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# Chapter 12
# Are Cognitive Habits in the Intellect? Durand of St.-Pourçain and Prosper De Reggio Emilia on Cognitive Habits

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**Peter John Hartman**

**Abstract** Once Socrates has thought something, he comes to acquire an item such that he is then able to think such thoughts again when he wants, and he can, all other things being equal, do this with more ease than he could before. This item that he comes to acquire medieval philosophers called a cognitive habit which most medieval philosophers maintained was a new quality added to Socrates' intellect. However, some disagreed. In this paper, I will examine an interesting alternative theory put forward by Durand of Saint-Pourçain and Prosper de Reggio Emilia about the *location* of cognitive habits. On their view, cognitive habits are not to be located in the intellect but in something on the side of the body or sensitive soul.

**Keywords** Durand of St-Pourçain · Prosper de Reggio Emilia · Intellectual habits · Cognitive habits · Cognitive acts · Relations

## 12.1 Introduction

Once Socrates has thought some proposition or about some object, he comes to acquire something such that he is then able to think that proposition or about that object when he wants, and he can, all other things being equal, do this with more ease than he could before.[1] This 'something' that he comes to acquire medieval philosophers called a cognitive habit. According to what I will call the Standard Theory of Habits (STH), a cognitive habit is an acquired qualitative state that the intellect takes on, or, in metaphysical terms, it is a non-relational (absolute) entity that comes to inhere in the intellect as its subject. Its active cause is either an act of thinking or at least the active causes of an act of thinking, and repeated acts of

[1] In what follows, I will focus on simple acts of thinking (thoughts about *O*) as opposed to complex (propositional) acts of thinking (thoughts that *p*) for sake of clarity. Both sorts of thoughts present different difficulties and puzzles in relation to habits.

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thinking reinforce it; in turn, the habit is at least in part somehow the active cause of subsequent acts of thinking (or an aspect or 'mode' of those acts), explaining both our capacity to think thoughts in the absence of their objects when we want as well as the ease with which we think such thoughts. Hence, according to the STH, Socrates' initial thought about, say, cats produces (or is concomitant with the production of) a quality in Socrates' intellect and subsequent thoughts of the same sort (thoughts about cats) reinforce it. In turn, this quality explains both the fact that Socrates can engage in the same thought that he had engaged in before whenever he wants and also the relative ease with which he elicits such thoughts. Philosophers as different as Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham maintained this view.[2] AU2

However, at some point in the early fourteenth century a new view emerged, a view I will call the Novel Theory of Habits (NTH). On this view, a cognitive habit, although acquired, is not a non-relational (absolute) entity; its active cause is not an act of thinking; and it is not in turn the active cause of subsequent acts of thinking. Rather, habits are relational entities, acts of thinking are passive (not active) causes of cognitive habits, and habits are, in turn, mere *per accidens* or *sine qua non* causes of subsequent acts of thinking. Moreover, cognitive habits are not *in* the intellect but rather exist outside the intellect in a certain sensitive power whose job it is to 'show' objects to the intellect whenever we want (henceforth: the ostensive power).[3] It is something on the side of the ostensive power, then, and not on the side of the intellect that explains both the fact that Socrates can think thoughts again whenever he wants and the relative ease with which he does this.

While there is evidence suggesting a number of authors endorsed the NTH, here I will discuss two of them, namely Durand of St-Pourçain[4] and Prosper de Reggio



[2] In Aquinas, see Pini 2015 and the references therein, as well as Boulnois, p. 000, Taieb, p. 000, and Klima, p. 000, in this volume. Aquinas's view is that a habit is the intelligible *species* (defined elsewhere as a kind of quality) as it exists in the possible intellect in a certain way—neither in potency nor in act, but in a middle way. See especially *Sent.* 3.14.1, a. 1, qla. 2: "In intellectu autem requiritur ad eius perfectionem quod impressio sui activi sit in eo non solum per modum passionis sed etiam per modum qualitatis et formae connaturalis perfectae, et hanc formam habitum dicimus." For Aquinas, the antecedent act of thinking is not the active cause of the habit; rather, a habit is just an intelligible *species* and so the active cause will be whatever goes into the production of an intelligible species, namely, the agent intellect together with the object (and phantasms and so forth). See *Sent.* 3.23.1 and 2.27.1. Scotus seems to hold a similar view. See Cross 2014 and the references therein (especially *Ord.* 1.17.1–2), as well as Boulnois, p. 000, and Trego, p. 000, in this volume. Ockham holds the more extreme view that a habit is the efficient cause of the act and that the act the efficient cause of the habit. See Panaccio 2004, ch. 2 and the references therein, as well as Roques, p. 000, in this volume. For other authors who held the view that a habit is a quality discussed in this volume, see Pickave (on Auriol), p. 000, Zupko (on Buridan), p. 000, and Perler (on Suarez), p. 000.

[3] Durand, Prosper and their opponents use various terms to characterize the ostensive power. See footnote 9 below. As well, there will be reason to qualify the term 'sensitive'. See below footnote 10.

[4] For Durand's dates and career, see Schabel et al. 2001 and Hartman 2011 and the references therein. Durand defends the view in *Sent.* 2.33.1 (on causation) and 3.23.1–4 (for A/B I have used Paris Bibl. Nat., lat. 12,330; for C I have used Venice 1517 and Paris 1517); *Tractatus de habitibus*,

Emilia[5] (the former slightly earlier than the latter).[6] What motivated Durand and Prosper to abandon the standard theory of habits? Why the novelty? I hope this paper will provide something by way of an answer to these questions. While there are several interesting differences between the NTH and the STH, I will focus on the issue of the location of habits: according to the STH, habits are to be located in the intellect, a thesis proponents of the NTH deny. I will first look at an argument Durand and Prosper put forward in defense of their view, and then present some objections to it raised by an anonymous proponent of the STH. In the third section, I will speculate about what might be at stake.

### *12.1.1 The Location Thesis*

In his *Tractatus de habitibus* (henceforth: TDH), Durand sounds out the ringing declaration that

> it can be held as probable that habits are not in the intellect or any cognitive power as such… Rather, habits are only in the power that shows objects to the intellect… (4.8, p. 50)[7]

And Prosper opens the body of a *quaestio* dedicated to the topic (Sent. Prol. 3.3.1, which asks "whether habits are in the intellect as in a subject") with the admission that



qq. 1–3 (ed. Takada 1963), q. 4 (ed. Koch 1930), and q. 5 (Vat. lat. 1086, f. 192vb–193ra and Vat. lat. 1076, f. 9rb–va); and *De subiecto virtutum moralium* (Vat. lat. 1086, f. 186ra). I have prepared a Latin edition of *Sent.* 3.23.1–2 in Hartman 2017.

[5] For Prosper, who is far less well-known, see Courtenay 2007 and Pelster 1928. Prosper defends the view in the prologue to his *Sentences* commentary, pars 1, qq. 5–6 and pars 3, q. 3 (Vat. lat. 1086). According to Courtenay, the *terminus post quem* for this text (a *redaction* it would seem) is 1318, since Prosper, who read the *Sentences* in Paris before 1315, cites John Paignote who was regent in 1318; the *terminus ante quem* is 1323, since Thomas Aquinas is never referred to as 'saint'. Prosper states in his dedication that the content is derived from his earlier stay in Paris.

[6] Cajetan (*ST* 1.2.49.3) and Suàrez (*DM* 44) both discuss the view, citing Durand by name as its core proponent. Durand, however, tells us that the view is the view of 'certain contemporaries' of his (see footnote 11 below). As well, Peter of Palude (*Sent.* 3.23.1, 3a opinio), Thomas of Argentina (*Sent.* 3.23.1), Hervaeus Natalis (*Quodl.* 1.13, 3.7) and John Duns Scotus (*Ord.* 1.17.1–2) present positions that approximate Durand's position but are not exact matches.

[7] "Primo modo potest teneri probabiliter quod in intellectu non sit aliquis habitus nec in aliqua potentia cognitiva ut sic ... sed solum in potentia quae ostendit obiectum intellectui..." Durand goes on to admit that we do *attribute* habits to the intellect owing to the fact that the acts which the habit regulates are acts of the intellect. However, attribution is not the same as claiming that such habits are in the intellect as in a subject. TDH 4.8, p. 53: "… in intellectu et in appetitu sensitivo vel intellectivo ponendus est habitus attributive, quia cum habitus non quaeratur nisi propter actum, ut promptius et facilius eliciatur, illi potentiae attribuendus est habitus propter cuius actum principaliter quaeritur; sed intellectus et appetitus principaliter sunt illae potentiae propter quarum actus quaeruntur habitus. Quare etc." On the idea that a habit is '*attributive*' and not '*subiective*' in the intellect, see pp. 53–55 and TDH 4.9, pp. 68–69. Prosper also draws the distinction in, e.g., *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1 at f. 63ra–63vb.

> practically everyone says that habitual scientific knowledge is formally in the possible intellect as in a subject… However, the total opposite strikes me as the case… (f. 62va)[8]

For both Durand and Prosper cognitive habits are not in the intellect as their subject.[9] Rather, such habits are located outside the intellect, in the ostensive power, a power of the sensitive part of the soul whose function it is to store and present items to the intellect.[10] While this power is sometimes called the imaginative power, it is important to stress one of its core features, namely, that it is not a *cognitive* power as such: its job is to store and present objects to cognitive powers such as the intellect and so its act is not a cognitive act but a condition for a cognitive act. If the ostensive power were itself a cognitive power, then it would require an ostensive power to present to it its object, and so there would be an infinite regress among ostensive powers.[11]



[8] "... respondent quasi communiter omnes quod scientia quaelibet habitualis est in intellectu possibili formaliter et subiective... Mihi autem ... videtur totum contrarium."

[9] Durand and Prosper draw a broad division between intellectual (or cognitive) habits, on the one hand, and practical or moral habits, on the other. Intellectual habits are sometimes called speculative habits (*habitus speculativi*), such as our habits associated with geometry, and these were located in the intellect according to STH, whereas practical and moral habits (*habitus practici et morales)* deal with the moral virtues and prudence. See *TDH* 4.8, p. 50. While Durand and Prosper both maintain that moral and practical habits are also not to be located in the intellect (or the will), in what follows I will be focused on intellectual (or to avoid confusion: cognitive) habits.

[10] Durand and Prosper use various terms here, e.g. 'memorativa' or 'memoria' (TDH 4.8, pp. 42, 43, 44, 45 [3 times]); 'repraesentativa' or 'repraesentans' (TDH 4.8, pp. 42, 43, 50 [3 times], 51 [bis], 56, 57; Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 62vb, 64va); 'praesentans' (TDH 4.8, p. 45; Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 62va [bis], 64ra, 64rb, 64va, 66vb, 67ra [bis]); 'proponens' (TDH 4.8, p. 53); 'ostendens' (TDH 4.8, p. 49, 50 [bis], 53, 54, 56; Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 66va); 'imaginativa' or 'imaginatio' (Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.2 [multiple times]); 'offerans' (Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 67ra). Prosper, in fact, goes on to locate its organ in the posterior part of the first ventricule of the brain (*in posteriori parte primi ventriculi cerebri*)—even providing us with an illustration in his student notebook! See *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.2, which asks "Utrum habitus theologiae sit in potentia sensitiva vel quae sit illa potentia sensitiva in qua ponitur." This particular *quaestio* is also available in an early modern printing: *Opusculum perutile de cognitione animae et eius potentiis Augustini de Anchona cum quadam quaestione Prosperi de Reggio* (Bologna 1503).

[11] See, e.g., TDH 4.8, p. 58: "Et quia illud est in potentia ostendente obiectum, ut declaratum est, quae ut sic non est cognitiva (alioquin esset processus in infinitum in hiis quae ostendunt obiectum ad absentiam realem ipsorum), ideo nec universale nec particulare est eius obiectum, cum nullius sit cognitiva." See also p. 50 and Prosper, *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 66va: "… cum <habitus> sit in potentia sensitiva ostendente obiectum quae ut sic non est cognitiva nec universale nec particulare est eius obiectum cognitive sed solum repraesentative, habet enim obiectum quod repraesentat intellectui."

Durand and Prosper each supply seven arguments in defense of this—admittedly minority[12]—position, with some overlap.[13] These arguments range from ones purely metaphysical in character—for instance, Aquinas's thesis that a habit as a mean between potentiality and actuality makes little sense to Durand and Prosper (TDH 4.8, p. 48; Prosper, Sent. Prol. 3.3.1, f. 60va–61ra)—on down to more experience-based arguments—for instance, we can lose habits over time, but this does not seem to be appropriate for something in the immaterial intellect (Durand, ibid., p. 44–45; Prosper, ibid., f. 61rb). In what follows, however, I focus on just one of these arguments, which I will call *the master argument*. It appeals to a kind of razor, which I will call Prosper's razor:

> We should not countenance anything in the intellect in vain. (*Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 60va)[14]

If habits are to be located in the intellect, then we must have a reason for putting them there. However, as Durand puts it, the only reason to maintain that there are habits in the intellect is because one also maintains that there must be something in the intellect in order to explain (i) its determination with respect to its act or (ii) the relative ease with which it acts. However, we don't need to maintain that there is something in the intellect in order to explain (i) or (ii). Ergo etc.[15] If a cognitive power's determination with respect to its act totally depends upon something else, then that power does not need something *in* it in order to explain its determination. However, the intellect's determination with respect to its act totally depends upon something else: the object presented to it by the ostensive power. Likewise with



[12] Durand tells us that this position had been put forward by certain contemporaries *(aliqui moderni*) and, in reporting Durand's position, the anonymous author of *Quaestio* "Utrum habitus acquisitus…" (ed. Koch 1930 in *TDH*) writes on pp. 70–71 (for discussion of this text, see footnote 22 below): "Quidam tractantes de ista materia dicunt et scribunt quod in intellectu non est aliquis habitus subiective, quorum positionem alii posteriores recitant et approbant, dicentes quod nec in intellectu nec in aliqua potentia cognitiva ut cognitiva est aliquid habitus subiective…" According to Koch 1927, p. 143 the '*quidam*' here is Godfrey of Fontaines, pointing us to Vat. lat. 1072, f. 239v–240v (i.e. *Quodl.* 14.3, pp. 340–6 [codex *R* in PhB 5]). In *Quodl.* 14.3, in his reply to the fifth objection—that justice is not general or common since it is in the sensitive appetite which peddles only in particulars—Godfrey does defend the thesis that "virtutes omnes morales sunt in appetitu sensitivo" (p. 341). However, Godfrey admits (*constat*) that prudence, a "habitus intellectivus cognoscitivus […] principaliter est in intellectu" (p. 341) and two pages later (p. 343) he recognizes and seems to reject the alternative (the view Durand champions). Moreover, none of the seven arguments found in *TDH* are in *Quodl.* 14.3. Godfrey does allude to a separate discussion on the topic (p. 342) which I have not been able to locate. For discussion on this point, see Wippel 2007, p. 318, fn. 58. For discussion of the fifth objection and Godfrey's reply, see ibid., pp. 317–20.

[13] Of the seven arguments Prosper gives (f. 60va–62va), one (f. 60va–61ra) is unique; the rest are either verbatim or paraphrases of Durand's arguments. Durand presents six arguments as '*motiva*' and a seventh as a more general argument (*TDH* 4.8, pp. 42–48).

[14] "… nihil in intellectu ponendum est frustra…"

[15] TDH 4.8, p. 42: "Si aliquis habitus esset in intellectu subiective, hoc esset propter determinationem eius ad actum vel propter facilitatem; sed propter neutrum istorum est ponendus talis habitus in intellectu; ergo nullo modo." See also TDH 4.8, p. 51; 4.6, p. 32; and 4.4, pp. 20–21. For Prosper's version, see *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 60va–vb. See also the presentation of the argument in *Quaestio* "Utrum habitus acquisitus…", p. 70.

ease: the relative ease with which the intellect elicits its act totally depends upon the relative ease with which the ostensive power presents to it its objects.[16]

The idea, then, seems to be that the intellect at least is such that the ease with which it elicits its acts and the fact that it elicits a determinate act is a function of the ease with which a power on the side of the sensitive soul shows to it objects and which objects it shows to it.[17] Now, 'determination' is a fishy term, and a word on its use here is in order. What does it mean to say that *X* (the ostensive power's presentation of an object) determines *Y* (the intellect, in this case) with respect to its act? One thing that this might mean is that *X* causes (in some sense of the term 'cause') the intellect to elicit its act. Another thing that it might mean is something like what we mean when we say that something fixes the content of the mental act: I am thinking about cats and not dogs because *X* where *X* is a kind of representation of cats and not dogs.[18] We might have one story about what causes the intellect to elicit its act and some other story about what fixes the content of that act; or it might be the case that the same item that causes the act also fixes the content of the act. (Prosper, in fact, splits these two features out in one version of the master argument.)[19]

The upshot here is that however we take 'determination', Durand and Prosper maintain that what determines the intellect to elicit a determinate act (a thought about cats, say, rather than dogs) is something outside the intellect: the intellect is determined to think about whatever is presented to it by way of the ostensive power. As Durand puts it:

> With respect to the determination and ease of the intellect, the determination and ease of the powers that are required in order to represent the object are sufficient.[20]

[16] TDH 4.8, p. 42: "Illud cuius determinatio et facilitas ad actum dependet totaliter ex altero non requirit propter ista habitum in seipso; sed determinatio intellectus ad actum suum et facilitas ad eumdem dependet totaliter ex altero, scilicet ex potentia memorativa vel repraesentativa obiecti; ergo etc." See also p. 51. For Prosper's take on it, see *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 60va–vb and *Sent.* Prol. 1.6, f. 37ra–b.

[17] TDH 4.8, pp. 42–43: "… quia ex hoc quod obiectum intellectus repraesentatur ei determinato modo, determinatur intellectus ad vere <p. 43 > vel false intelligendum. Si enim proponantur intellectui principia per se nota et sub eis gradatim accipiantur ea quae sunt eis per se connexa, determinatur intellectus ad cognitionem veri et scientifice. Si vero proponantur principia non per se nota, sed dubia, ut per sillogismum dialecticum vel apparentia et non-existentia ut fit per sillogismum sophisticum, determinatur intellectus ad opinandum vel ad erronee sentiendum; et cum ista ab alio accepta vel per nos inventa firmantur in memoria nostra sensitiva facillimum est intellectum exire in actus consimiles."

[18] This way of putting the point leaves open the precise story we will tell here as to representationality. We might suppose that *X* is a representation of cats in virtue of the fact that it is a kind of image, form, *species* or likeness of cats that, once possessed, somehow fixes the content of the act; or we might suppose that *X* is a representation of cats in virtue of the fact that X stands in a certain causal relationship to cats and the act. As I have argued elsewhere, Durand maintains the latter view, with some qualification about this causal relation. See Hartman 2013 and Hartman 2014.

[19] *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 64va–vb (emphasis mine): "… quia aut poneretur propter habilitatem potentiae *vel propter determinationem ad actum vel propter repraesentationem obiecti* vel ut potentia delectabiliter operetur."

[20] TDH 4.8, p. 43: "Videtur ergo quod ad determinationem seu facilitatem intellectus sufficiat determinatio et facilitas virium quae requiruntur ad repraesentationem obiecti."

Since a habit is postulated in order to explain the determination of the intellect, and since the determination of the intellect is a function of something on the side of the ostensive power, and not something on the side of the intellect, we ought to suppose that habits are not in the intellect but rather in the ostensive power as in a subject. So too, mutatis mutandis, with ease. Hence, cognitive habits are not in the intellect.

### *12.1.2 The Arguments from the Anonymous Thomist*

To get a better idea of what Durand and Prosper have in mind, I think it might be useful to look at the sort of reaction that the NTH received from proponents of the STH.[21] As part of his edition of the fourth question of Durand's *Tractatus de habitibus*, Josef Koch edited a *quaestio* he found prepended to it in Erfurt, *Amplon.* F369 (f. 82ra–83ra). The anonymous author of this *quaestio*—which asks "whether we should suppose that acquired intellectual and moral habits are in that power as in a subject whose act they primarily and directly concern"[22]—attacks Durand's position, quoting him verbatim. Following Koch, I will call him a Certain Anonymous Thomist (*Thomista quidam anonymus*), or Cat, for short.[23]

Cat considers the master argument, and he rejects its minor premise—that the intellect is sufficiently determined with respect to its ease and determination by the ostensive power. It is true, he notes, that if a cognitive power is such that its determination and ease totally depend upon something else, then one does not need to posit a habit in that power. Hence, Cat agrees, there are no habits in the external sensitive powers, for these totally depend with respect to their determination and ease upon present sensible qualities.[24] However, the intellect is such that the ease

[21] Durand and Prosper present their positions very much in negative terms—as critiques of the STH—and their own positive proposals are often left vague. The bulk of Prosper's *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, for instance, is made up of 27(!) arguments in defense of the STH together with his careful response to each of them. Many other authors responded to Durand's position. For a list, see footnote 5 above.

[22] "Utrum habitus acquisitus intellectualis vel moralis sit ponendus in illa potentia subiective cuius actum primo et immediate respicit."

[23] Cat tells us that he wishes to defend the "common doctrine" (i.e. Aquinas's position) on p. 73: "Sequendo communem doctrinam dicendum est quod habitus intellectuales sunt subiective in intellectu et morales in appetitu." For Aquinas's position on habits, see the references in footnote 1 above. On the anonymous author's identity, see Koch's introduction (p. 6) to his edition of TDH as well as Koch 1927, pp. 142–143. Pelster 1922, p. 238 had suggested that the author might be Peter of Palude, a thesis Koch rejects on the grounds that (a) Palude's criticism of Durand in Sent. 3.23 is quite different than the one found here and (b) the criticism is "zu scharfsinnig für Petrus."

[24] *Quaestio* "Utrum habitus acquisitus…" pp. 74–5: "… potentiae sensitivae interiores non determinant intellectum ad actum suum eo modo quo visibile determinat visum ad actum videndi, quia non eo modo praesentant obiectum suum intellectui sensus interiores quo obiciens corpus coloratum visui repraesentat sibi proprium suum obiectum. Nam color existens in corpore obiecto vel < p. 75 > supposito est proprium obiectum visus in quod potentia visiva primo et directe fertur… Et ideo contingit quod sensibili praesentato sensui exteriori non solum faciliter sed etiam

with which it elicits its acts and its determination does not totally depend upon something else (*ex alio*)—a difference in ease or determination is explained at least sometimes by appeal to a difference on the side of the intellect.[25]

Cat adduces the following argument in defense of this idea.

> Variation to the intellect is not totally explained by appeal to the imagination which presents to the intellect its proper object, for if this were totally explained by the imagination, then there could be no variation to the intellect without an antecedent variation to the imagination. But the consequent is false. (p. 76)[26]

Cat uses the terms 'imagination' (*imaginativa pars*; *phantasia*) to pick out the role that the ostensive power performs in Durand's account,[27] and his argument is simple: if all change or variation to the intellect is sufficiently explained by items outside the intellect, then there can be no change or variation to the intellect unless there is an antecedent change or variation outside the intellect. Call the consequent here—that there can't be an intellectual difference (i.e. a variation to the intellect) without an antecedent physical difference (i.e. a variation to the imagination or at least variation outside the intellect)—*the dependence thesis*; call its denial *the independence thesis*.[28]

Cat goes on to adduce two arguments in defense of the independence thesis, that is, the view that there *can* be variation on the side of the intellect even if there is no antecedent variation outside the intellect. The first appeals to the intellect's agency—the intellect is capable of performing an action even if everything outside the



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necessario consequitur actus sentiendi, quia videlicet illud tamquam proprium obiectum talis potentiae est sufficienter motivum ipsius."

[25] ibid., p. 73: "Omnis potentia se extendens ad multos actus indeterminate cui ex se competit quod in aliquos illorum actuum quandoque non possit sine difficultate et tarditate et quandoque prorumpat in eosdem faciliter, expedite et prompte, necessario variatur secundum aliquid existens in ea formaliter. Et dico 'ex se' quia si varietas secundum difficultatem et facilitatem, tarditatem et promptitudinem ad actus suos sibi competeret ex alio, totaliter sufficeret variatio in illo; sed si sibi competat ex se, oportet quod varietur in se vel secundum essentiam suam vel secundum aliquid receptum in illa. Sed intellectus et uterque appetitus sunt potentiae quaedam indeterminate se extendentes ad multos actus, ita quod in aliquos illorum quandoque non possit nisi cum difficultate et tarditate, quandoque autem possit in eosdem faciliter et prompte. Et hoc competit sibi secundum se. Ergo etc."

[26] "… talis variatio non competit intellectui totaliter ex parte imaginativae per quam praesentatur sibi proprium obiectum; si enim hoc conveniret intellectui totaliter ratione phantasiae, tunc non posset esse talis varietas in intellectu nisi variata illa. Consequens est falsum."

[27] For Durand, at least, the ostensive power is not the same as the imagination, for the imagination has its own function and is a cognitive power as such, whereas the ostensive power is not a cognitive power as such. See the discussion above about the ostensive power, footnote 9 above.

[28] I don't want too much weight to be placed on the term 'physical' here, for there is an independent, and complicated, question of how to translate our contemporary talk of 'mental/physical' into medieval debates. However, all parties in this debate agreed that the intellect is an immaterial entity, whereas the ostensive power is not, for it is something that exists in the sensitive part of the soul. Hence, we can take 'physical' to mean, at least, what is not immaterial, or, even more carefully, what is not the intellect or in the intellect.

intellect (including the phantasms in the imagination or ostensive power) remains the same. He writes:

> With the phantasms associated with the terms of some demonstrable conclusion formed with equal speed and ease, the intellect, which before did not assent to this conclusion quickly and firmly, will, once it has performed an actual deduction, assent to it quickly and firmly. (p. 76)[29]

If we were to freeze, so to speak, everything outside the intellect, the intellect could, according to Cat, still perform an actual deduction on materials previously acquired. Now, this action, since it is itself a cognitive act, would generate a cognitive habit associated with it (or reinforce one already present). But since, *ex hypothesi*, everything is the same outside the intellect, yet there is a difference on the side of the intellect—the relative ease with which it elicits its act after repeated actual deductions—we ought to locate the habit that explains such a difference in the intellect. Call this *the agency argument*: the fact that the intellect is capable of some independent agency entails that the intellect is also capable of developing cognitive habits unique to it.

While the agency argument has as its target the relative ease with which the intellect elicits its act, the second argument that Cat adduces primarily concerns the intellect's determination with respect to its act. According to Durand (and Prosper too), the intellect is determined with respect to its act owing to something outside of it, namely what the ostensive power presents to it. If the ostensive power presents a cat (presumably in the form of a phantasm), the intellect will think about cats, and so on. Now, in the case of complex acts—the sort involved in deductions, for instance—the ostensive power presents certain objects in a certain order. So if Socrates thinks certain complex thoughts easier than others, this is owing to the fact that the stored phantasms (or *species*) are more quickly presented to the intellect by the ostensive power in a certain order—and this is what a cognitive habit explains.[30] As Cat puts the idea, "the determination of a [cognitive] power is from the way objects are shown to it (*ex modo praesentandi obiecti*); in the case of the intellect, this 'way' just is the ordered formation of *species*" (p. 77).[31] In the case of sight, the sensitive power for seeing is determined to see a certain color owing to the presence of that color (the visible object). In the case of the intellect, its determination is owing to whatever object the ostensive power (or the imagination) presents to it. Now, the ostensive power (or the imagination) can through training come to have its phantasms structured into a certain 'ordered formation', and so it is that one can be



[29] "… aeque prompte et faciliter formatis phantasmatibus terminorum alicuius conclusionis demonstrabilis, intellectus, qui illi conclusioni prompte et firmiter non assentit antequam sit actualiter ex principiis deducta, post actualem deductionem assentit prompte et firmiter."

[30] TDH, p. 56: "Propter hoc autem non oportet ponere aliquod novum subiective in intellectu, sed sufficit quod in potentia repraesentativa obiecti sit facta ordinata impressio scibilium prius cognitorum et firmata, et quod illa moveatur ad repraesentandum ea intellectui cum voluerit; tunc enim intelligimus cum volumus quod prius non poteramus."

[31] "… determinatio potentiae est ex modo praesentandi obiectum qui modus quoad intellectum est ordinata formatio specierum etc." See also ibid., p. 71.

said to be in a position to elicit certain, that is, determinate, thoughts in a certain order rather than others and in some other order.

However, Cat demurs,

> this ordering of the *species* in imagination—of the sort required in a demonstration that causes a scientific habit—is not something imagination can do on its own, nor is it owing to a change in the will except insofar as the will is directed by the intellect. The reason there is such an ordering primarily and in the first place is the intellect, for the imagination can never perform the act in virtue of which the *species* in it come to have a certain order unless the intellect performs a more basic act first. Hence, just as a habit comes about in the imagination from the performance of the act, so too one comes about in the intellect. (pp. 77–78)[32]

The idea here is that the ostensive power (or the imagination) is incapable of organizing the phantasms (or *species*) on its own. It requires the intellect to organize the phantasms. Hence, this more basic act by which the intellect alone organizes the phantasms in the imagination, as it is a cognitive act, should generate a cognitive habit associated with it in the intellect, in addition to the habit generated in the imagination. Call this *the ordered-formation argument*.

With both arguments, Cat's aim is to point out that there is a cognitive act that the intellect performs independent from the ostensive power and what the ostensive power presents to it: in the first case, this is an actual deduction on material already present to it; in the second case, this is the original act of organization done to the phantasms in the imagination.

I won't dwell on how Prosper (on Durand's behalf) responds to such objections—suffice it to say, Prosper sticks to his guns: the intellect, in this life at least, is incapable of an independent action: its determination and the relative ease with which it acts is totally dependent upon what the ostensive power presents to it and how quickly it does this. Nor is there a more basic act of organization on the part of our intellects: the ordered formation of the imagination is explained by appeal to teaching (*doctrina*) or chance discovery (*inventio*) through trial and error.[33]

Let's take stock. One thing that seems to motivate the NTH's location thesis—that cognitive habits do not exist in the intellect—is a commitment to the dependence thesis, the view that there is no intellectual difference without an antecedent difference to something outside the intellect, i.e. a variation to the imagination or ostensive power. Since every intellective act presupposes an antecedent difference to something outside of it, it seems that a theory that countenances habits in both the imagination (or ostensive power) and the intellect is a little more expensive than one that countenances them in just the imagination. Hence, parsimonious Prosper invokes his razor. On the other hand, if the independence thesis is right, then we



[32] "… ordinatio specierum in phantasia qualis requiritur ad processum demonstrativum causantem habitum scientiae, non potest competere phantasiae secundum se nec ex motione voluntatis nisi prout dirigitur ab intellectu. Et ideo ratio a qua est talis ordinatio primo et principaliter est in<p. 78 > tellectus. Unde cum phantasia numquam possit exercere actum quo ordinate formantur in ea tales species quin intellectus ibi principaliorem actum exerceat, sicut ex tali exercitio generabitur habitus in phantasia, ita et in intellectu."

[33] On the agency objection, see *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 64va; compare with TDH 4.8, pp. 42–43. On the ordered-formation argument, see *Sent.* Prol. 1.6 ad 5, f. 38va–b.

should countenance habits in the intellect, for there is at least sometimes intellectual change independent from non-intellectual change.

### *12.1.3 Habits and Acts: Ontology and Change*

When coupled together, Prosper's razor and the dependence thesis seem to entail a kind of eliminativism about cognitive habits conceived of as entities in the intellect: we do not need to posit entities inside the intellect in order to explain the content of our thoughts and the ease with which we engage in such thoughts. But why stop with just cognitive habits? If entities outside the intellect sufficiently explain the content (that is, the determination) of our intellective acts as well as the ease with which we elicit such acts, then it would seem we ought to go a step further and eliminate intellective acts conceived of as entities in the intellect as well. But neither Durand nor Prosper go this far—both retain intellective acts in their ontology as entities that exist *in* the intellect. In this section, I want to examine their reasons for keeping intellective acts as bona fide entities, and in what sense they do this; this will shed some light on what exactly Durand and Prosper are rejecting when they reject cognitive habits as entities in the intellect.

Let me start by distinguishing two views about episodic intellectual change—that is, the change from not thinking to thinking. On the one view, which I will call *the quality theory of acts*—a view defended by proponents of the Standard Theory of Habits—an intellective act is the direct result of a qualitative non-relational change that happens to the intellect resulting in a new non-relational entity (an absolute quality) coming about and inhering in the intellect. Some identified this quality with the act of thinking, others as a necessary condition for an act of thinking—the so-called intelligible *species*.[34] When conditions are right, and an intelligible object is present to our intellects, that object (either on its own or together with something else) acts upon and changes our intellects, producing a new quality in the intellect. According to another view—endorsed by both Prosper and Durand—an intellective act is not the direct result of a qualitative non-relational change to the intellect. An intellective act is not (nor does it require) an absolute entity inhering in the intellect. Rather an intellective act is a relative entity (founded on the intellect and directed at the object), and it results from a relational change that happens to the intellect. Call this *the relation theory of acts*.[35] When the intellect comes to be newly related to an intelligible item (either present on its own or by means of the ostensive power), we can then claim, without any further ado, that it has elicited an intellective act. All

[34] For recent discussions of both views, see Cross 2014, esp. chs. 5 and 6, and Hartman 2014.

[35] In Durand, see *Sent.* (A) 2.3.5 and *Quaestio disputata* 1. For discussion, see Hartman 2011, ch. 3, Hartman 2013, Hartman 2014, Solère 2013 and Solère 2014. For Prosper, see *Sent.* Prol. 1.5.1 (esp. ad 8) and *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 63ra.

there is to thought is the relation, for an act of thinking just is the relation that obtains between the intellect and a present intelligible item.[36]

One important feature of the relation theory of acts is that it entails the dependence thesis, for a new relative entity cannot come about unless there is a change to one (or both) of the relata. Hence, the intellect cannot come to be newly related (that is, come to have a new episode or act of thinking) unless there is a change *outside* the intellect. Even so, on the relation theory of acts, we can still say that there is a new real entity added to the intellect: the act of thinking conceived of as a relative entity, founded upon the intellect and directed at the object, and not an absolute entity.[37] So why can't we also say that habits are also relative entities added to the intellect, dependent upon a change *outside* the intellect?

That Durand and Prosper are eliminativists about cognitive habits conceived of as entities *in* the intellect is even more puzzling granted that both authors maintain as well the ontological thesis that a habit (just as an act) is a mere relative entity and not an absolute entity, another thesis as we saw above distinctive of the NTH. For instance, Prosper—in the first subquestion in *quaestio* five of the first part of his Prologue—writes,

> Some people maintain that each scientific habit falls into an absolute category, namely the first kind of quality… but others—whose view I endorse—maintain that it falls into the category of relation.[38]

And Durand, in his *Sentences* commentary declares that "a habit … is not strictly speaking an absolute thing but it is rather a mode of a thing or a relation."[39] Durand and Prosper, then, are committed to the ontological thesis that cognitive habits are not absolute entities (just as acts are not absolute entities) and they allow acts to be added to the intellect in the sense that a relative entity is added to its foundation.[40]



[36] How can Durand and Prosper explain our thoughts about items that are not present or intelligible, such as universals? Suffice it to say, their position amounts to a kind of externalist causal-theory of content, and it faces some of the same challenges. See Hartman 2013 for discussion.

[37] For Durand, at least some relations are *bona fide* or real entities in their own right: modes of things and not things, but real all the same. The relevant feature that interests us here is that such relations (as opposed to absolute qualities) do not 'enter into composition'with their foundations, and so the intellect can acquire a new relation (the act) without being compromised, so to speak, by the object's causal power (as it is when it is affected such that it takes on a new absolute quality which enters into composition with it). For a discussion of Durand's views on relations, see Hartman 2011, ch. 3; Dewender 2009; Iribarren 2002, pp. 293–4; Iribarren 2005, pp. 109–21; Iribarren 2008, pp. 250–2; Henninger 1989, pp. 177–8; Müller 1968, pp. 97–8; Decker 1967, pp. 427–38; Fumagalli 1969, pp. 93–113; Schönberger 1994, pp. 125–31. In Durand, see *Sent.* (AC) 1.33.1, 1.30.2, *Quodlibeta avenionensia* 1.1 and *Sent.* 4.12.1 (inter alia).

[38] *Sent.* Prol. 1.5.1 ("Utrum <habitus> sit res alicuius generis absoluti"), f. 31rb.

[39] *Sent.* (A) 3.23.1 (from Peter of Palude, *Sent.* 3.23.1–2 Paris 1517, f. 116vb): "... habitus ... non est proprie aliqua natura absoluta sed est magis modus rei vel naturae." See also *Quaestio disputata* 2, p. 21 (ed. Takada 1968): "Cum igitur habitus dicat modem quemdam et non rem absolutam..." Durand, however, allows us to place habits in the category of Quality, for he holds that not all qualities are absolute things (*Sent.* (A) 3.23.1).

[40] In TDH 4.1, p. 10–11, Durand notes that even corporeal habits are not the *per se* and *primo* (that is, direct) result of an intrinsic (qualitative) change, although *ex consequenti* such corporeal habits

So why can't habits, conceived of as relative entities, be added to the intellect as well?

Yet Durand and Prosper insist that the change in a subject from not having a cognitive habit to having a cognitive habit does not entail any change whatsoever to the intellect, be it relational or non-relational (qualitative). Durand, for instance, in an unfinished *quaestio* entitled "De subiecto virtutum moralium" nestled among a collection of other texts in Prosper's notebook, writes,

> If scientific knowledge (which is a habit) were in the intellect as in a subject, then it would be acquired in us by way of some change to the intellect; but according to the Philosopher it is acquired in us when a change happens to something else. (Vat. lat. 1086, f. 186vb)[41]

As well, in his TDH, Durand writes,

> When Aristotle is speaking as a natural philosopher, namely in *Physics* 7, he quite clearly states that scientific knowledge comes about in us even if our intellective power doesn't change at all. This wouldn't be the case if scientific knowledge were in the intellect as in a subject, especially if it were taken to be an absolute item. (4.8, p. 55)[42]

So what really motivates the view that habits are not in the intellect? I would submit, in close, that there are two answers, one simple, one more complex. The more complex answer first. There are good theological reasons for supposing that intellective acts have to be in the intellect as in a subject. For one thing, angels, who have no bodies, can still think. Angels, however, do not have to have habits.[43] For another thing, the beatific vision—an intellective act—is something that the disembodied intellect can enjoy. The disembodied intellect does not have to have habits, at least



change, for a corporeal habit is just the 'commensuratio' of the four humours in the body.

[41] "Item si scientia, quae est habitus, subiective esset in intellectu, acquireretur in nobis in novatione facta in intellectu; sed secundum Philosophum acquiritur in nobis mutato quodam altero." Prosper quotes this argument in *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1 at f. 62ra.

[42] "Ubi autem Aristoteles loquitur ut naturalis philosophus, scilicet septimo Physicorum, plane dicit quod nobis non motis secundum ullam potentiam intellectivam fit scientia in nobis; quod non posset esse si scientia esset in intellectu subiective, maxime si esset aliquid absolutum." See also TDH 4.8, p. 46: "Quintum motivum est, quia secundarius terminus cuiuslibet actionis est in eodem subiecto in quo est principalis terminus; sed scientia acquiritur in nobis non ut per se et immediatus terminus alicuius actionis, sed solum ut secundarius terminus alterationis factae secundum partem sensitivam; ergo scientia subiective est in illo in quo est primus et immediatus terminus alterationis sensibilis; illud autem est aliquod corporeum; quare etc. Maior patet, quia per nullam actionem fit aliquid nisi in subiecto actionis in quo est principalis terminus. Quod patet exemplo: sanitas enim quae sequitur alterationem factam secundum calidum et frigidum et caeteras qualitates est in eodem subiecto cum eis. Similiter quantitas et figura quae sequitur alterationem factam secundum rarum et densum sunt in eodem subiecto cum raritate et densitate. Minor patet ex septimo Physicorum, ubi probat Aristoteles ex intentione quod ad scientiam non est per se et primo neque alteratio neque aliqua actio, sed fit in nobis facta alteratione secundum corpus et vires sensitivas." I should note that the passage that both Durand and Prosper have in mind is *Physics* VII.3, a truly incredibly interesting chapter—Aristotle's aim is to show that change occurs only among sensible qualities—that generated a good deal of discussion in the medieval literature. For recent discussion, see Robert 2016.

[43] On angels in Durand, see *Sent.* (A) 2.3.5; *Sent.* (C) 2.3.6; in Prosper, see *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 60va–vb and 1.6 ad 6, f. 39rb.

not—as Prosper puts it—outside Paris.[44] Hence, Durand and Prosper have some reason to think that intellective acts are 'in' the intellect—in the sense that a real relation is in the item so-related. Thus they perhaps with some reluctance endorse the idea that episodic intellectual change involves a real change to the intellect, albeit a mere relational change, and it results in a real entity added to the intellect, albeit a mere relative entity. But that's all they have to admit. Hence, the simple answer is Prosper's razor: as natural philosophers we should not countenance too many things over and above the physical.[45] In the case of intellectual habits, then, entities and facts outside the intellect—the ostensive power and its determination—sufficiently explain what needs to be explained, and so we do not need to countenance some further entity in the intellect over and above that.

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[44] *Sent.* Prol. 3.3.1, f. 61vb–62ra. According to John of Naples, whom Prosper quotes, Prosper's view entails that when a human being dies, his scientific knowledge dies with him (*mortuo homine non manet scientia habituali*). However, this is an error, condemned by the Bishop of Paris: "Dicere quod intellectus hominis corrupti non habet scientiam eorum quorum habuit—error." Prosper's initial insouciant response: "articulus ille non artat nisi Parisiis." He goes on to give a more serious response to the charge.

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