

THE ARISTOTELIAN CONCEPTION OF THE INTELLECT

PREFATORY REMARKS

This paper, entitled "The Aristotelian Conception of the Intellect", is a study of a portion of chapter four of the third book of the *De Anima* of Aristotle. It is in this fourth chapter that Aristotle treats *ex professa* of the possible intellect. And it is the possible intellect which is the intellect in the strict sense. The purpose of the present undertaking is to study the nature of this intellect.

St. Thomas opens his commentary on this fourth chapter with the words : "Postquam Philosophus determinavit de parte animae sensitiva, et ostendit etiam quod sentire et intelligere non sunt idem, hic incipit determinare de parte animae intellectiva" (1).

Up to this point in his treatise on the soul, Aristotle has considered the soul in general, the vegetative soul, and the sensitive soul - in that order. Now he has come to the consideration of the intellective soul.

(1) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, no. 671.

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PROPOSITIONS

1. Sensus exterior non est reflexivus super actum suum neque super ipsam potentiam.

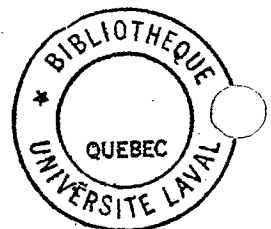
2. Ad rationem amicitiae oportet quod per eam aliqui si-
bi velint bene adinvicem, et quod hoc non lateat
eos, et quod hoc sit propter bonum, delectabile, vel
utile.

3. Omne participatum comparatur ad participans ut actus
eius.

4. Nomen non est solum instrumentum intellectus, sed
etiam cognitionis principium.

5. Materia prima non potest sciri per seipsam, sed scitur
secundum analogiam.
St. Thomas Aquinas, in his commentariis ad Metaphysicam, determinavit de parte
animae sensitivae, et ostendit etiam quod sentire et intelligere
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lectivae (1).

Up to this point in his treatise on the soul, Aristotle
has considered the soul in general. The vegetative soul,
and the sensitive soul - in that order. Now he has come to the
consideration of the intellectual soul.



There is always a definite method and rigorous order to be found in all of Aristotle's works. His is never a random procedure. Before undertaking our study of his doctrine in connection with the nature of the intellective soul, therefore, we wish first to show why he assigns to the intellective soul the precise position that he does. We wish to show that this particular treatise - like all of his works - is situated in the general scheme of things with meticulous precision.

This present work, as a result, contains two major divisions. First, we shall determine the place of the treatise on the intellect, or the intellective soul, in Natural Doctrine. Secondly, shall set forth our study of the nature of this intellective soul.

In connection with the first division, it will be necessary to trace the order followed by Aristotle in the development of his doctrine on the soul. This will enable us to see clearly the place which the treatise on the intellective soul occupies in the De Anima. But even prior to this, it will be necessary to situate the De Anima itself in the study of Natural Science.

The first part of our work, then, is again subdivided into two divisions. In the first, we shall determine the

place of the De Anima in Natural Science. It will not be our concern here to show how it is that the study of the soul pertains to Natural Science. This we shall assume. Secondly, we shall consider the place in the De Anima of the treatise on the intellective soul.

I PLACE OF THE WILL ON THE INTELLECT IN
NATURAL DOCTRINE.

A. - PLACE OF THE DE ANIMA IN NATURAL SCIENCE.

In the first book of the *Physica* it is stated that in the acquisition of knowledge it is natural for us to proceed from those things which are more known to us to those things which are more known to nature (2). In the *De Animalibus*, it is further stated that in every genus of things it is necessary to consider first that which is common to that genus, and then that which is proper to each species, and this, in order to avoid frequent repetition when considering each species (3).

These, then, are the two principles which determine the order to be followed in the consideration of the different subjects of a science.

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- (2) - Innatum est nobis ut procedamus cognoscendo ab his quae sunt nobis magis nota in ea quae sunt magis nota naturae. (In I *Physic.*, lect. 1, ed. Leon., no. 6).
- (3) - Sicut docet Philosophus in undecimo de *Animalibus* in quolibet genere rerum necesse est prius considerare communia et secreta et postea propria unicuique illius generis; quem quidem modum Aristoteles servat in *Philosophia prima*. In *Metaphysicis* enim primo tractat et considerat communia entis in quantum ens, postea vero considerat propria unicuique enti. Cuius ratio est, quia nisi hoc fieret, idem diceretur frequenter. (In I *De Anima*, lect. 1, no. 1).

1. - Order of Procedure in Natural Science.

Natural science is about those things which have in themselves a principle of nature. And nature is the principle of motion and rest in that in which it is (4). Consequently, Aristotle's study of natural science begins with the consideration of those things which are most common to all natural things, viz. motion and the principle of motion (5). This he does in the book of the Physics, which treats of the principles and properties of mobile being in general.

Now, there are three species of mobility : mobility according to place, mobility according to quality, and mobility according to quantity (6). We have enumerated these species according as they are more known to us.

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- (4) - In I Physic., lect. 1, n. 3).
(5) - Unde et scientiam naturalem incipit tradere ab his quae sunt communissima omnibus naturalibus, quae sunt motus et principium motus. (In De Sensu et Sensato, lect. 1, 6d. Piroetta, no. 2)
(6) - Dicit ergo primo, quod cum praedicamenta dividantur per substantiam, qualitatem, et huiusmodi; et in aliis generibus non possit esse motus; erunt igitur tria genera entis in quibus potest esse motus : quae sunt qualitas, quantitas et ubi : loco cuius ponit locum, quia nihil aliud significat esse ubi, nisi esse in loco. (In XI Metaphysic., lect. 12, 6d. Cathala, no. 2378)

The treatise on mobile being in general — the book of the Physics — is, then, followed immediately by the De Caelo et Mundo, which considers mobile being according to local motion. Local motion is the first species of mobility. It is that which is most known to us.

The De Caelo, is in turn followed by the De Generatione et Corruptione, which considers mobile being under the aspect of motion according to quality — the second species of mobility.

Motion according to quantity is the third species of mobility. It is the mobility which characterizes animated mobile being, that is, the living body (7). The De Anima is only one part of the study of living things. Hence, if we wish to situate it with precision, it is necessary first to inquire into the order that should prevail in the consideration of living things. St. Thomas outlines this order for us.

Aristotle, he says, after having determined those things which are common to all natural things, proceeds to apply these common principles concretely to determinate mobile beings — of which some are living bodies. He repeats the same procedure

(7) - St. Thomas, Introduction à l'étude de l'œuvre d'Aristote, III, no. 1, p. 10.

with respect to living bodies under a threefold division. First — in the *De Anima* — he considers the soul in itself, as though in a sort of abstract manner. Secondly, he applies these considerations to the body, but only in a general way. This he does in those writings which deal in a general way with all animals, or with several genera of animals, or even with all living things. Thirdly — in the writings on animals and plants — he again applies these considerations to each species of animal and plant. (8)

- (8) - Unde et scientiam naturalem incipit tradere ab his quae sunt communissima omnibus naturalibus, quae sunt motus et principium motus, et deinde processit per modum concrectionis, sive applicationis principium commune, ad quaedam determinata mobilia, quorum quaedam sunt corpora viventia : circa quae etiam simili modo processit distinguens hanc considerationem in tres partes. Nam primo quidem consideravit de anima secundum se, quasi in quadam abstractione. Secundo considerationem facit de his, quae sunt animae secundum quandam concrectionem, sive applicationem ad corpus, sed in generali. Tertio considerationem facit applicando omnia haec ad singulas species animalium et plantarum, determinando quid sit proprium unicuique speciei. Prima igitur consideratio continetur in libro de Anima. Tertia vero consideratio continetur in libris quos scribit de Animalibus et Plantis. Media vero consideratio continetur in libris, quos scribit de quibusdam, quae pertinent communiter, vel ad omnia animalia, vel ad plura genera eorum, vel etiam ad omnia viventia. (In *De Sensu et Sensato*, lect. 1, no. 2)

From this outline, we see that Aristotle and St Thomas are in agreement that the study of living things in general should begin with the De Anima. And since living things are beings which are mobile according to quantity, we can now determine the position of the De Anima in Natural Science. It will be the first consideration in the treatise on those natural things which are characterized by mobility according to quantity.

The order of procedure in Natural Science may, therefore, be summed up thus.

The mobile in command The Physics.

See table in appendix

Una mobile secundum locum De Caelo et Mundo

De Generatione et Corruptione.

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The mobile secondary quantities. . . De cerca et cetero

**In Animalibus et
Plantis**

2. - Order of Procedure in the Study of Living Things

We have said that the third species of mobility is characteristic of animated mobile being -- the living body. We have also noted that Aristotle begins the consideration of this third species of mobility with the *De Anima*. This procedure, at first glance, does not seem to be in keeping with the order he has established as requisite in the consideration of a science. The *De Anima* is not a study of the living body. As its title implies, it is rather the study of the soul. And the soul is only an intrinsic principle of natural living things. It is the form of the living body. Thus, it would seem to be more in accordance with the principle of community to consider first the natural living thing in general, and only then to take up the consideration of the characteristics of its form in particular (9).

And yet, as we have seen, St. Thomas is in complete accord with the order as followed by Aristotle. He (St. Thomas) expressly states that the study of living things should begin with the consideration of the soul in itself. In the beginning of the *De Anima* he says, in regard to animated things, that it is necessary to consider first that which is common to

(9) - De Koninck, *Introduction à l'étude de l'âme*, p. 10.

all animated things. And that which is common to all animated things is the soul (10). In his listing of the treatises that are to follow the De Anima, St. Thomas assigns the study of living beings in general to the bottom of the list (11).

a) - Order of Community.

These statements of St. Thomas by themselves do not dissipate our misgivings. For it seems that that which all living things have in common is the fact that they are living more so than the fact that they have a soul. However, we must

(10) - ... in consideratione rerum animatarum oportet prius considerare ea quae sunt communia omnibus animatis, postmodum vero illa quae sunt propria cuilibet rei animatae. Communia autem omnibus animatis est anima : in hoc enim omnia animata conveniunt. Ad tradendum igitur de rebus animatis scientiam, necessarium fuit primo tradere scientiam de anima tanquam communem eis. Aristoteles ergo volens tradere scientiam de ipsis rebus animatis, primo tradit scientiam de anima. (In I De Anima, lect. 1, no. 1)

(11) - Sed quia oportet per magis similia ad dissimilia transire, talis videtur esse rationabiliter horum librorum ordo, ut post librum de Anima, in quo de anima secundum se determinatur, immediate sequatur hic liber de Sensu et Sensato, quia ipsum sentire magis ad animam quam ad corpus pertinet : post quem ordinandus est liber de Somno et Vigilia, quae important ligamentum et solutionem sensus. Deinde sequuntur libri qui pertinent ad motivum, quod est magis propinquum sensitivo. Ultimo autem ordinantur libri qui pertinent ad communem considerationem vivi, quia ista consideratio maxime concernit corporis dispositionem. (In De Sensu et Sensato, lect. 1, n. 6)

not lose sight of the fact that we are here in the domain of natural philosophy, and that we are dealing with natural things (12). And among natural things, some are bodies and magnitudes, as are stones and other inanimate things; whereas others have a body and magnitude, as plants and animals, whose principal part is the soul. Thus, they are what they are by reason of the soul rather than by reason of the body (13). Living things, therefore, are what they are not because of their common attribute of having life, but rather because of that which gives them this life, viz. the soul. It is precisely for this reason that we speak of them as being animated things (14).

This, then, is the reason why St. Thomas says that that which is common to all animated things is the soul. And this, then, is the reason too why the study of the third

(12) - Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 10.

(13) - *Foram quae sunt secundum naturam, quaedam sunt corpora et magnitudines, sicut lapides et alia inanimata; quaedam habent corpus et magnitudinem, sicut plantas et animalia, quorum principior pars est anima (unde magis sunt id quod sunt secundum animam quam secundum corpus); quaedam vero sunt principia habentium corpus et magnitudinem, sicut anima, et universaliter forma, et materia. (In I de Caelo, lect. 1, éd. Léon., no. 8)*

(14) - Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 11.

species of mobility begins with the consideration not of the living body as such, but of the soul itself. We seek first to define the soul according to its commonest ratio. Then, we seek the proper definition of each part of the soul (15).

And thus, we have vindicated the order of procedure in the study of living things, and have established the place of the De Anima in this study as well as in natural science, but from the viewpoint of community only. Before we can assume to have completely justified Aristotle's procedure relative to the De Anima, there still remain some points to be clarified with respect to the order of knowability.

b) - Order of Knowability.

We have seen that a science, in order to avoid frequent repetition when considering each species, should first consider those things which are common to each species. But

(15) - Non debemus esse contenti definitione communi, sed oportet propriam definitionem cuiuslibet partis animae inquirere. Et ex hoc concludit, quod hoc, secundum unumquodque animalium querendum est, quae sit uniuscuiusque anima; ut scilicet sciatur, quid est anima plantae, et quid anima hominis, et quid anima bestiae: et hoc est scire de unaquaque parte animae, quid sit. (In II De Anima, lect. 6, n. 299).

we have also seen that a science should begin with those things which are more known to us (16).

This means that the more common things from which a science should begin must also be those which are more known to us. But it is precisely this point which confronts us with a two fold difficulty.

In the first place, that which is most common does not always coincide with that which is more known. Thus, for example, in nature there are unquestionably elements which are common to all natural things. Throughout the centuries, however, science has never succeeded in discovering what these elements are. (For the ancients, the elements were water, earth, air and fire). Whatever science has ever considered to be the ultimate elements in nature has always been able to be resolved into something more elementary (17).

Secondly, it is not quite clear how we can say that in living things it is the soul which is first known to us. In all ages this has been and continues to be questioned, and even denied, by men of learning and of repute. Now, then,

(16) - Cf. page

(17) - Le Roninck, Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 11.

can it be maintained that the soul is that which is most known to us (18).

As regards the first difficulty -- that the most common and the most known do not always coincide -- we can only point out that which is obvious. In science, we proceed from that which is more known to that which is less known. Hence, science considers those things which are common only to the extent that they are known (19).

The second difficulty results from the failure to distinguish between the nature of the soul and that which is signified by the word soul. The soul is the principle of vital operations. Our first knowledge of having life and a soul comes to us from the internal experience we have of living, that is, from the consciousness we have of exercising vital operations. This knowledge is certain, for the fact of our vital operations is something that is most manifest to us. It is a fact that is undeniable. That is why St. Thomas can say that the knowledge of the soul is most certain from this point of view that everyone experiences in himself

(18) - De Koninck, Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 11.
(19) - De Partibus Animalium, lect. 1.

the presence of a soul and of the operations of the soul. But as to what the soul is, that is, its nature, he is quick to add that this is another matter (20).

The knowledge of the soul, therefore, is very certain as to the fact. The errors and difficulties one encounters have to do with the nature of the soul. No one has ever erred with respect to the knowledge by which we perceive what transpires in the soul. Many, however, err with respect to the nature of the soul in itself (21).

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- (20) - Dicendum quod secundum hoc scientia de anima est certissima, quod unusquisque in seipso experitur se animam habere, et actus animae sibi inesse; sed cognoscere quid sit anima difficillimum est; unde Philosophus... subiungit quod omnino difficillimum est accipere aliquam fidem de ipsa. (De Veritate, q. 10, a. 3, ad 3 in contrarium).
- (21) - Dicendum quod nullus erravit unquam in hoc quod non perciperet se vivere, quod pertinet ad cognitionem quae aliquis percipit quid in anima sua agatur; secundum quam cognitionem dictum est, quod anima per essentiam suam cognoscitur in habitu. Sed error apud multos accidit circa cognitionem naturae ipsius animae in specie. (De Veritate, q. 10, a. 3, ad 2)

B. - PLACE OF THE TREATISE ON THE INTELLECTIVE SOUL IN THE
DE ANIMA

Having established the place of the De Anima in Natural Science, and more particularly in the study of living things, we are now in position to determine the order within the De Anima itself and to understand why the consideration of the intellectual soul occupies the place that it does therein.

1. - Order of Procedure in the De Anima.

In his proemium to the De Anima, John of St. Thomas gives a very general outline of this treatise. He says that the study of the De Anima is divided into three books. In the first book, Aristotle reviews the various philosophical opinions regarding the nature of the soul. In the second book, he explains his own opinion on the nature of the soul both in general and with respect to the vegetative and sensitive souls and their faculties. In the third book, he deals mainly with the intellectual soul (1^o) with respect to the potencies which minister to it immediately — the internal senses (2^o) with respect to the intellectual faculty itself, and (3^o) with respect to the subsequent potencies — appetite and locomotion (22).

(22) - John of St. Thomas, Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 5.

Here, as elsewhere, the order followed is based on the twofold principle of community and knowability. We consider first the definition and the properties of the soul in common. Then, we consider the soul in specie. And here again, we consider first that which is most common and more known to us, viz. the vegetative soul. This is followed by an inquiry into the nature of the sensitive soul, and finally into that of the intellective soul.

In broad outline, the order of procedure in the *De Anima* may be summed up as follows :

De Anima in common

De Anima in specie

} *De Anima* vegetativa

} *De Anima* sensitiva

} *De Anima* intellectiva.

a) - Order of Community relative to the soul in specie.

We have already seen the necessity for beginning the study of any genus of things with the consideration of that which is common to that genus. Thus, the propriety of beginning the *De Anima* with the consideration of the soul in common is obvious. It is only when we come to the study of the different species of soul that some question may arise in connection with the order of procedure. If we wish to understand this order, it is imperative that we have an understanding of the order among the species of the soul and among the potencies of the soul.

The soul is the substantial form of the living body. And every substantial form is the radical principle of operation. The operations of which the soul is capable are multiple. With respect to these operations the soul is a whole whose parts are its faculties, or — as Aristotle calls them — its potencies. He lists five such potencies of the soul, each generically distinct: the vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, locomotive, and intellective (23).

This immediately presents a problem. We have said that there are three species of soul. How is it, then, that

(23) - In II *De Anima*, lect. 5, n. 279.

Aristotle enumerates five genera of potencies. To answer this question adequately, we shall have to examine the basis for the division of the soul into three species as well as the basis for the generic distinction of five potencies.

(1) - Basis for the Division of the soul into three species.

Everything acts according to its esse. "Agere sequitur esse". The being, or esse, of living things comes from their form -- the soul. Consequently, there will be as many essentially distinct souls as there are essentially distinct modes of esse in living things (24). If we study living things with a view to their mode of being, we find in them a twofold esse : material, which they have in common with other material things; and immaterial, which they have in common, to a certain extent, with higher substances (25).

(24) - ... cum omnis potentia dicatur ad actum proprium, potentia operativa dicitur ad actum qui est operatio. Potentiae autem animae sunt operativae, talis enim est potentia formae; unde necesse est secundum diversas operationes animae, accipi diversitatem potentialium. Operatio autem animae, est operatio rei viventis. Cum igitur unicuique rei competat propria operatio, secundum quod habet esse, eo quod unumquodque operatur in quantum est ens : oportet operationes animae considerare, secundum quod inveniuntur in viventibus (In II De anima, lect. 5, no. 281).

(25) - Huiusmodi autem viventia inferiora, quorum actus est anima... habent duplex esse. Unum quidem materiale, in quo conveniunt cum aliis rebus materialibus. Aliud autem immateriale, in quo communicant cum substantiis superioribus aequaliter. (In De anima, lect. 5, no. 282).



Material esse is that which is restricted by matter, so that a thing is what it is and nothing more. Thus, for example, from the viewpoint of material esse, a stone is nothing more than that. Immaterial esse, on the other hand, is not thus restricted by matter. According to immaterial esse, therefore, a thing is not only what it is, but it is in a way other things than itself (26). This mode of esse is proper to knowing beings. The knower becomes the things it knows.

This immaterial esse is of two kinds, depending on whether things are known by the intellect or by the senses. Intelligible esse is that which things assume in the intellect. Sensible esse is that which they have in the senses (27).

In living things, therefore, we can distinguish three modes of being : material esse, sensible esse, and intelligible esse. The operations which we attribute to living things according to their material esse pertain to the vegetative soul.

(26) - ... quia secundum esse materiale, quod est per materiam contractum, unaquaeque res est hoc solum quod est, sicut hic lapis, non est aliud quam hic lapis : secundum vero esse immateriale, quod est sapientium, et quodammodo infinitum, inquantum non est per materiam terminatum, res non solum est id quod est, sed etiam est quodammodo alia. (Ibid. no. 263)

(27) - Huiusmodi autem immateriale esse, habet duos gradus in istis inferioribus. Nam quoddam est penitus immateriale, scilicet esse intelligibile. In intellectu enim res habent esse, et sine materia, et sine conditionibus materialibus individuantibus, et etiam absque organo

And those we attribute to intelligible esse are operations of the intellective soul. These three modes of esse, then, are the basis for distinguishing three species of soul into vegetative, sensitive and intellective (23).

(2) - Basis for the Generic Distinction of Five Potencies.

The three modes of esse in living things give rise to operations which are proper to each mode. These operations require appropriate potencies, or faculties, for their exercise. This accounts for the basis and necessity of a vegetative potency, a sensitive potency and an intellective potency.

In the Summa, St. Thomas shows the necessity for five potencies from the fact that the body to which the soul is united, sensible things, and universal being are all objects of

(27 continued) - corporali. Esse autem sensibile est medium inter utrumque. Nam in sensu res habet esse sine materia, non tamen absque conditionibus materialibus individuuantibus, neque absque organo corporali. (In II De Anima, lect. 3, no. 234).

(23) - Operationes igitur, quae competunt viventi secundum esse materiale, sunt operationes quae attribuuntur animae vegetabili... Operationes autem quae attribuuntur rebus viventibus secundum esse penitus immateriale, pertinent ad partem animae intellectivam; quae vero attribuuntur eis secundum esse medium, pertinent ad partem animae sensitivam. Et secundum hoc triplex esse distinguitur communiter triplex anima: scilicet vegetabilis, sensibilis et rationalis. (Ibid. no. 235).

the operations of the soul, but not in the same way. Sensible things, as object, are more universal than the body to which the soul is united. Universal being, in turn, is more universal than sensible things. The body to which the soul is united is the object of the vegetative potency. Sensible things and universal being are extrinsic to the soul, but are nevertheless united to it by means of their similitude. They are objects of the sensitive and intellective potencies respectively. These extrinsic things can be viewed also as object of an inclination for the soul. Hence, the necessity for an appetitive and a locomotive potency : the appetitive, inasmuch as these extrinsic things are for the soul an end to be attained; the locomotive, inasmuch as they are for the soul the term of its operation and movement (29).

(29) - Genera vero potentiarum anime distinguuntur secundum obiecta. Quanto enim potentia est altior, tanto respicit universalius obiectum. Obiectum autem operationis anime in triplici ordine potest considerari. Alicuius enim potentie anime obiectum est solum corpus anime unitum. Et hoc genus potentiarum anime dicitur vegetativum; non enim vegetativa potentia agit nisi corpus cui anima unitur. Est autem aliud genus potentiarum anime quod respicit adhuc universalius obiectum, scilicet omne corpus sensibile, et non solum corpus anime unitum. Est autem aliud genus potentiarum anime quod respicit adhuc universalius, scilicet non solum corpus sensibile, sed universaliter omne ens. Ex quo patet quod ista duo secunda genera potentiarum anime habent operationem non solum respectu rei conjuncte, sed etiam respectu rei extrinsecae. Cum autem operari oporteat aliquo modo coniungi suo obiecto circa quod operatur, necesse est extrinsecam rem, quae est obiec-

lest we become lost in the maze of our own investigation, it may be well to restate here what it is that we are endeavoring to accomplish.

Our main objective, it will be recalled, is to determine the order of procedure in the *De Anima*. At this point, we are inquiring into this order relative to the three species of soul. Inasmuch as the order of procedure of a science is based on the twofold principle of community and knowability, we wish to establish which of the three species of soul is more common and more known. And since our knowledge of the nature of the soul comes through knowledge of its potencies (30), it is necessary that we first determine the order and relation

tum operationis animae, secundum duplicem rationem ad animam comparari. Uno modo secundum quod nata est animae coniungi et in anima esse per suam similitudinem. Et quantum ad hoc, sunt duo genera potentiarum: scilicet sensitivum, respectu obiecti minus communis, quod est corpus sensibile; et intellectivum, respectu obiecti communissimi, quod est ens universale. Alio vero modo secundum quod ipse anima inclinatur et tendit in rem externam. Et secundum hanc etiam comparationem sunt duo genera potentiarum animae: unum quidem, scilicet appetitivum, secundum quod anima comparatur ad rem extrinsecam ut ad finem, qui est primus in intentione; aliud autem motivum secundum locum, prout anima comparatur ad rem externam sicut ad terminum operationis et motus. (Ia, q. 28, a. 1)

- (30) - Ut scilicet per obiecta cognoscamus actus, et per actus potentias, et per potentias essentiam animae. (in *De Anima*, lect. 6, no. 308).

among these potencies. Our investigation has encountered the necessity of explaining how it is that there are five genera of potencies and only three species of soul. Up to this point we have shown that the division of the soul into three species is based on the three modes of esse in living things. We have also shown how the object of the operations of the soul necessitate five genera of potencies.

(3) - Order and Relation among the Five Potencies.

The next logical step in our effort to establish the order of community of the three species of soul is to determine the order and relation of the potencies of the soul.

Not all five potencies are found in all living things. In plants there is only one potency -- the vegetative. All animals have the vegetative, sensitive, and appetitive potencies (31). Some animals have the locomotive potency besides. Man alone is endowed with all five potencies (32). Among these potencies there is a definite order and relation which is comparable to the order and relation of the species of number and geometrical figures (33). Thus, for example, the intel-

(31) - In II De Anima, lect. 5, no. 299.

(32) - Ibid., no. 293.

(33) - Dicendum quod aliquius generis species se habent secundum prius et posterius, sicut numeri et figurae, quantum ad esse, licet simul dicantur in quantum suscipiunt communis generis predicationem. (Ia, q. 7^a a. 4, ad 1)

lective presupposes the other potencies in the same way as lower numbers are presupposed in the higher.

This order can be considered from two points of view; the order of nature and perfection; and the order of generation and time. If viewed from the order of perfection, the intellective potency is prior to the sensitive and vegetative potencies; and the sensitive is prior to the vegetative. But if viewed from the order of generation and time, then the vegetative potency is prior. (34) In the first case, the more perfect potencies are principles of the less perfect. In the latter case, the less perfect potencies are principles of those that are more perfect. It is in this sense that the vegetative potency is prior to the sensitive and intellective

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- (34) - *Dependentia autem unius potentiae ab altero dupliciter accipi potest: uno modo secundum naturae ordinem, prout perfecta sunt naturaliter imperfectis priora; alio modo secundum ordinem generationis et temporis, prout ex imperfecto ad perfectum evenitur. Secundum igitur primum potentialium ordinem, potentiae intellectivae sunt priores potentiae sensitivae; unde dirigunt eas et imperant eis. Et similiter potentiae sensitivae hoc ordine sunt priores potentiae animae nutritivae. Secundum vero ordinem secundum e converso se habent. Nam potentiae animae nutritivae sunt priores in via generationis potentiae animae sensitivae; unde ad earum actiones praeparant corpus. Et similiter est de potentia sensitiva respectu intellectivarum. (Ia, q. 77, a. 4, corp.)*

potencies (35).

We can now conclude, from what we have seen, to the priority and community of the vegetative soul. It alone is found in all living things. And because of its priority, it is as principle and foundation of the sensitive and intellectual soul. Thus, the order of procedure relative to the study of the species of soul requires that the first consideration be that of the vegetative soul (36). The sensitive soul, although it is not found in all living things, still it is common to all animals. Consequently, it is considered immediately after the study of the vegetative soul. Since the intellectual soul is proper only to man, its consideration among the species of soul is last.

- (35) - ... consequens est quod potentiae animae quae sunt priores secundum ordinem perfectionis et naturae, sunt principia aliarum per modum finis et activi principii... Sed secundum viam susceptivi principii... e converso potentiae imperfectiores inveniuntur principia respectu aliarum... Et propter hoc imperfectiores potentiae sunt priores in via generationis. (Ia, q. 77, a. 7, corp.)
- (36) - Concludit ergo primo ex predictis quod cum dicendum sit primo de objectis et actibus, quam de potentia : et primo de prima potentia quam de consequentibus; sequitur quod primo dicendum est de alimento, quod est obiectum animae vegetativae, et de generatione, quae est actus eius. Ideo primo dicendum est de obiecto et actu huiusmodi partis, quam aliarum : quia ista pars est prima inter alias partes animae in substantia in quibus invenitur cum aliis : est enim quasi fundamentum aliarum, sicut esse naturale ad quod parti-

b) - Order of knowability relative to the soul in species.

That which is most common, we have pointed out earlier, does not always coincide with that which is most known. For this reason, the study of a science begins with the consideration of that which is common only to the extent that it is more known. St. Thomas tells us on various occasions that life in plants is hidden; and that it is manifestly apparent only in animals (37). Surely the implication here is that the animal soul is more known to us than is that of the plant! But if such be the case, how are we to reconcile the position of Aristotle and St. Thomas regarding the order of procedure in the consideration of the species of soul? Should not this order rather be reversed?

(36 continued) sent operationes eius, est fundamentum esse sensibilis et intelligibilis. Et alia ratio est, quare prius de ea dicendum est; quia ipsa est communis omnibus viventibus: ipsa enim separatur ab aliis, esse alios non separantur ab ea, et de communibus prius est agendum. (In II De Anima, lect. 7, no. 310)

(37) - in plantis est vita occulta et latens. (In II De Anima, lect. 7, no. 311) —
.... vita in plantis est occulta, quia carent motu locali et sensu, quibus animatum ab inanimato maxime distinguitur. (Is, q. 69, a. 2, ad 1) —
Vita enim apud nos in solis animalibus apparet manifeste. (In XII Metaphysic., lect. 8, no. 2344)

To resolve this seeming inconsistency, it is necessary to understand exactly what St. Thomas means when he says that life in plants is less apparent than it is in animals, particularly since it is obvious that the animal organism is much more complex than that of the plant (38). It seems to be abundantly clear that St. Thomas does not intend his statement to be taken without qualification. Our problem, then, is to bring into focus his real intent.

It is undeniable that the inorganic world is more within the range of our comprehension than the world of man. Of all natural beings, man is the unknown per excellence. But let it be noted that it is this same unknown which knows himself to be such. Of all animals, it is man alone who inquires into the what and the why of his being, it is man alone who knows himself to be the most complex of animals, and who knows that he knows very little about himself (39).

Man has an internal consciousness of this inquiry which he makes with respect to his own being. This conscious

(38) - ... anima (humana) quae est nobilissima inter formas inferiores, etsi simplex in substantia, est tamen multiplex in potentia et multarum operationum; unde indiget diversis organis ad suas operationes complendas, quorum diversae animae potentiae proprii actus esse dicuntur, sicut visus oculi, auditus aurium, et sic de aliis; propter quod animalia perfecta habent maximam diversitatem in organis, plantae vero minimam. (Contra Gentiles II, c. 72)

(39) - De Koninek, Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 13

operation is an activity which is as real and as distinct as are the activities of walking or of eating. In fact, it is in the consciousness of the exercise of such operations that we have our first notion of life (40).

But there are other activities within man which are not acts of knowledge; nor are they acts of a movement proceeding from knowledge. These activities, consequently, do not fall within the internal consciousness of man. The vegetative activity of digestion, for example, is outside the range of internal experience. This, then, is the reason why plant life -- which is confined to nutrition and reproduction -- is hidden. But at the same time, its physical structure, its parts and their function are less heterogeneous and less complex than those involved in the conscious activities of the animal. Consequently, the plant is more accessible to external experience. And from this point of view, we say that animal life is more hidden than that of the plant (41).

(40) - De Koninck, Introduction à l'étude de l'âme, p. 13.
(41) - Ibid.

II. - NATURE OF THE INTELLECT.

A. - GENERAL REMARKS.

The third book of Aristotle's *De Anima* is devoted to the study of the intellect, or the intellective soul. It contains thirteen chapters and is divided into three parts as follows :

1. - In chapters one to three, the intellect is studied in connection with the potencies which minister to it immediately, viz. the internal senses.
2. - In chapters four to eight inclusive, the intellective potency is considered in itself.
3. - The remaining chapters are given over to the study of the appetitive and locomotive potencies -- potencies which are subsequent to the intellective faculty (1).

It is the intent of this present work to study a portion of Aristotle's doctrine as contained in chapter four of this third book. Chapter four deals with the possible intellect and may be further subdivided into two parts. The first part

(1) - *Cars. Phil.*, T. 3, p. 272.

considers the nature of the possible intellect. In the second part, some difficulties are resolved which arise in connection with the possible intellect (2). We shall confine our study herein to the first part, that is, to the consideration of the nature of the possible intellect.

In broad outline, the contents of chapter four may be summarized thus :

With regard to the nature of the intellect, Aristotle shows wherein the intellect and the senses are alike, and wherein they differ. They are alike in this that they are passive potencies, their passivity to be understood not in the sense of a real passio, and which implies a correlative change of the subject, but in the sense of passio as synonymous with receptivity. They differ in this that the senses are organic and corporeal faculties, whereas the intellect is incorporeal and inorganic. They also differ in the fact that excessive stimulation diminishes the capacity of the senses to exercise their operation, whereas the effect of stimulation on the intellect is just the reverse, (3) the reason for this being this that the senses are organic faculties, the intellect, inorganic.

(2) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 274a19-23.

(3) - Ibid., p. 274a24-25.

With regard to the difficulties which arise in connection with the possible intellect, Aristotle brings up four. The first concerns the object of the intellect — whether the universal and the singular are known by the same faculty. The second difficulty raises the question as to how the intellect, being immaterial, can be a passive potency. The third question concerns the intelligibility of the intellect — whether the intellect is intelligible of itself, or because of something which is added to it. And the fourth difficulty has to do with the question as to why the intelligible does not always think or know (4).

(4) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 274a46-274b29.

B. - DISTINCTION BETWEEN SENSATION AND INTELLICTION.

In the preceding outline we stated that Aristotle manifests the nature of the intellect by comparing the intellect with the senses. The reason for this is because he has already determined the nature of sensation and of the senses, and because in doctrine we acquire knowledge of one thing through the knowledge of another (5), he is now going to apply to the intellect what we already know about the senses.

The nature of potencies is known through their operations (6). If Aristotle is going to manifest the nature of the intellective potency through the sense potency, then obviously, for him at least, the intellect and the senses are distinct faculties. And if the faculties are distinct, then so too are the operations which emanate from them.

But what was obvious for Aristotle was not quite so obvious to his predecessors. They confused sensation and intelligence. Since they are two forms of one and the same thing -- knowledge --, the ancients concluded that sensation

(5) -

(6) - In II De Anima, lect. 6, no. 308 -- "ut scilicet per obiecta cognoscamus actus, et per actus potentias".

and intellection are one and the same thing.

In their quest for knowledge of the nature of the soul, they recognized that animate things differ from the inanimate in this that animate things have a soul. But the nature of the soul was not manifest. Consequently, it could not be studied except through something which is manifest, and which at the same time constitutes the difference between the animate and the inanimate. This difference, they saw, consists in the fact that animate things are capable of self-movement and of knowledge (7).

Aristotle explains that this knowledge includes apprehension (*intelligere*), judgment (*discernere* or *sapere*), and sensation (*sentire*) (8). In connection with this passage, St. Thomas remarks that knowledge includes intellective judgment (*intellectivam discretionem*) and sensation (*sensum*) (9). In another place, both refer to knowledge as "discretio", adding that it is an operation of the intellective and of the sensitive part of the soul (10).

(7) - Aristotle, I De Anima, c. 2, 403a14-28;
St. Thomas, In I De Anima, lect. 3, no. 32.

(8) - III De Anima, c. 3, 427a19.

(9) - In III De Anima, lect. 4, no. 616.

(10) - III De Anima, c. 8, 432a16;
In III De Anima, lect. 14, no. 795.

Thus, from the fact that the soul judges and knows (iudicat et cognoscit) in intellectual as well as in sense perception (tam sentiendo quam intelligendo), the ancients were easily led to the conclusion that intellection (intelligere et sapere) is the same thing as sensation (sentire) (11).

In view of this prevailing opinion, Aristotle clears the way, as it were, for the exposition of his doctrine on intellection and the intellect by first showing that sensation and intellection cannot be the same thing.

Intellection, — as intimated above, consists of two operations — judgment (sapere) and apprehension (intelligere). These two operations are proper to intellectual knowledge (12). If he can show that sapere is not the same thing as sentire, and then, if he can show that intelligere is not the same thing as sentire, he will have conclusively proved that sensation and intellection are two distinct operations and can in no way be identified.

(11) - III De Anima, c. 3, 427a21;
In III DE Anima, lect. 4, no. 616.

(12) - St. Thomas, *ibid.*, no. 620 — "... haec enim duo (sapere et intelligere) intellectivae cognitioni attribuuntur. Intellectus enim habet iudicare et hoc dicitur sapere et apprehendere, et hoc dicitur intelligere".

The ancients may have had some doubts as to the identity of apprehension (*intelligere*) and sensation (*sentire*). But as far as judgment (*sapere*) was concerned, they were convinced. They expressly said that judgment (*sapere*) and sensation (*sentire*) are one and the same thing (13). Hence, Aristotle disposes of this question first.

If sapere and sentire are identical, then all those beings which are capable of the one should likewise be capable of the other. But that such is not the case is evident. Sensation is found in all animals. This cannot be said of judgment. Judgment, if we will only observe, is restricted to few animals. If sensation and judgment were the same thing, we would expect to find judgment wherever we find sensation. The fact that one is common to all animals, whereas the other is restricted to a few, can only mean that they are not the same thing (14).

It is to be noted that we do not say that judgment is confined to man exclusively. Certain animals, other than man,

(13) - In III De Anima, lect. 4, no. 817 -- "sed expresse antiqui dixerunt, quod idem sit sapere per intellectum et sentire".

(14) - Ibid., no. 829 -- "Sentire inest omnibus animalium; sapere autem non inest omnibus, sed paucis; ergo sapere non est idem quod sentire".

evidence signs of a certain wisdom and prudence in the natural judgment of which they are capable (15). These animals are not intelligent in the formal sense of the word. But they show signs of a kind of intelligence. We speak of them as being intelligent, because in their actions, they display a sagacity which is more akin to intelligence than to the senses (16). This power which seems to approach human intelligence, but which is nevertheless a power of the sensitive part of the soul, we attribute to a limited number of animals, just as we attribute intelligence only to man.

Sensation cannot be the same as judgment, then, since one is found in all animals, the other only in some. Even the ancients, we feel, would not contest this fact, once it had been brought to their attention. Aristotle could have applied the same argument to show that apprehension (*intelligere*) is not the same as sensation, and let it go at that. The argument would have been perfectly valid. But that would not have been in keeping with Aristotelian thoroughness. Anticipating objections which perhaps none but as keen a mind as

(15) - In III De Anima, lect. 4, no. 529. — "... sapere inest paucis animalium, et non quod inest solis hominibus, quia etiam quaedam animalia participant aliquid prudentiae et aliquid sapientiae, scilicet quod recte iudicant de agendis per acclamationem naturalem".

(16) - In IIae, q. 12, a. 2, ad 3. (See also Curs. Phil., t. 3, p. 264a12-264b16).

his own would see, he clears the ground of all underbrush. He is laying the groundwork on which he is going to set up his doctrine on the intellective soul, and he wants to make certain that he is building on a solid foundation, which will withstand the adverse winds of all time.

He has established to the complete satisfaction of all that sensation and judgment (sapere) cannot be the same thing in all animals. But perhaps they may be identified in that limited number of animals whose natural judgment, we said, is akin to intelligence. In the case of these animals, the above argument is not applicable, for in them we find both judgment and sensation. The same question may be raised also as regards man. We find sapere and sentire together in all men. May we not, therefore, say that they are the same thing in man?

Aristotle does not give any direct reply to this question. Instead, he goes on to show that apprehension (intelligere) cannot be identified with sensation (sentire). Does this mean that he failed to see this objection and has fallen victim to what he so earnestly sought to avoid — an oversight? Not at all! He has already made it sufficiently clear that sapere is not sentire. He feels no need of belaboring this point further. By showing that intelligere cannot

be the same as sentire, he intends to sweep away the last vestige of doubt as regards both sapere and intelligere. Since these two are operations of intellectual knowledge, if one is not identifiable with sentire, neither will the other be.

Apprehension (intelligere) may be true, and it may be false, depending on whether the matter under consideration pertains to speculative science — whose object is necessary, to prudence — whose object is contingent, to right opinion; or to their contrary, namely, false science, false prudence, or false opinion (17).

In the case of sensation, there can be no error. That which is known in sensation is the proper sensible. Two things characterize this proper sensible. First it is perceptible by but one sense faculty. Secondly, the sense faculty cannot err with respect to it (18). If there be error, it will be purely accidental. Thus, for example, if we look through rose-colored glasses, everything will be seen as rose-colored. If this be error, the error is not due to the proper

(17) - III De Anima, c. 9, 427b9-11;
In III De Anima, lect. 4, n. 630.

(18) - In II De Anima, lect. 13, n. 384 — "Et dicit quod sensibile proprium est quod ita sentitur uno sensu, quia non potest alio sensu sentiri, et circa quod non potest errare sensus".

sensible. Rather, it is the result of an impeding element on the part of the medium through which the proper sensible must exercise its action on the sense faculty. Similarly, to an ailing person, even sugar may taste bitter. Here again, the error is due not to the proper sensible, but to an impeding element on the part of the sensorial organ. In either case, the error is accidental (19).

The fact, then, that sentire is never in error, whereas intelligere may be true or false, is indication that they are not identical. At this point, an objection may be brought forth. What is there to prevent sentire from being identified with intelligere which is true (as opposed to intelligere which is false)? This objection is disposed of by pointing out that sentire is common to all animals; intellectual comprehension of truth is the result of an inquiry of which rational beings alone are capable (20).

Thus, neither sensare nor intelligere are the same as sentire. Consequently, sensation and intellection are not identical, as the ancients maintained, but they are two entirely different operations, both of which terminate in knowledge.

(19) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 127;
De Veritate, qu. 1, a. 11.

(20) - In III De Anima, lect. 4, no. 651.

This clears the way for us to pass on to our main endeavor — to manifest the nature of the intellect. And because the nature of the intellect is made manifest through the nature of the senses, one final observation must be made here.

Although the operation of intellection is in itself more known than is sensation, nevertheless, it is through knowledge of sensation that we come to the knowledge of intellection. For prior to any philosophical consideration, we have a more tangible acquaintance with sensation than we have with intellection. And even after studied reflection, senses knowledge — however obscure it may be — provides us with intuitive certitude which intellectual knowledge does not furnish (21).

(21) - Cantin, Précis de psychologie thomiste, (éd. Laval), p. 122, 123.

C. - THE POSSIBLE INTELLECT.

Doctrinal Text:

De parte autem animae, qua cognoscit anima et sapit, sive separabili existente, sive non separabili secundum magnitudinem, sed secundum rationem, considerandum quam habet differentiam, et quomodo tandem sit ipsum intelligere.

Si igitur est intelligere sicut sentire, aut pati quoddam erit ab intelligibili, aut aliquid huiusmodi alterum. Impossibilem ergo oportet esse susceptivum autem speciei, et potentia tale, sed non hoc; et similiter se habet sicut sensitivum ad sensibilia, sic intellectivum ad intelligibilia.

Necesse est itaque, quoniam omnia intelligit, immixtum esse, sicut ait Anaxagoras, ut imperet. Hoc autem est, ut cognoscat. Intus apprensus enim prohibet extraneum, et obstruit. Quare neque ipsius esse naturam neque unam, nisi hanc quod possibilis sit. Vocatus itaque animae intellectus, dico autem intellectus, quo opinatur et intelligit anima, nihil est actu eorum quae sunt, ante intelligere.

Unde neque misceri, est rationabile, ipsum corpori. Qualis enim aliquid, utique et esset, aut calefactus aut frigidus, et erit organum aliquid, sicut sensitivo; nunc autem nullum est.

Et bene iam dicentes sunt, animam esse locum specierum, nisi quod non tota, sed intellectiva; neque actu, sed potentia, species.

quod autem non similis sit impossibilitas sensitivi et intellectivi, manifestum est ex organo et sensu. Sensus enim non potest sentire ex valde sensibili, ut sonum ex magnis sonis, neque fortibus odoribus et coloribus, neque videre, neque odorare. Sed intellectus cum intelligat aliquid valde intelligibile, non minus intelligit infima, sed et magis. Sensitivum enim non sine corpore est. Intellectus autem separatus (22).

1. - Statement of Intent.

Text :

De parte autem animae, qua cognoscit
anima et sapit, sive separabili exis-
tente, sive non separabili secundum
magnitudinem, sed secundum rationem,
considerandum quam habet differentiam,
et quomodo tandem sit ipsa intelli-
gere (23).

Aristotle has just completed his study of the sensi-
tive soul, and has shown that sensation and intellection are
not the same thing. This now brings him to the consideration
of the third and final species of soul — the intellective
soul.

De parte autem animae, quam cognoscit anima et sapit.

The soul is the substantial form of the living body.
Like every substantial form, it is the remote principle of ope-
rations of the composite of which it is the form. In man, this
substantial form is called the intellective soul. The soul
takes its name from the most perfect operation of the subject
it informs (24). In man the most perfect operation is intellec-

(23) - III De Anima, c. 4, 429a9-429a12.

(24) - In II De Anima, lect. 4, no. 270.

tual knowledge (25).

Here, Aristotle is singling out for study that part of the soul "by which it (the soul) knows and judges" (26), that is, that part of the soul which is the principle of the most perfect operation of which man is capable — the intellect. The faculties proper to the intellective soul as such include the possible intellect, the agent intellect, and the will. The formal principle by which man "knows and judges" is the possible intellect. This is the intellect in the strict sense. Hence, the study of the intellective soul begins with the consideration of the possible intellect.

It is extremely important to note here that Aristotle refers to the intellect as "part of the soul". This is proof positive that for him the intellect is not a principle of knowledge which is extrinsic to man. As we shall see later, the Averroists maintained that the doctrine of Aristotle contains the basis for the teaching that the possible intellect is a separate substance. Avicenna held a similar view as regards the agent intellect.

(25) - In X Ethic., lect. 10, no. 2060-2065.

(26) - *Cognoscit* and *sapit* are rendered in the Greek text by *γινώσκει* and *φρονεί*. St. Thomas notes that Aristotle is here referring to the intellectual acts of apprehension and judgment — Cf. In III De anima, lect. 7, no. 672.

Give separabili existente, sive non separabili secundum magnitudinem, sed secundum rationem.

The soul is the first principle of life. Since there are three distinct grades of life, a question arises concerning the divisibility or separability of the soul. Is there a separate soul corresponding to each grade of life? Or does the soul have parts which are separable from each other, and which are localized in different parts of the body? Among the ancients, there was much speculation and indecision on this point, especially in connection with the intellective part of the soul. Plato, St. Thomas notes, held that the soul has parts which are all — even the intellective part — localized in different parts of the body, and each of which has its proper organ (27).

St. Thomas tells us that in those living things in which there is but one grade of life — in plants — the principle of this life is a soul, the vegetative soul. But in living beings in which we find several grades of life, the principle of vegetative life is not a soul per se, but a part of the soul, which is either sensitive or intellective, according as it is that of a brute or of a man (28). This is so, because

(27) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, no. 673.

(28) - In II De Anima, lect. 4, no. 262.

the soul is a substantial form, and there can be only one substantial form in any natural thing (29).

The soul, then, has parts. These parts admit of a twofold distinction : one of the formal or specific order; the other of the material or spatial order. The specific distinction arises from the fact that the parts of the soul are its potencies, or faculties. But potency is ordered to act. Therefore, these potencies will be specifically distinct, if the operations of the soul are specifically distinct. The material distinction arises from the fact that the potencies of the soul — excepting the spiritual potencies — are joined to an organ. Consequently, if these organs are localized in different parts of the body, the soul will also be localized with respect to these potencies (30).

Up to this point in his study, Aristotle has not yet determined whether or not the intellect, is an organic faculty.

(29) - In II De Anima, lect. 1, no. 224 — "... impossibilis est unius rei esse plures formas substantiales; quia prima faceret ens actu simpliciter, et omnes alias advenirent subiecto iam existenti in actu, unde accidentaliter advenirent subiecto iam existenti in actu, non enim facerent ens actu simpliciter, sed secundum quid".

(30) - Cantin, L'âme et ses puissances, selon Aristote; in the Laval Théologique et Philosophique, 1946, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 193.

Thus, the question of whether it is distinct from the other potencies not only specifically but spatially as well is still in the balance. Whether the intellect be an organic faculty, as Plato held, Aristotle at this point does not know. Nor does he care.

considerandum quam habet differentiam

In any case, whether the intellective part of the soul be spatially distinct from the other parts or not, he knows definitely that it is specifically distinct. And he is determined to find out wherein the difference consists.

et quomodo tandem sit ipsum intelligere

Potencies are principles of operation. If he is going to study the nature of the intellective potency, common sense alone would seem to require that the operation which emanates from this potency be considered in conjunction with it. Scientific method, moreover, demands that the operation be considered, for the properties of a potency are known from the quality of its operation (31). Consequently, after he has studied the nature of the intellect, he intends to turn his attention to the

(31) - IN III De Anima, lect. 7, no. 674 — "Et quia proprietas potentiae ex qualitate actus cognoscitur".

consideration of its operation, that is, he will examine how the act of intellection is accomplished (32).

This order of procedure which Aristotle proposes to follow in his study of the intellective soul may appear to be confusing, because of its seeming inconsistency. We know that knowledge of potencies is derived from knowledge of their operations (33). And yet, the study of the operation of intellection is to be taken up only after the consideration of the intellective potency. Surely, this is a case of placing the cart before the horses.

To convict Aristotle of an inconsistency would be an accomplishment of Herculean proportions. Keener minds than ours have learned to develop a wholesome respect for the rigor and perspicacity of the Aristotelian intellect. More discerning minds than ours have been forced to the admission that it were more prudent to recognize their own incapacity to plumb the depths of Aristotle's meaning than to impute a contradiction or an inconsistency to him. Only fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

(32) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, no. 674.

(33) - In II De Anima, lect. 6, no. 303.

It is St. Thomas again who points out for us the consistency and rigor of the order in Aristotle's procedure here. The nature of the intellect is studied before the operation of intellection, but actually it is studied through the act of intellection (*per ipsum intelligere*) and through that which is known (*per id quod intelligitur*). And it must of necessity be so, for the intellect can be known only in examining an act of knowledge (34). For a more perfect knowledge of the intellect we must depend on a more perfect knowledge of its operation. But for a general knowledge of the intellect, a detailed knowledge of intellection is not necessary.

(34) - In III De Anima, lect. 9, no. 724 — "Unce Philosophus per ipsum intelligere, et per illud quod intelligitur, scrutatus est naturam intellectus possibilis. Non enim cognoscimus intellectum nostrum nisi per hoc, quod intelligimus nos intelligere".

2. - Similarity between the Intellect and the Senses.

Text :

Si igitur est intelligere sicut sentire,
aut pati quoddam erit ab intelligibili,
aut aliquid huiusmodi alterum. Impossi-
bilem ergo oportet esse, susceptivum au-
tem speciei, et potentia tale, sed non
hoc; et similiter se habet sicut senti-
tivum ad censibilia, sic intellectivum ad
intelligibilia (35).

Intellection and sensation, we have noted, are as two forms of knowledge. This common ground proved to be a stumbling block for some of the ancients. They identified intellection with sensation. For Aristotle, it is the means of manifesting the nature of one through the other. Thus, in the second book, he manifests the nature of the external senses by comparing them with the intellect. In the third book, he manifests the nature of the intellect by means of what he has already determined about the senses.

Si igitur est intelligere sicut sentire

If intellection is similar to sensation, then certain qualities which characterize the sense faculties and their operations will be found to characterize the intellect and its

operation as well, at least to a proportionate extent. But that the two are similar is no mere hypothesis. They are two forms of knowledge. Their similarity, then, is rooted in knowledge. Hence, if we wish to determine the common quality which characterizes both, it will be necessary to examine the qualities of knowledge in general.

aut pati quoddam erit ab intelligibili

Knowledge is an operation which bears on some object. This is evident from experience (36). The nature of knowledge is such that it draws the object to itself so that a union is effected between the knower and the thing known (37). In this union, the object is assimilated by the knower without undergoing any real change. It remains what it is. On the part of the knowing faculty, however, there takes place an intrinsic transformation, which is determined by the object (38). The object acts on the cognitive faculty by actualizing and per-

(36) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 101. — "Certum est omnem potentiam apprehensivam versari circa aliquod obiectum, siquidem experientia constat nos res aliquas cognoscere, et id, quod cognoscimus, obiectum est potentiae."

(37) - Ibid., p. 102. — "...quia cognitio versatur circa obiecta trahendo illa ad se per aliquam unionem vel assimilationem ad ipse."

(38) - Ibid.

fecting it. (39) This actualization is accomplished not by the object as it exists physically but by means of the intentional species representing the object. The intentional species actualizes or informs the faculty in the order of entitative or natural existence as well as in the order of intentional or representative existence (40). The first mode of information is accidental to knowledge; the second mode is essential.

From this it is apparent that in knowledge, the knowing faculty undergoes the action of the knowable object. In the second book, Aristotle has explained the application of these notions to sense knowledge. There, it is shown that the sense faculties are not the sensibles in act, as the ancients believed, but only in potency. These faculties are passive with respect to the sensibles, which are exterior to the faculties, and which exercise their action on them (41). For this reason, he speaks of sensation as a "pati". And since intellection is similar to

(39) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, 103 -- "Sententia D. Thomae affirmat potentiam cognoscitivam per se et in genere cognoscitivo pati ab obiecto et ab ipso actuari et perfici et non solum per accidens et in genere entitativo".

(40) - By entitative existence we mean the existence a thing has independently of our knowledge of it. By intentional existence we mean that which a thing assumes in the mind by the fact that it is known.

(41) - II De Anima, c. 5.

sensation, he can now say that intellectual knowledge will also be a "pati" in which the intellective faculty undergoes the action of the intelligible object.

aut aliquid huiusmodi alterum

The sense faculties and the intellective faculty undergo the action of their object, sensible and intelligible respectively. The intellect and the senses, then, are passive with respect to these objects. But this passivity is not to be interpreted to mean that the act of knowledge — sensation and intellection — consists in the mere actualization of the faculty by the intentional species. Such actualization is indeed a condition prerequisite for knowledge. It does not, however, constitute the act of knowledge. The act of knowledge is an immanent operation. As such, it cannot be a pure "passio" (42). The act of knowledge is a vital operation. As such, it emanates from the faculty in an active way. A vital operation is the act of a living thing. To live is to move. And to move is to act rather than to be acted upon (43).

(42) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 106. — "Et ubicumque distinguit actionem immanentem a transeunte, actionem immanentem dicit cognitionem vel volitionem; ergo sentit non consistere in pura passione".

(43) - Ibid., p. 107. — "... quia potentia actus specie vere et proprie operatur et agit, siquidem habet actum vitalem.... Dum ergo talis actus vitalis sit, oportet quod

Essentially, the act of knowledge is not a "passio" but an "actio", in the sense that the cognitive faculty, in the very act of knowing, is active. In its initial phase, however, knowledge necessarily implies "passio". Both Aristotle and St. Thomas constantly refer to sensation and intellection as a "quoddam pati". (44) Obviously, the term has a special significance and importance for them, which it will be worth our while to examine.

The word "passio" and "pati" may be taken in its strict sense, or in a general and broad sense. It is derived from the Greek verb $\pi\alpha\sigma\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$, to receive. Taken in its broad sense, "passio" signifies the reception of something in any way whatsoever. In the strict sense, it signifies the reception of something by way of movement (45).

"Passio" in the strict sense is found only where there is movement and contrariety, for all movement is between

procedat active a potentia, et non mere passive in illa sit, siquidem proprium est viventis se movere, et in tantum est in actu secundo vitali, in quantum est in actu secundo se movendi et consequenter non patiendi; pati enim est moveri, movere autem est agere".

(44) - I De Anima, C. 3, 410a25;
In I De Anima, lect. 12, no. 183.

(45) - De Veritate, qu. 26, a. 1, corpus.

contraries. The patient, then, must of necessity surrender that which is the contrary of what it receives. To this extent, it is assimilated to the agent. We find such a "passio" only in the movement of alteration. In local movement, it is the mobile being itself that is received in place. In the movement of increment and decrease, it is not a form which is received or displaced. Something merely accrues to or is withdrawn from the substance. But in generation and corruption, there is no movement or contrariety, except it be preceded by alteration. Thus, only in alteration is one contrary form replaced by another (46).

"Passio" in the broad sense is found in all created things. For in every creature there is an admixture of potency. As such, every creature is receptive of something (47). In this case, the receptivity consists in a perfection rather than in a "passio" (48). That which is in potency to something receives that to which it is in potency (49).

(46) - De Veritate, q. 26, a. 1, corp. (See also Aristotle, II De Anima, c. 3).

(47) - De Veritate, ibid.

(48) - Ia IIae, q. 22, a. 1, corp.

(49) - Ia, qu. 79, a. 2, corp.

When Aristotle speaks of sensation and intellection as being a "quoddam pati", it is in the broad sense that he uses the word "passio" and "pati". In both cases, knowledge does not consist in the mere undergoing of the action of an agent. He expressly states that if we speak of alteration and of passio with respect to sensation, it is due to the lack of a better word (50). To sense is to be the sensible in act. Thus, the sense faculty is to sensation what potency is to act. The passage from potency to act, here, is not an alteration; or if it is, it is an alteration of a very special kind (51). He also points out that it is the sensible object which effects the passage of the sense faculty from potency to act. But he adds that this faculty does not undergo an action, nor is it altered, its movement being altogether different from physical movement (52).

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- (50) - II De Anima, c. 5, 417b32 -- "... sic habet et sensitivum. quoniam autem innominata est ipsorum differentia; determinatum est autem de his, quod altera sunt, et quomodo altera; utinacesse est ipso pati, et alterari, tamquam propriis nominibus".
- (51) - Ibid., 417b9 -- "quod certe aut non est alterari (in ipso enim additio est, et in actu est) aut alterum genus alterationis est".
- (52) - III De Anima, c. 7, 431a3-6 -- "Videtur autem sensibile ex potentia existente sensitivo agens : non enim patitur, neque alteratur. Unde alia haec species motus. Motus enim imperfecti actus; simpliciter autem actus alter est, qui perfecti".