantum terminat aspectus et actus potentialium, cooperetur specificae productioni eorum, sciendum quod obiectum, in quantum est talis terminus, habet rationem termini fixivi et illapsivi et praesentativi et sigillativi seu configurativi et repraesentativi seu cognitivi. Nam actus et aspectus cognitivus figuratur in obiecto et intentionaliter habet ipsum intra se imbitum; propter quod actus cognitivus vocatur apprehensio et apprehensiva tentio obiecti. In qua quidem tentione et imbibitione actus intime conformatur et configuratur obiecto; ipsum etiam obiectum se ipsum praesentat seu praesentialiter exhibet aspectui cognitivo et per actum sibi configuratum est quaedam repraesentatio eius.”

137. See PETER OF JOHN OLIVI, *Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 484; q. 74, vol. III, pp. 113-114, 123-124.

138. See J.F. SILVA – J. TOIVANEN, “The Active Nature of the Soul,” pp. 271-277.

4. CONCLUSION

To sum up, despite the strong acquaintances with a number of theses that can be found in the works of other thinkers, Durand's view retains originality in the way it weaves together the concept of *causa sine qua non*, the theory of accidental potentiality and the suppression of mental species. Durand's position is in fact reducible neither to Kilwardby's, nor to Olivi's, nor to Henry's, although he is in different ways close to each of these three thinkers.

Let us have, however, a look at the immediate context of his writings. As we earlier saw, Gonsalvus of Spain calls the object an "agens sine quo non." Moreover, he expresses doubts about the necessity of postulating species in intellectual cognition.¹³⁹ According to Ubertino of Casale (admittedly not a disinterested witness), Gonsalvus, when he was a *baccalaureatus*, had supported Olivi's theories,¹⁴⁰ and with his stint in Paris as *magister actu regens*, in 1302-1303 (while Scotus was lecturing on the *Sentences*), we get close to the times when Durand was a student. We know that Durand was present in Paris in those days because he signed Philip the Fair's appeal to the Council in June 1303. The debates between Godfrey and Henry of Ghent were more than ten years old, but they had been rekindled with the aged Godfrey's return to Paris.¹⁴¹ Gonsalvus in particular defended voluntarism and opposed Godfrey's intellectualist positions, and this in turn sparked the replies of some of Godfrey's disciples, such as John of Pouilly and John Lesage.¹⁴² Scotus, as interested in securing our unconditional free will as he was, at first curtly dismissed Henry's notion of "causa sine qua non."¹⁴³ But thereafter he withdrew his

139. See GONSALVUS OF SPAIN, *Quodl.*, q. 7, in: *Quaest. disp. et de quodl.*, p. 403: "Ista quaestio tria dubia supponit: primum est quod species in intellectu requiritur propter actum intelligendi, quod est mihi dubium, et quomodo species est aliud ab habitu et actu intelligendi."

140. See references in AMORÓS's introduction, *ibid.*, p. xxiv-xxv.

141. Cf. J.F. WIPPEL, "Godfrey of Fontaines: The Date of Quodlibet 15," in: *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), pp. 300-369.

142. See S.D. DUMONT, "Did Duns Scotus Change His Mind on the Will?," in: J.A. AERTSEN – K. EMERY, Jr. – A. SPEER (eds.), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts: Studien und Texte*, Berlin / New York 2001, pp. 719-794; see esp. pp. 744-749 and 773-777.

143. JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Lectura*, I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 2, nn. 323-324, pp. 353-354; ID., *Lectura*, II, d. 25, n. 55-68, 76-80, pp. 247-252, 255-257.

criticisms to support, as Stephen Dumont has shown,¹⁴⁴ his regent master, Gonsalvus of Spain, against Godfrey's objections.

In the first decade of the 14th century, therefore, the concept of *causa sine qua non*, together with the topic of the self-actualization of a faculty, still enmeshes the cognition issue within a wider debate that involves the question of the will.¹⁴⁵ When rallying, as far as cognition is concerned, an 'Augustinian' position largely represented among the Franciscans, Durand may have appeared to offer them some support. This is why the Dominican investigation commission that, in 1314, compiled from Durand's writings and censored a list of 93 articles, targeted his theory of cognition:

Ibidem [*Super Sent.* (2), II, d. 3, q. 5] eciam dicit quod huiusmodi actus immanentes sunt a generante per se et ab obiecto solum sicut a causa sine qua non.¹⁴⁶

To that observation, the commission added in a sibylline manner:

Periculosum propter libertatem arbitrii reputamus.¹⁴⁷

Why this strange *caveat*? Why is the issue of free will linked to an epistemological problem? The allusion is laconic, but the danger is all too clear. The two problems of the activity of the will and the activity of the intellect are so closely related that Durand's epistemological position opens the door to a blatantly anti-Thomist theory of free choice. If one allows the notion of "causa sine qua non" in cognition theory, one might allow it also in moral psychology.¹⁴⁸

144. S.D. DUMONT, "Did Duns Scotus change," pp. 774-775.

145. The connection between the two problems is clearly underlined by Olivi (*Qq. in II Sent.*, q. 58, vol. II, p. 437 sqq.; see also the passage quoted above, p. 224 at n. 131), James of Viterbo (*Quodl. I*, q. 12, p. 165, 273-278), Gonsalvus of Spain (*Quaest. disp.*, q. 3, p. 32: "Et primo induco rationes communes intellectui et voluntati").

146. In J. KOCH, "Die Magister-Jahre des Durandus de S. Porciano O.P. und der Konflikt mit seinem Orden. Anhang: Die gegen Durandus gerichteten Irrtumslisten," in: ID., *Kleine Schriften*, Roma 1973, p. 58, n. 19.

147. *Ibid.*

148. Actually, the suspicion is unfair to Durand, whose conception of free-will does not seem to be actually similar to the Franciscans'.