

Physical movement is movement in the real sense of the word. It is that which takes place between contraries (55), and is essentially the act of that which is in potency, that is, of something imperfect (56). For that which moves from one contrary to another remains in potency until it has achieved its term (57). Sensation, on the other hand, is movement which is the act of a perfect being. It is the operation of a sense faculty, which operation is possible only after this faculty has been actualized by the species, i.e. by the form or similitude of the sensible object. Thus, it is the act of a being which is in act, and not of a being which is in potency (58). From this we can see that sensation is distinct from the action of the sensible object on the sense faculty. Sensation is subsequent to such action.

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(55) - In III De Anima, lect. 12, no. 766. -- "... quia motus, qui est de rebus corporalibus, est de contrario in contrarium".

(56) - Ibid. -- "ille enim motus est actus existentis in potentia..... ideo ille motus est actus imperfecti".

(57) - Ibid. -- "quia videlicet recedens ab uno contrario, quamdiu movetur non attingit alterum contrarium, quod est terminus motus, sed est in potentia. Et quia omne, quod est in potentia, in quantum huiusmodi, est imperfectum, ideo ille motus est actus imperfecti". (Cf. Aristotele, III Physic., c. 1, and V Physic., c. 5).

(58) - Ibid. -- "sed iste motus (sentire) est actus perfecti : est enim operatio sensus iam facti in actu, per suam speciem. Non enim sentire convenit sensui nisi in actu existenti; et ideo iste motus simpliciter est alter a motu physico".

To say that sensation is a "quoddam pati", then, is to say that it is a "passio" in the sense of pure receptivity. It is not a "passio", if we mean by that a change or alteration of the physical order. The sense faculty and the sensible object are not as contraries of which one acts on the other by transforming it physically. The sensible object merely reduces the faculty from potency to act by actualizing it (59). The predecessors of Aristotle believed that the soul was capable of sensation precisely because it was composed of all sensible things. To refute this opinion, Aristotle felt constrained to show that sensible things are extrinsic to the soul and act on it by informing or actualizing it (60).

Impossibilem ergo oportet esse

We must not lose sight of the fact that we are manifesting the nature of the intellect through what has already been established regarding the senses. We have, therefore, recalled here the views of Aristotle on sensation so that we may apply them to intellection. Hence, we can now say that since

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(59) - In III De Anima, lect. 12, no. 785 -- "Non enim alio agit sensibile in sensum sicut contrarium in contrarium ut aliquid ab eo abiciat transmutando, et alterando ipsum; sed solum reducit eum de potentia in actum. Et hoc est quod subdit, quod sensitivum neque patitur neque alteratur a sensibile passione et alteratione proprie accepta, secundum scilicet quod est ex contrario in contrarium".

(60) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 111.

sensation is not a "passio" in the strict sense, but only a "quoddam pati", neither will intellection be a real "passio", but only a "quoddam pati".

susceptivum autem speciei

In knowledge, the object acts on the knowing faculty by actualizing and perfecting it by means of the intentional species (61). The knowing faculty, therefore, prior to the act of knowledge, is in potency to receive this species. It is precisely this receptivity, i.e. this potency to receive the form of the object, which constitutes the passivity of knowledge. It is not a real passio. It is a quoddam pati, i.e. it has some resemblance to real passio. Thus, although sensation and intellection are not a passio strictly speaking, nevertheless, they have some resemblance to passio in this that the sense faculties are in potency to receive the sensible species, and consequently, the intellect is in potency to receive the intelligible species.

To receive a form is common to knowing and to non-knowing things (62). But there is a vast difference in the way

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(61) - See page

(62) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 103 -- "... recipere formas est commune cognoscenti et non cognoscenti".

both receive this form. Non-knowing things have only their own proper form. Knowing beings, in addition to their own form, may also have the form of another thing (63). It is to be noted that we do not say of knowing beings that they receive another form, but rather, the form of another thing. This distinction is extremely significant. When a thing receives into itself some extrinsic perfection or form, it receives another form, i.e. a form distinct from itself. But it does not receive the form of another thing, for in receiving an extrinsic form, this form becomes its own proper form and consequently, it is no longer the form of something else. Knowing beings, on the other hand, receive the form of another thing as other. They are not only what they are in themselves; they also become the other thing (64).

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(63) - Ia, q. 14, a. 1, corp. -- "Non cognoscentia nihil habet nisi suam formam, cognoscentia autem possunt habere etiam formam rei alterius".

(64) - Curs. Phil., T. 3, p. 103 -- "Nam formam alteram potest habere quaecumque res, quae recipit in se perfectionem aliquam vel formam ab extrinseco provenientem. Nam illa forma est altera, id est distincta a se et ab extrinseco proveniens, sed non est alterius, quia hoc ipso, quod in se recipitur, fit sua, ita quod non pertinet ad alterum, sed ad se.... Cognoscentia autem in hoc deviantur super non cognoscentia, quia id, quod est alterius, ut alterius, seu prout manet distinctum in altero, possunt in se recipere, ita quod non solum sunt id quod in se sunt, sed etiam possunt fieri alia a se".

et potentia tale, sed non hoc

One thing cannot become another, as other, according to the material or entitative existence of that other. It is characteristic of matter to restrict and limit form, thereby rendering it incommunicable to another subject. Thus, the reception of the form of another thing must necessarily be effected in an immaterial way (65).

The ancients, however, believed that the form of perfection of the thing known is in the knower according to its natural existence (66). They failed to distinguish between the intentional and the material mode of existence which a thing may have (67). As a result, they concluded that if the soul knows all things, it contains within itself the principles of all things, in a material way (68). We find Empedocles, for

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(65) - De veritate, q. 2, a. 2, corp.;  
Id., q. 14, a. 1, corp.;  
Curs. Phil., P. IV, q. 6, a. 1.

(66) - De Veritate, ibid.

(67) - In I De Anima, lect. 4, n. 43.

(68) - Ibid., lect. 12, n. 179 -- "quorum positio fuit quod anima cognosceret res omnes, quia cognitio fit per assimilationem, quasi hoc a longe divinantes, dicebant animam, ad hoc quod omnia cognosceret, esse compositam ex omnibus; et quod similitudo rerum omnium esset in anima secundum proprium modum essendi, scilicet corporalem. Unde, cum res constant ex elementis, dicebant quod anima erat composita ex omnibus elementis, ut sentiat et cognoscat omnia quae sunt".

example, maintaining that the sensitive soul knows all sensible things, because it is composed of all sensible things (69).

But if this were so, then the soul is all sensible things in act. Consequently, the sense faculties should be capable of sensation of themselves; for that which is sensible in act is able to be sensed. Furthermore, the sense faculty should be capable of sensation in the absence of sensible objects. Neither of these consequences, however, is true to fact. The sense faculty can neither sense of itself; nor can it sense except in the physical presence of external sensible objects (70). Manifestly, then, to use the words of Aristotle, the sensitive soul is not the sensible objects in act, but in potency only (71).

What is true of the sensitive soul will be proportionately true also of the intellective soul. The sensitive soul is not the sensible object in act, but in potency only. Similarly, the intellective soul is not the intelligible object in

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(69) - In II De Anima, lect. 10, no. 352.

(70) - Ibid., no. 353.

(71) - II De Anima, c. 5, 417a6-7 -- "Manifestum igitur est, quod sensitivum non est actu, sed potentia tantum, unde non sentit, sicut combustibile non comburitur ipsum a seipso, sed a combustivo."

not, but in potency only.

et similiter se habet sicut sensitivum ad sensibilia, sic intellectivum ad intelligibilia.

In recapitulation, intellection and sensation are alike in this that both are preceded by a quoddam pati. In neither case, is this a real passio. In either case, there is some resemblance to real passio to the extent that the respective faculties are receptive of something which perfects them. This reception, in both cases, is the reception of the form or species of the object, in an immaterial way, which actualizes and informs the faculties. The faculties, then, are in potency with respect to these objects. Thus, the intellect will have the same relation with respect to the intelligible object as the sense faculties have to the sensible objects. This relationship consists in this that both are in potency to receive their respective objects (72).

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(72) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, no. 676. -- "Et sic oportet, quod sicut se habet sensitivum ad sensibilia, similiter se habeat intellectivum ad intelligibilia; quia utrumque est in potentia ad suum obiectum, et est susceptivum eius".

3. - The Intellect is Incorporeal.

Text :

Necesse est itaque, quoniam omnia intelli-  
git, immixtum esse, sicut ait ANAXAGORAS,  
ut imperet. Hoc autem est, ut cognoscat.  
Intus apparens enim prohibebit extraneum,  
et obstruet. Quare necesse ipsius esse natu-  
ram necesse unam, nisi hanc quod possibilis  
sit. Vocatus itaque animae intellectus,  
dico autem intellectum, quo opinatur et in-  
telligit anima, nihil est actu eorum quae  
sunt, ante intelligere (73).

Utilizing the various points of similarity that exist between the intellect and the senses as stepping stones, Aristotle has led us to the point where we cannot fail to recognize the intellect as a passive potency which is receptive of intelligible species. He feels that we are now prepared and better disposed to appreciate an insight into the nature of such a potency. Therefore, he unfolds the implications of a passive potency which is receptive of intelligible species.

quoniam omnia intelligit

That the soul knows all things is a fact that is evident from experience. Because of this fact, the predecessors

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(73) - III De Anima, c. 4, 417a18-417a23.

of Aristotle were divided in their opinion as to the nature of the intellect. There were two schools of thought on this question. The first held that if the intellect knows all things, it must necessarily be composed of all things. This was the opinion of Empedocles, as we have seen (74). The second school maintained a diametrically opposite opinion. According to this school, if the intellect knows all things, it must necessarily be something simple, and consequently can contain no admixture of any of the things that it can know (75).

Necesse est itaque immixtum esse, sicut ait Anaxagoras, ut imperet.

Aristotle follows the opinion of the second school of thought, which was headed by Anaxagoras. Anaxagoras was one of those, among the ancients, who sought the nature of the soul in the cause of movement. Self-movement was for these ancients one of the two characteristics which distinguish animate beings from the inanimate. It was the common belief at that time that nothing moves another except it itself be moved by another. Since it is the soul that moves animate beings, it falls within the class of things which are moved (76).

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(74) - See page

(75) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 677.

(76) - I De Anima, c. 2, 403b30-32.

On this point Anaxagoras did not follow common opinion. He was in agreement that the soul moves all things. But he did not agree that whatever moves another must itself be moved by another. For him, there existed an intellect -- separated and unmixed -- which moves all things, but which itself is not moved by anything. And he maintained that the soul is of the same nature as this intellect. (77)

However, he was rather vague and indefinite -- and even contradictory -- in his references to the soul. At times, he identifies the soul with the intellect. At other times, he says that they are not the same. But in so far as he expressly states that the soul moves all things, and that the intellect moves all things, to that extent, at least, he is taking them to be one and the same thing (78).

Anaxagoras characterizes the intellect as "simple", "unmixed", and "pure". By "unmixed", he means that it is not composed or mixed with other things (79). Since it is the principle of all movement, everything that moves is moved under the imperium of the intellect. But if the intellect were

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(77) - In De Anima, lect. 3, n. 38.

(78) - I De Anima, c. 5, 406a13-16;  
In I De Anima, lect. 5, n. 57.

(79) - Ibid.

mixed with or composed of corporeal natures, it could not move all things under its imperium, for it would then be determined ad unum (80).

Hoc autem est, ut cognoscat

Aristotle is not concerned here with the intellect which moves all things. His concern is with an intellect by which the soul knows, that is, an intellect which knows all things. And so, just as Anaxagoras held that the intellect must be unmixed if it is to exercise its imperium over all movement, in a similar way, Aristotle intends to show that the intellect must be unmixed if it is to know all things (81).

Intus apparens enim prohibebit extraneum, et obstruet

An act of knowledge is preceded by the reception on the part of the knowing faculty of the form or species of the object known. The knowing faculty, thus, is in potency to receive this form. Hence, prior to this reception, the faculty in no way contains within itself the nature of this form.

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(80) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 678.

(81) - Ibid., n. 679.

Since the intellect can know all things, its receptive potentiality extends to the species of all things. Consequently, before it is actualized by the species, the intellect does not contain within itself the determinate nature of any of the things that it can know. For the presence within a knowing faculty of the determination of any nature would by that very fact determine the nature of the faculty itself ad unum, that is, the nature of the knowing faculty would be determined and restricted by the nature of the object it contained (82). To illustrate this principle, St. Thomas shows its application in the case of the sense of sight and the sense of taste.

The pupil of the eye, he points out, is in potency with respect to color, and is receptive of the species of color. For this reason, it itself is necessarily void of all color. If it were in any way colored, it would perceive only that color and no other. The determinate presence in the eye of one color would prevent the perception of any but that color (83).

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(82) - Ia, q. 78, a. 2, corp. -- "Quod autem potest cognoscere aliqua, oportet ut nihil eorum habeat in sua natura; quia illud quod inest ei naturaliter, impediret cognitionem aliorum."

(83) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 680.

Similarly, when the tongue is infected by fever or disease with bitterness, it is incapable of distinguishing between bitter and sweet. The infection has the effect of preventing the perception of any other taste but bitter. So complete is the determination of the sense faculty that what is sweet in itself actually tastes bitter (84).

Applying the same principle to the intellect, Saint Thomas states that if the intellect contained within itself a determinate nature, that nature would be connatural to it and would prevent its knowing other natures (85). And it is precisely for this reason that Aristotle says of the intellect, "inustus apprensus enim prohibebit extraneum et obstruet". This "inustus apprensus", as St. Thomas explains, is something intrinsic and connatural to the intellect, which prevents it from knowing other things (86).

This text of Aristotle constitutes an unequivocal affirmation of the spirituality of the intellect. Spirituality is here opposed to corporeality. To say that something is

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(84) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 600.

(85) - Ibid. -- "Sic etiam intellectus si haberet aliquam naturam determinatam, illa natura connaturalis sibi prohiberet eum a cognitione aliarum naturarum.

(86) - Ibid.

spiritual is to say that it is not corporeal. When we say that the intellect does not contain the determination of any nature, we exclude from it all corporeality. The intellect can know all corporeal natures. If it itself possessed a corporeal nature, it would be intrinsically determined by that nature, which would prevent its knowing other corporeal natures. Thus, it is impossible that the intellect be corporeal; for everything corporeal has a determinate nature (87).

In commenting on St. Thomas in this connection, Cajetan formulates the following a priori proof for the incorporeality of the intellective soul.

That which can know all corporeal natures  
does not itself possess any corporeal nature;

But the intellective soul can know all corporeal natures;

Therefore, the intellective soul is incorporeal.

The minor, he notes, is evident. We know from experience that man can know all corporeal natures. The major is based on the axiom : cognoscitivum aliquorum nihil eorum habet in sua natura, i.e. that which is a potency to know does not

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(87) - Ia, q. 75, a. 2, corp. -- "Si igitur principium intellectuale haberet in se naturam alicuius corporis, non posset omnia corpora cognoscere. Omne autem corpus habet aliquam naturam determinatam. Impossibile est igitur quod principium intellectuale sit corpus".

contain within itself the nature of any of the things it can know, this again we know from experience, when we consider the sense of taste (88).

Cajetan then goes on to analyse the axiom cognoscitivum aliquorum nihil eorum habet in sua natura to show that its elements may be understood in different senses.

Cognoscitivum aliquorum. A knowing faculty can be either in essential potency to know something, or in accidental potency.

Habere in sua natura. When we speak of a knowing faculty containing an object within itself, we must distinguish between the natural existence of that object and its intentional existence.

In natura sua. Here too we can distinguish two ways in which the faculty may contain an object within itself : inhesively, as forms are contained in matter; or intrinsically, as component parts are contained in the composite; and in general those things which are intrinsic to the essence of a thing are said to be contained in the nature of that thing (89).

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(88) - In Iam, q. 78, a. 2, par. 3.

(89) - Ibid., par. 4.

Having made these distinctions, Cajetan explains that when applied to the intellective soul, this axiom is to be taken in this sense : cognoscitivum in potentia essentiali aliquorum non habet in se intrinsece obiectum secundum naturale esse illius. And he adds that this is a per se nota proposition, since the intellect cannot both be and not be in essential potency at one and the same time. If it contained within itself the nature of the object actually, it would then be in accidental or habitual potency to know it, and not in essential potency (90).

Stated thus, without further qualification, this proposition immediately gives rise to a series of difficulties. We shall consider some of these difficulties, because it will enable us to better understand the scope and application of the axiom.

According to the axiom, that which is in essential potency to know does not intrinsically contain within itself any of the things it can know according to their natural existence. But when we consider the case of the intellect itself, we find that it is in essential potency to know itself. And

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(90) - In Iam, q. 73, a. 2, par. 4.

(91) - Ibid., par. 5.

we also find that the nature of the intellect is within the intellect intrinsically and according to its natural existence. How are we to explain this opposition (91).

The solution, of course, is found in the fact that the axiom applies only where there is direct knowledge. It is not applicable in the case of indirect or reflex knowledge. The reason for this is because that which is known is received according as it is in itself (*secundum se*) or according to its species. This is not true in the case of reflex knowledge (92).

The soul is not in essential potency to know itself, directly. It is in potency to know directly things other than itself. The intellect can know itself only by considering an act of knowledge. Hence, it knows itself only through the prior knowledge of other things (93).

Then, there is a similar difficulty of reconciling the truth of the axiom with the fact that the human soul is in essential potency to know being and substance, whereas it intrinsically contains within itself the nature of being or of substance (94).

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(91) - In Iam, q. 75, a. 2, par. 5.

(92) - Cajetan, In Iam, q. 75, a. 2, par. 6.

(93) - Ibid.

(94) - Ibid., par. 5.

In general, we may say that this axiom applies only where there is question of a knowable nature which Cajetan calls contracted and which is not determinable by another nature (95). St. Thomas calls this kind of nature a determinate nature. Cajetan distinguishes between determinate nature and common nature.

A determinate nature, he says, is one which is not determinable by the nature of other objects of a knowing nature. Thus, one species is not determinable by another species of the same order, as for example, white with respect to other colors (96).

A common nature is one which while it is a nature in itself can nevertheless be determined by the nature of other objects which can be known by the same faculty. Thus, transparency is determinable by color. So too is the sense of sight (97).

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- (95) - In Iam, qu. 78, a. 2, par. 6 -- "Melius autem et universalius dicitur quod propositio illa intelligitur tantum de natura cognoscibili contracta et indeterminabili per alias.
- (96) - Ibid., par. 7 -- "Sed determinata natura vocatur, quae indeterminabilis est per naturas ceterorum obiectorum illius cognoscitivae naturae; qualis est species quaelibet respectu alterius speciei eiusdem ordinis, ut albedo respectu aliorum colorum.
- (97) - Ibid. -- Communis vero vocatur quae, licet in se natura quaedam sit, determinari nate est per reliquorum naturas cognoscibilium ab illa potentia; ut diaphaneitas respectu colorum et sensus visus.

The common nature is not an obstacle to knowledge of other natures. Rather, it favors such knowledge. The transparency of the faculty of sight, for example, does not prevent the eye from seeing other colors, even though the transparent is one of the objects of sight. Whiteness, however, or blackness will definitely prove to be an obstacle to the perception of any other color (98).

In reply, then, to the difficulty as to how to reconcile the axiom which states that a faculty which is in essential potency to know cannot contain within itself the nature of any of the things that it can know with the fact that the human soul is in potency to know being and substance while it itself is being and substance, we point out that the soul is a common nature, that is, one that is determinable by other natures; for substance and being are admittedly determinable natures. The axiom, therefore, does not apply to the nature of the soul, since, as we have seen, it applies only where there is question of a determinate nature (99).

The position of both Aristotle and St. Thomas, then, is that if the human intellect contained within itself any

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(98) - Cajetan, In Iam, q. 75, a. 2, par. 7.

(99) - Ibid.

corporeal nature, it could not know other corporeal natures, because that corporeal nature would so determine the nature of the intellect that it would be an obstacle to its knowledge of other natures (*illa natura interior existens prohiberet apparere extranea*). St. Thomas goes a step further and considers the angelic intellect also. In treating the question as to whether angels know one another, he raises the following difficulty. With respect to knowledge of immaterial things, the angelic intellect should occupy the same relative position as does the human intellect with respect to knowledge of corporeal things. And since the angelic intellect has a determinate nature, it would seem that the principle intus apparet pro-  
hiberet extraneum et obstruet precludes knowledge of one angel by another (100).

In reply to this difficulty, St. Thomas notes that the only difference among angels is in the degree of perfection of each. There is, thus, an affinity between the nature of one angel and that of another. Because of this affinity, the nature of one angel is no obstacle to his knowing other angelic natures (101).

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(100) - Ia, q. 86, a. 2, obj. 1.

(101) - Ibid., ad 1.

This reply of St. Thomas, observes Cajetan, does not seem to be a satisfactory answer to the objection raised. It seems to consist in an exception, as if stating that a knowing faculty may contain within itself actually the nature of some of the things it knows, provided that the nature of the faculty has an affinity with other natures, and provided some order of perfection distinguishes them (102).

Cajetan then brings forth three difficulties which St. Thomas' reply raises : (103).

First, he recalls the commentary of Averroes on the *De Anima* wherein Averroes says that the principle that the receiver must be void of the nature of the thing received is to be understood as applying to the proximate genus of the things received. This principle, Cajetan goes on to add, is even more applicable where an intrinsic nature has an affinity with other natures (*ex hoc quod natura intrinseca habet affinitatem cum extrinseca, magis obstat propositio*). His contention that the angels are all of the same proximate genus he bases on the fact that St. Thomas does not admit of any subalternate genus with respect to the angels.

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(102) - In *Iam*, q. 56, a. 2, par. 2.

(103) - *Ibid.*

Secondly, this reply of St. Thomas would destroy the position of Aristotle. For it would mean that the soul can contain actually the nature of some of the things that it knows. It would also mean that this would not be an obstacle to the soul's knowing other objects, since between the intellect and other objects there is an obvious order in degrees of perfection, and since the intellect has an affinity with these other objects by reason of proximity in the order of being or in the order of principle (*propter proximitatem in essendo aut principiando*).

Thirdly, to have affinity with another, and to differ from another by virtue of a certain order, does not eliminate the cause why the presence of one nature within another is an obstacle to this other's receiving still another nature. The cause, of course, lies in the fact that whatever is determined to one nature cannot be determined to another nature. Nor can that nature to which something has already been determined be determined to another nature. It is for this reason, explains Cajetan, that in his commentary on the *Physics*, Averroes notes that if prime matter had a form of its own, it could not receive all forms; neither could it receive all potency, if it possessed some potency. If, then, we consider the fact that it is the common property of every actual and specific nature

that the ultimate difference of one cannot be determined by the ultimate difference of another, we will understand that this cause is present even in those natures which have an affinity with each other and which differ from each other in degrees of perfection. Moreover, we experience the fact that when one of our senses is affected by a sensible object, it is prevented from perceiving other objects by reason of that wherein these objects differ.

These are real difficulties which stem from the argument as stated by St. Thomas. But difficulties are not indicative of error. Cajetan realizes that one does not readily impute error to St. Thomas. He is convinced that these difficulties are due, rather, to failure to get at the precise and proper understanding of his intent. And since the only means we have of knowing the mind of another is through words and external signs, Cajetan seeks to resolve these difficulties by a close scrutiny of the meaning of the words of St. Thomas.

In a preparatory way, he first points out the root cause as to why the presence of one nature within another is an obstacle to the reception of another nature (*quare intra existens prohibet extraneum*). The proper reason for this, he says, is because the one nature is not determinable by the other. By way of exemplifying a determinable nature, he sug-

gests that if prime matter possessed a form that is determinable by all forms, this form would be no obstacle to prime matter's receiving all forms. In a similar way, the human intellect, if it possesses an intelligible nature which is determinable by all intelligible natures, will not be prevented from knowing all intelligible natures. Likewise, the tongue which is infected with bitterness -- if it were determinable by sweetness, the bitterness would be no obstacle to its tasting the sweet. The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that this axiom intus existens prohibet extraneum does not apply to those natures of which one is determinable by the other, but only to those where one cannot be the determination of another. In other words, the axiom manifestly does not apply to natures which are related to each other as potency and act (104).

Then, he shows that the axiom intus existens prohibet extraneum admits of a twofold application and interpretation. This axiom has to do with knowable natures, i.e. natures that are object of a knowing faculty. But there is a twofold order of knowable things. Some are knowable only, as are corporeal natures. Others are both knowable and knowing natures. Here a distinction is made between natures which are both knowable

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(104) - In Ism, q. 56, a. 2, par. 3.

and knowing per se and those which are knowable and knowing per accidens. Animals are knowable and knowing natures. In them, however, the knowing and the known are not identical in essence. For this reason, animals are said to be natures which are knowable and knowing per accidens. The separated substances, on the other hand, are both knowable and knowing per se. In them, the knowing and the known are identical in essence (*idem est secundum se cognoscens et cognitum esse*) (105).

Having made these observations, we are now in better position to come to grips with our problem. At first glance, the argument of St. Thomas seems to say that where we have natures of the same genus, but differing from each other only by reason of some specific order, the intrinsic presence of one nature will not be an obstacle to its receiving other natures. The reasoning here is apparently based on the fact that knowledge takes place by assimilation; and inasmuch as natures of the same genus are similar, that one will not be an obstacle to the knowledge of the others. And since angelic natures are of this kind, i.e. of the same genus and hence similar, one angel should not be an obstacle to his knowing other angels. This interpretation views natures as knowable only, and its validity is intended to apply to spiritual and corporeal natures

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(105) - In Iam, q. 55, a. 3, par. 4.

alike (106).

Experience, however, rules out this interpretation. Colors and tastes are all of the same respective genus, differing only in species. And yet, we know from experience that one color is an obstacle to knowledge of other colors. The same is also true of tastes (107). This interpretation, therefore, is untenable, and thus we must study the meaning of St. Thomas still further.

On closer scrutiny, it would seem that one and the same principle cannot be applied with equal validity to corporeal natures (objects of the intellect are such) and to spiritual natures alike. The reason for this is that spiritual natures have an affinity with each other arising from the fact that they differ only according to a certain specific order. The angelic intellect, consequently, does not occupy the same relative position with respect to spiritual natures as does the human intellect with respect to corporeal natures (108). It will be recalled that this was the reason given in the objection raised by St. Thomas to show that angels do not know each

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(106) - In Iam, q. 56, a. 2, par. 3.

(107) - Idem

(108) - Ibid., par. 3.

other (109).

We can have affinity of natures where there is question of things which are knowable only, i.e. corporeal natures. In this case, one nature is an obstacle to knowledge of the other. We can also have affinity where the natures are both knowable and knowing (per se). In this case, one nature is not an obstacle but an aid to knowledge of another (110).

Such a nature is not an obstacle to knowledge, because there is no impeding cause to prevent this knowledge. The impeding cause, as we have seen (111), is the indeterminability of one nature by another. But a knowing nature is one which is necessarily determinable. If the nature of color, for example, were such that it could see as well as be seen, it would of necessity be determinable by all colors, just as the faculty of sight is so determinable; and as such, it would not be an impeding cause. But because color is visible only, it is not determinable by all colors; and as such, it is an impeding cause (112).

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(109) - See page

(110) - Cajetan, In Ism, q. 56, a. 2, par. 6.

(111) - See page

(112) - Cajetan, *ibid.*

A knowing and knowable nature is an aid to knowledge, because knowledge takes place by assimilation. The greater the affinity of natures, the greater the assimilation of one by the other (113).

Cajetan is now certain that he has finally uncovered the true meaning of St. Thomas' words. It is spiritual substances that are both intellectiva and intelligible in act. It is in spiritual substances that affinity of nature is no obstacle to knowledge. Therefore, it is the affinity of spiritual natures (as opposed to the affinity of corporeal natures) that St. Thomas has in mind when he gives affinity as the reason why one angel can know another (114).

Quare necne lapsus est naturam necne unam

We have been considering the scope and application of Aristotle's intus apprensus prohibebit et obstruet, which, we have said, is an affirmation of the spirituality and incorporeality of the intellect. We have shown that because it is in potency to know all corporeal natures, the intellect cannot itself be corporeal precisely because intus apprensus prohibebit et obstruet.

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(113) - Cajetan, In Ism, q. 88, a. 2, par. 6.

(114) - Ibid.

If the nature of the intellect is such that the presence within it of a determinate nature is an obstacle to its receiving another nature, then the intellect, Aristotle concludes, possesses no special determination (*quare neque ipsius esse naturam neque unam*). But if this be true, if the intellect has no determination, then the inference seems to be that it is nothing at all. This inference seems to find support in the fact that the intellect is in potency to know universal being. But since it cannot contain within itself the nature of any of the things it can know, then it follows that it has no being whatsoever.

St. Thomas removes this difficulty when he tells us that in the case of those faculties which have a universal object, it is not always true to say that they have to be totally void of the form of their object (115). He cites the intellect, the sense of touch, and the appetite as cases in point. The intellect, he points out, having quiddities for its object, is itself a quiddity. But still, it must be void of the forms which it receives (16).

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(115) - *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1, ad 8 -- "In apprehensivis potentiis non semper hoc est verum quod potentia denudetur totaliter a specie sui obiecti. Hoc enim fallit in illis potentiis quae habent obiectum universale".

(116) - *Ibid.* -- "Sicut intellectus cuius obiectum est quidditas, cum tamen habeat quidditatem; oportet tamen quod sit denudatus a formis illis quae recipit".

nisi hanc quod possibilis sit.

We cannot, therefore, infer that the intellect has no determination in the entitative order. It has a quiddity, as St. Thomas says. It is not, however, a sensible quiddity, and as Aristotle teaches, it is that part of the soul by which the soul knows and judges. As to its nature, it has no other nature than to be in potency with respect to all things. And it is precisely for this reason that it is called the possible intellect. We say that it has no nature proper to it, to the extent that the intellect is in potency. For to the extent that it is an accident, i.e. a quality which determines the substance which is its subject, it is also in act (117). It is quite possible for something to be pure potency in the order of immaterial things, and yet be in act in the order of material things. Pure potency in the intelligible order does not mean pure potency simpliciter in the entitative order. (118)

(117) - In Iem, q. 87, a. 1, par. 6 -- "... quia substantia animae actus est, ut in II De Anima dicitur: et intellectus quoque, si potentia est, in ipse substantia est ut subiecto".

(118) - Ibid. par. 10 -- "... potest quod stat aliquid esse puram potentiam in genere immaterialium et tamen actum in genere sensibilium. Unde scotus deceptus est, ac si pura potentia in genere intelligibili esset pura potentia simpliciter in genere entium.

The human intellect is in pure potency in the intelligible order (119). And yet, it is a part of a soul which is the act of a corporeal substance (120).

Vocatus itaque animae intellectus, nihil est actu eorum quae sunt ante intelligere.

The cognositive nature in general requires that the knower be the thing known. The intellective nature in particular requires that the intellect not be limited to this or that genus of being, but that it have universal being as its object. Hence, if the intellect can know all things, it must be all things either in act or in potency or in some way both in potency and in act (121). Only the Divine Intellect is pure act with respect to universal being, for all things pre-exist in God as their first cause. Every created intellect, consequently, is necessarily in potency with respect to that which is intelligible. In the case of the angelic intellect, this potency is one that is ever perfected by act, i.e. it is never without its act. In the case of the human intellect, it is not always

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(119) - In Iam, q. 87, a. 1, par. 7 -- "Intellectus noster est pura potentia in genere intelligibili".

(120) - Ibid. par. 10 -- "anima enim est actus corporis sensibilis, est autem potentia pura intelligibilis".

(121) - In Iam, q. 79, a. 2, par. 23.

in act but passes to act from potency (122). In the beginning, the intellect is as a blank tablet (tabula rasa) on which nothing has yet been written (123). This is the reason why Aristotle says that before thinking, the intellect is not in act any of the things that exist. This, as St. Thomas, mentions is contrary to what the Ancients held. For they maintained that in order to know all things, the intellect must be composed of all things (124). But if this were so, he points out, the intellect would always be in act and never in potency, just as the sense faculties, if they were composed of sensible objects, would be capable of sensation even when the sensible objects were not exteriorly present (125).

dicō autem intellectum, quo opinatur et intelligit anima.

That there might be no misunderstanding as to what he means when he says that the intellect, before thinking, is in potency with respect to the things that it can know, Aristotle emphasizes the fact that he is here speaking of the intellect

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(122) - Is, q. 79, a. 2, corp.

(123) - III De Anima, c. 4, 430a1.

(124) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 682.

(125) - Ibid.

by which the soul knows and judges. By these words, he definitely excludes the Divine Intellect, which is pure act (126).

4. - The Intellect is Inorganic.

Text :

Unde neque misceri, est rationabile, insum corpori. Qualis enim aliquis, utique et esset, aut calefactus aut frigidus, et erit organum aliquod, sicut sensitivo; nunc autem nullum est (127).

Et bene iam dicentes sunt, animam esse locum specierum, nisi quod non tota, sed intellectiva; neque actu, sed potentia, species (128).

The fact that the intellect is a knowing faculty which is in essential potency to receive forms of intelligible things implies, as we have seen, that the intellect be an incorporeal faculty. To be an incorporeal faculty contains, in its turn, other implications which affect the very nature of the intellect. It is these implications which Aristotle now uncovers.

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(126) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 683.

(127) - III De Anima, c. 4, 429a25-27.

(128) - Ibid., 429a28-29.

Unde necesse miscere, est rationabile, ipsam corpori.

If the intellect is to know all corporeal natures, it cannot contain within itself the determinate nature of anything corporeal. In brief, the intellect is incorporeal in its essence. This is what Aristotle has just concluded proving. Why, then, the repetitious statement here to the effect that "the intellect (an incorporeal faculty) must be unmingled with a corporeal thing" ?

The repetition is only apparent. The statement would indeed be repetitious, if he were referring to the essence of the intellect. But from his ensuing remarks, we know that it is the operation and not the essence of the intellect that Aristotle has in mind here. Whereas he has just concluded proving that the intellect is not corporeal as to essence, he is now going to show that neither is it corporeal as to operation, that is, that the intellect does not exercise its operation through the medium of a corporeal organ. The latter, he observes, is a logical consequence (est rationabile) of the former.

qualis enim aliquid, utique et esset.

St. Thomas in noting that no corporeal organ can receive the determination of anything corporeal, adds that every

corporeal organ has a corporeal nature of some kind (129). Thus, if the intellect were an organic faculty, it would necessarily "be mixed" with something corporeal. This "something corporeal" would be the sensible qualities, which are determinations of the organ through which the intellectual faculty would exercise its operation. The intellect being seated in the organ would likewise be affected by these same sensible qualities (130).

Aut calefactus aut frigidus

A faculty of the soul which is the act of an organ must be proportioned to that organ, just as any act is proportioned to the potency which receives it (131). For whatever is received, is received according to the mode of the receiver. And the faculty is received by the organ, since it is a property

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(129) - Quest. Disp., De Anima, qu. 1, art. 14, corp. --  
"/Non enim posset inveniri aliquod organum corporale quod esset receptivum omnium naturarum sensibilium; praesertim quia recipiens debet esse denudatum a natura recepti, sicut pupilla caret colore. Omne autem organum corporale habet naturam aliquam sensibilem".

(130) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 634.

(131) - Ibid. -- "Manifestum est enim quod potentia animae, quo est actu alicuius organi, conformatur illi organo, sicut actus susceptibilis".

or a potency of the organ. The sensible qualities which determine a corporeal organ are qualities like hot and cold. The intellective faculty, therefore, if it were an organic faculty, would be in some way "mixed" with hot or cold. These determinations, then, could not be perceived by such a faculty.

St. Thomas goes on to enlarge a bit on this point of Aristotle's doctrine. Speaking of the operation of a faculty, he remarks that it makes little difference whether it be the faculty itself which has this determinate sensible quality, or whether it be the organ. The fact is that it is the act not of the faculty alone but of the faculty and the organ taken together as a composite (132). It is in this way, he points out, that the eye -- the organ of sight -- would be incapable of sight if the faculty of sight were determinately colored.

et erit organum aliquod, sicut sensitive

Aristotle here draws the conclusion which we have anticipated above. If the intellect is an incorporeal faculty, it cannot receive corporeal determinations. As a necessary consequence, neither can it be an organic faculty, as is the case with the sensitive part of the soul.

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(132) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 685.

nunc autem nullum est.

In other words, every sense faculty is an organic faculty. But the intellect is inorganic.

Et bene iam dicentes sunt, animam esse locum specierum

In view of the fact that the intellect is not an organic faculty, Aristotle finds that he can approve of the opinion maintaining that the soul is "the place for species". St. Thomas, borrowing Avicenna's expression, refers to it as "the repository for species" (133). He explains that this is a figure of speech signifying that the species are received into the soul as into their proper subject (134).

nisi quod non tota, sed intellectiva

This would not be true if every faculty of the soul were organic. In that case, the species would be received not into the soul, but into the soul and the organ conjointly. For example, it is not the faculty of sight alone which receives the visible species. The species is received by the eye as well.

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(133) - Summa Contra Gentiles II, c. 74 -- "... quod intellectus possibilis est locus specierum, quod nihil aliud est dicere quam ipsum esse thesaurum intelligibilium specierum, ut verbis Avicennae utamur".

(134) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 626 -- "... quod anima est locus specierum: quod per similitudinem dicitur, eo quod est specierum receptiva."

Hence, we do not say that the entire soul is "the place for species", but that part of the soul which is incorporeal, that is, the intellective soul (135).

Deus actu, sed potentia, species

Nor do we say that the intellective soul is the repository for species as if it contained these species in act. Rather, it is in potency to receive them (136). This, then, is another text indicating that the intellect is in essential potency with respect to intelligible species. It is likewise another indication of that essential difference existing between the intellect and the other faculties of the soul. Thus, it cannot be said that Aristotle is the author of the theory of innate ideas, nor of the theory of an intellect which is impersonal to man (137).

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(135) - Ibid.

(136) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 636.

(137) - Cantin, L'Intelligence selon Aristote, Laval Théologique et Philosophique, 1948, Vol. IV, n. 2, p. 258.

5. - The Impossibility of the Intellect.

Text :

Quod autem non similis sit impossibilitas sensitivi et intellectivi, manifestum est ex organis 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 aliquod valde intelligibile, non minus intelligit infima, sed et magis. Sensitivum enim non sine corpore est. Intellectus autem separatus (138).

In our consideration of the similarity that exists between sensation and intellection, we saw that both are alike in this that the faculties from which they emanate are passive potencies, not in the sense of real passivity, which implies a correlative change of the subject, but in the sense of receptivity, which implies perfection of the subject. Since there is no real passivity in either case, it is true to say that both the sense faculties and the intellect are impassible.

Quod autem non similis sit impossibilitas sensitivi et intellectivi.

Aristotle finds that through the medium of their impassibility, he is now in position to show another point of dis-

similarity between the senses and the intellect. In other words, through one and the same medium, he can manifest both the similarity and dissimilarity of the same faculties. We immediately suspect, therefore, that it is under different aspects that the senses and the intellect are impossible. Otherwise, we would be confronted with a contradiction.

manifestum est ex organis et sensu.

That they are impossible under different aspects will be evident, if we but consider two facts. First, that the senses are organic faculties; whereas the intellect is inorganic. And secondly, that excessive stimulation by their respective objects inversely affect the sense faculties and the intellect as regards their capacity to exercise their operation.

St. Thomas, in commenting on this particular passage, observes that although there is no real passio in sensation, nevertheless, the sense faculties are subject of a real passio per accidens (139). But a real passio implies a corruptive change of the subject, and there is no such change, either per se or per accidens, apparent in sensation. St. Thomas explains

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(139) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 687 -- "Sensus enim licet non patiatur a sensibili, passione proprie accepta, patitur tamen per accidens".

that this per accidens passio consists in a rupture of the proportion of the sense organ, which rupture is produced by the action of objects of excessive sensibility on the sense faculty (140). On various occasions, both Aristotle and St. Thomas speak of the corruptive effect which highly sensible objects have on the "proportion" of the sense faculties (141). Whether the action referred to is an action of the natural or of the intentional order is not clear. But John of St. Thomas submits convincing arguments indicating that St. Thomas has reference to an action of the intentional order, that is, the action by which the intentional species are transmitted to the faculty, as opposed to a natural action, which implies a physical alteration (142).

In the second book of his *De Anima*, Aristotle explains this proportion, and how it is destroyed, or corrupted. There, he recalls that the sense faculties receive their species immaterially. Since in this respect they do not differ from the

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(140) - In *III De Anima*, lect. 7, n. 687 -- "... patitur tamen per accidens, inquantum organi proportio corrumpitur ab excellenti sensibili".

(141) - *II De Anima*, c. 12, 424a28;  
*III De Anima*, c. 2, 426a30;  
In *II De Anima*, lect. 24, n. 555;  
In *III De Anima*, lect. 2, n. 597.

(142) - *Curs. Phil.*, T. 3, pp. 183-186.

intellect, and to preclude the possible misconstruing that the sense faculties are inorganic, he attributes organs to them (143).

Here, St. Thomas explains that the sense organ together with the potency are one in subject but other in esse, since the definition (ratio) of the potency and the definition of body are not the same (144). The organ is here identified, in a way, with the body which the soul informs. The soul, we know, is the act of a physical body having life in potency. We also know that every organic body, a body which has a diversity of organs, is a physical body having life in potency (145). Consequently, the sense potencies -- which are faculties of the soul which informs an organic body -- are, as it were, the form of their organs (146).

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(143) - II De Anima, c. 12, 424a17-23.

(144) - In II De Anima, lect. 24, n. 536 -- "Organum enim sensus, cum potentia ipsa, utpote oculus, est idem subiecto, sed esse aliud est, quia ratione differt potentia a corpore".

(145) - In II De Anima, lect. 1, n. 330 -- "... anima est actus corporis physici habentis vitam in potentia, etiam dicit, quod tale est esse corpus organicum. Et dicitur corpus organicum quod habet diversitatem organorum.

(146) - Ibid., lect. 24, n. 535 -- "Potentia enim est quasi forma organi".

The sense potencies are, then, received into their organs -- which Aristotle designates as magnitudo -- as form is received into matter. The definition (ratio) of magnitude is not the same as the definition of sense potency, just as the definition of form is not identical with that of matter. As a matter of fact, the sense potency consists in this that it is a certain proportion, it is a form and a power of that magnitude (147), i.e. of the organ.

In view of this, we can now see why it is that a highly sensible object will corrupt the sense organs. In order to have sensation, there must necessarily be a certain proportion in the sense organs. If the action of a sensible object is in excess of the capacity of the organ to sustain it, this proportion will be broken, and the sense potency is thus corrupted (148)

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(147) - In II De Anima, lect. 2, n. 555 -- "Et ideo subdit quod 'magnitudo' idest organum corporeum est 'quod sensum patitur' idest quod est susceptivum sensus, sicut materia forme. Non tamen est eadem ratio magnitudinis et sensitivi sive sensus, sed sensus est quedam ratio, idest proportio et forma et potentia illius, scilicet magnitudinis".

(148) - Ibid., n. 556 -- "... quod manifestum est ex praedictis, propter quid excellentia sensibilium corrumpat organa sensuum. Operet enim in organa sentiendi, ad hoc quod sentiantur, esse 'quendam rationem' idest proportionem. Si ergo motus sensibilis fuerit fortior quam organum natum sit pati, solvitur proportio, et corrumpitur sensus, qui consistit in quadam proportionem organi".

St. Thomas employs the example of a musical instrument to illustrate his meaning.. A musical instrument (a piano, for example) consists in a certain proportion (of sounds). If the chords of the instrument (the keys, in the case of the piano) are struck too forcefully, the tone quality is distorted (149).

Sensus enim non potest sentire ex valde sensibilibus, ut sonus ex magnis sonis neque fortibus odoribus, et coloribus, neque videre, neque odorare.

Although the actual corruption of this proportion is not something we can see, it is, nonetheless, evident in its effects. For the action of an excessively sensible object has for its effect to incapacitate the exercise of the sense faculty (150). We know from personal experience that brilliant colors, loud noises, powerful odors, all have a deteriorating, if but temporary, effect on our capacity to see, to hear, or to smell. Even our manner of speaking takes cognizance of this phenomenon. For we speak of blinding lights, deafening sounds, desensitizing odors, etc.

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(149) - In II De Anima, lect. 24, n. 556 -- "Et est simile, sicut cum aliquis fortiter percutit chordas solvitur symphonia et tonus instrumenti, qui in quadam proportionem consistit.

(150) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 668.

sed intellectus cum intelligat aliquod valde intelligibile, non minus intelligit infima, sed et magis.

In the case of the intellect, we notice that the reverse is true. If the sense faculties are subject of a real passio per accidens, the intellect enjoys absolute impassibility. It is subject of no real passio whatsoever, either per se or per accidens. As a result, greater intelligibility rather than impeding the operation of the intellect is a stimulation to even greater activity. Unlike the sense faculties with respect to sensible objects, the intellect can turn from objects of high intelligibility to objects of lower intelligibility without suffering any diminution in its operative capacity. In fact, this capacity is ameliorated rather than deteriorated (151).

Sensitivum enim non sine corpore est.

The sense faculties, as St. Thomas notes, would also enjoy absolute impassibility, if they were not co-subjected with a corporeal organ (152) through the medium of which they undergo a kind of corruption. But the sense faculties are organic faculties. As such, they are subject to the corruptive influence of the action of hypersensible objects.

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(151) - In III de anima, lect. 7, n. 688.

(152) - Ibid.

Intellectus autem separabilis.

The intellect, however, is an inorganic faculty. Its impassibility is absolute, since it has no corporeal organ upon which the action of a knowable object may exercise its corruptive influence. Nevertheless, the intellect can be impeded in its operation.

In human knowledge, it is natural for man to proceed to intelligible things through the medium of the senses (183). Unlike the angelic intellect, the human mind is not infused with species from the moment of its creation, but must abstract them from material things as these are represented in the imagination and the senses. Thus, the intellectual knowledge of man presupposes prior sense knowledge. In fact, without the senses, human intellectual knowledge would be impossible.

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(183) - In I Sent., dist. 17, q. 1, a. 4, sol. -- "Ea quae per esse sunt in materia, quantum in se est, sunt maxime acta; sed quod nos sunt difficillima ad cognoscendum; propter quod dicit Phil. (II Meta.) quod intellectus noster se habet ad manifestissimas naturas, sicut oculus vespertilionis ad lucem solis. Cuius ratio est quia cum intellectus noster potentialis sit in potentia ad omnia intelligibilia, et ante intelligere non sit in actu aliquod eorum; ad hoc quod intelligat actu, oportet quod reducat in actum per species acceptas a sensibus illustratas lumine intellectus agentis; quia sicut Phil. (III De Anima) dicit, sicut se habent colores ad visum, ita se habent phantasmata ad intellectum potentialem. Unde cum naturale sit nobis procedere ex sensibus ad intelligibilia, ex effectibus in causas, ex posterioribus in priora, secundum statum viae, etc."

Since nothing enters the intellect except it first pass through the senses, any defect in or injury to the sense organs will necessarily be reflected in the operation of the intellect (154). In the Summa, St. Thomas notes that a defective corporeal organ could not impede the operation of the intellect -- an inorganic faculty -- if the operation of the intellect were not dependent on the operation of an organic faculty. And he adds that the senses and the imagination are such faculties (155). Let us note well here that it is not the intellect but the sense faculties that are directly affected by organic defects. The effect on the intellect is indirect. The intellect cannot be affected by organic defects, because it has no organs. Aristotle expresses this reason in the words intellectus autem separatus.

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- (154) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 388 -- "Debilitatur tamen intellectus ex laesione alicuius organi corporalis indirecte, inquantum ad eius operationem requiritur operatio sensus".
- (155) - Ia, q. 84, a. 7, corp. -- "Primo quidem quia, cum intellectus sit via quaedam non utens corporali organo, nullo modo impediretur in sub actu per laesionem alicuius corporalis organi, si non requireretur ad eius actum actus alicuius potentiae utentis organo corporali. Utuntur autem organo corporali sensus et imaginatio et aliae vires pertinentes ad partem sensitivam".

6 - The intellect is not a Separated Substance.

Averroes and his followers have in some peculiar way distorted Aristotle's doctrine so as to attribute to him the basis for their theory that the intellect is a substance existing separately from the body, after the manner of the separated substances.

St. Thomas prepared a special treatise -- the *De Unitate Intellectus* -- directed particularly against Siger de Brabant and designed to refute this teaching of Averroism. In the preface to this work, St. Thomas declares that the theory upholds the false doctrine that the possible intellect is not united to the body as its form, but is a substance existing separately from the body; and that there is but one intellect for all men. He notes that this doctrine is contrary to Faith, for it leads to the inevitable conclusion that after death nothing remains of human souls except this single intellectual substance. This conflicts with Christian Doctrine which holds as an article of faith that there are varying degrees of punishment and reward in the hereafter (156).

Because the doctrine of Averroism had a direct bearing

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(156) - *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas* (ed. Keeler), p. 2.

on fundamental truths of Catholic faith and philosophy, it had incurred the official condemnation of the Church on three occasions. It is no surprise, then, that scholastic philosophers directed their attacks against it. The chief Averroists against whom St. Thomas wrote were Bernier of Nivelles, Boethius of Dacia, and Siger de Brabant (157).

Siger de Brabant was the head of Latin Averroism at the University of Paris from about 1260 to 1277. For ten years he led the forces of a violent and dangerous revolt. Refuted by St. Thomas and condemned by Stephen Tempier, Bishop of Paris, he continued his opposition to the masters and to the Church. Dante speaks of him in the *Paradiso*, where he depicts St. Thomas as pointing out Siger de Fiore, renowned in dialectics (158).

In the *Commentary on the De Anima*, and again in the *Quaestiones Disputatae De Anima*, St. Thomas deals with the errors of Averroism with repeated and continued insistence. In the *De Unitate Intellectus*, he is severe and unrelenting (159). He remarks that the false doctrine may be refuted on the basis of its departure from the truth as known by faith, but he will

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(157) - Brennan, *The Trinity and the Unity of the Intellect*, 4d. by Herder Book Co. (1946) p. 203.

(158) - Ibid. p. 206.

(159) - Ibid. p. 207.

deal with it on a philosophical basis (160).

Proceeding by rational arguments from Aristotle's doctrine of the soul, and a textual exposition of Aristotle's true doctrine, St. Thomas confronts Siger de Brabant with evidence of his intrinsic fallacies, and points out the difficulties that would be created by the acceptance of his false doctrines. Not only is the theory untenable, but St. Thomas proves by passages first from the Greek, then from the Arabian philosophers themselves that neither Aristotle nor the Peripatetic school had held it. Thus he disproved the theory from the very sources upon which the Averroists had drawn for support of it.

With the infidel Averroes, St. Thomas can deal with patient and charitable restraint. It is evident, he writes, that Averroes incorrectly presented the opinions of Themistius and of Theophrastus concerning both the possible and the active intellect. Therefore, we have rightly called him the perverter of Peripatetic philosophy. Hence, it is amazing that certain men, after seeing only the commentary of Averroes, presume to declare, on his authority, that all the philosophers -- Greek and Arabians, excepting only the Latins -- held this opinion as certain (161).

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(160) - De Unitate Intellectus, p. 2.

(161) - Ibid., p. 78.

But as regard Siger de Brabant, St. Thomas is burned up with righteous zeal for the truth. Siger is a Christian, he is, therefore, severely denounced for assuming that in abandoning the truth of faith, he could by reason arrive at another truth. The closing paragraph of the *De Unitate Intellectus* is dedicated to the denunciation of this attitude. The gravity and severity of its tone, warrants its reproduction here in full.

"However, it is a matter of much greater surprise, or rather even of indignation, that one who professes to be a Christian should dare to speak so irreverently in regard to Christian faith. This he does when he says that the Latins do not accept this doctrine among their principles (namely, that there is but one intellect) because perhaps the law of their faith is in contradiction to it.

"Now, in this there are two evils : first, because he doubts whether this teaching is against faith; secondly, because he implies that he himself is exempt from this law, and because he later says : 'This is the reason why Catholics seem to hold this opinion'. Here he calls an article of faith only an "opinion". Nor is it less presumptuous that later he dares to assert that God could not create many intellects because this implies a contradiction.

"However, what he says subsequently is even more reprehensible : "By reason I conclude of necessity that the intellect is numerically one; nevertheless, I firmly hold to the

opposite by faith". Thus, he judges that faith is concerned with doctrines of which one can conclude the contrary of necessity. But since what I conclude of necessity can be only what is necessarily true -- the opposite of which is false and impossible - it follows that faith must be demanded in what is false and impossible : a thing that not even God could do. But the ears of men who have faith cannot endure such words.

"In his great temerity, moreover, he has not hesitated to dispute even questions that not only do not pertain to philosophy, but that are matters of pure faith : for example that the soul suffers from the fire of hell, and that the judgment of the doctors on this point should be discarded. With equal reason one might enter into philosophical dispute about the Trinity or the Incarnation and other similar questions, concerning which none but the idle prattler would speak.

"These, then, are the arguments which we have gathered to destroy the aforementioned error, not through the testimony of faith, but through the reasoning and words of philosophers. If any pseudo-scientist has anything to say in contradiction to what we have set forth, let him speak not on street corners, nor before children who are incapable of passing judgment on difficult matters; but let him, if he dare, submit in writing his re-

ply to what we have set down herein He will find not only me, who am the least, but many others who know and promote the truth, prepared to resist his error and to dissipate his ignorance." (162).

The text intellectus autem separatus with which Aristotle closes his consideration of the nature of the possible intellect has been seized upon by the Averroists as just another affirmation that the intellect exists separately from the body. St. Thomas is at a loss to understand how anyone could possibly arrive at such a conclusion, in view of the abundant evidence to the contrary. Among other evidence that this is not Aristotle's position, he refers to the fact that at the very beginning of his treatise on the intellective soul, Aristotle expressly states that he is undertaking the study of a part of the soul. Moreover, it is that part of the soul by which the soul knows and judges. Thus, the intellective operation for Aristotle is an operation not of a separated substance, but of the soul which is the form of the body (163).

By the above text Aristotle intended to convey no more than the simple fact that the intellect, unlike the sense facul-

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(162) - De Unitate Intellectus, p. 78-81.

(163) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, nos. 696, 698.

ties, is separated from corporeal organs, i.e. that it is inorganic. Emanating from the human soul -- a form whose perfection is such that it is not completely immersed in matter as are other forms -- it is capable of immaterial operations. In order to exercise these operations, it has an immaterial and inorganic faculty. It is in this sense that Aristotle speaks of an intellectus separatus (164).

Not only is the theory of a separated intellect contrary to the expressed teaching of Aristotle and of other philosophers, both Greek and Arab, but it is impossible that it be true. For if the intellect is that part of the soul by which the soul knows and judges, then obviously it is the formal principle by which man thinks. But for the formal principle of operation to exist separately from that which acts is an impossibility. The active principle may exist separately, but never the formal. That which acts formally constitutes but one being in act with that through which it acts. And in order that two things constitute one being in act, it is impossible that they exist separately. Consequently, if the intellect existed separately, its operation could not be attributed to this or that particular man. Thinking would not be an operation of man. As a result, we could

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(164) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 699.

not rightly speak of "our thoughts", "our thinking", etc. (165).

The proponents of the separated intellect theory recognizing this as a real problem found it necessary to explain how the operation of the intellect is the fact of man. The solution of Averroes was that the principle of intellectual operation is not the soul or faculty of the soul, except equivocally. This operation, which belongs to the separated substance, is my operation or yours because the possible intellect is united to me or to you through the phantasms which are in us. The intelligible species, which becomes one with the possible intellect since it is its form and its act, has two subjects: the phantasm and the possible intellect. Thus, the possible intellect is united with us through its form, the phantasms acting as intermediaries. In this way, the operation of the possible intellect is said to be "our" operation (166).

St. Thomas classifies the error in Averroes' reasoning as fallacia accidentis. The intelligible species is not one with the possible intellect until it has actualized the intellect. While in the phantasm, the species is intelligible in potency. To actualize the intellect, it must first become intelligible in

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(165) - Quaest. Disp. De Anima, q. 1, art. 2;  
In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 690;  
De Unitate Intellectus, p. 39.

(166) - De Unitate Intellectus, p. 42.

act. This is effected by the action of the agent intellect abstracting the species from the phantasm. Thus, while the species is in the phantasm, it is not yet in the possible intellect; when in the intellect, it is no longer in the phantasm. The solution of Averroes, then, fails to establish a union between the intellect and the man who exercises intellectual operations (167).

Even granting that one and the same numerical species would be the form of the possible intellect and at the same time be in the phantasms, this still would not suffice to explain how a particular man would think (168). A knowing nature is constituted such not because it possesses a knowable species, but because it has a knowing faculty. Consequently, the mere presence of the intelligible species in the phantasm would not make man intelligent, for the knowing faculty, which is the possible intellect, would exist separately from him (169).

Through the intelligible species there is something to be known. Through the possible intellect man knows that thing. The phantasms have the same relation to the possible

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(167) - *Quest. Disp. De Anima*, qu. 1, a. 2.

(168) - *De Unitate Intellectus*, p. 42.

(169) - *Quest. Disp. De Anima*, q. 1, a. 2.

intellect as color has to the faculty of sight. The proposed union of the possible intellect with a man having in his imagination phantasms whose intelligible species reside in the possible intellect would be comparable to the union of a colored wall with the eye in which the species of the color would reside. Just as the wall does not see - but its color is seen - so too, man would not know, but the phantasms that are his would be known by the intellect (170).

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(170) - In III De Anima, lect. 7, n. 694;  
De Unitate Intellectus, p. 42.

7. - Recapitulation.

The intellect is that part of the soul by which the soul knows and judges. Knowledge and judgment are found in sensation as well as in intellection. Intellectual knowledge, however, is not the same as sense knowledge, although some philosophers, before and after Aristotle, have confused the two. Sensation is common to all animals; intellection is the prerogative of but a few. If they were the same, all animals would be capable of sensation and of intellection. Experience teaches us that such is not the case.

The operation of intellection is in itself more known than sensation. Nevertheless, it is through knowledge of sensation that we come to know intellection. They have a common ground of similarity in so far as they are as two species of one and the same thing - knowledge. Both imply receptivity on the part of the knowing subject. In either case, there is a passage from potency to act effected by the action of the knowable object on the knowing faculty. This faculty, in both sensation and intellection, is passive with respect to its object. Intellection and sensation are a quoddam pati.

The potentiality of the intellect extends to all things

Its adequate object is being in all its universality. Since the presence within it of the determinate nature of one thing is an obstacle to its receiving other determinations, the intellect cannot possess the determination of anything whatsoever. It is pure potentiality in the intelligible order just as is prime matter in the material order. Consequently, the intellect is an incorporeal, an immaterial faculty. If it were corporeal, it would have a corporeal determination and thus could not know other corporeal natures. It then would not be in potency with respect to all things.

Because the intellect is incorporeal, it must necessarily be an inorganic faculty. Organic faculties are determined by the nature of the organ through which they exercise their operation. Such a determination in the intellect would render it corporeal. Intellectual operation takes place without the medium of corporeal organs.

The intellect and the sense faculties are impassible. But because the senses are organic, the intellect inorganic, this impassibility is not of the same perfection. The impassibility of the intellect is absolute; that of the senses is not. The action of hypersensible objects exceeds the capacity of the sensorial organ to sustain it. This destroys the propor-

tion existing in the organ and thus impedes the operation of the faculty. A highly intelligible object, on the other hand, promotes rather than impedes intellectual operation. This is due to the fact that the intellect has no organ whose proportion can be corrupted. The intellect is separated from all organs. It is inorganic.

The intellect, therefore, has no other nature than that of being in pure potency in the intelligible order. In the beginning, it is as a blank tablet on which nothing has as yet been written.

The intellect is separated from corporeal organs. It is not, however, a substance existing separately from the soul, which is the form of the body. The Averroist theory of a separated intellect is contrary to faith and to reason. It is contrary to the teaching of Aristotle and of other philosophers, Greek and Arab. As to those who accept the authority of Averroes, we let St. Thomas speak :

"Therefore, I wonder from which of the Peripatetics any may proudly claim to have derived their error; unless, perhaps, it be because those who hold it prefer to err in company with Averroes rather than to be right in their thinking in

company with other Peripatetics. Averroes was not so much a Peripatetic as a corrupter of Peripatetic philosophy (171).

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(171) - De Unitate Intellectus, p. 33.

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