

Now the obvious translation of the Latin word, intelligere, is by the English word, understand. The English word has various meanings and connotations, but there is a very plain and ordinary meaning fixed by the contrast between intelligence and stupidity; a man is intelligent inasmuch as he understands easily and frequently; a man is stupid inasmuch as he understands only rarely and then with difficulty. Let anyone set to work on Aquinas' diligens et subtilis inquisitio, first, forming suitable images that give rise to acts ~~of~~ of understanding, for instance, solving problems in geometry, secondly, reflecting on his acts of understanding ~~and~~ and noting how they are distinct from other elements present in the field of consciousness, thirdly, studying the nature of these acts, what they enable him to do, what they add to knowledge, whence they spring. If he carries through this procedure with the required assiduity and subtlety, he will find reading Aquinas/like standing with Cortez on a peak in Darien; for "anima humana intelligit seipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam." I 88 2 3m. If, ~~on the other hand, he has not followed out successfully Aquinas' instructions on how to understand understanding, his claim to interpret Aquinas will be the claim of the blind to lead.~~

on soul and
intellect/

Understand understanding, and it will be obvious what act Aquinas wrote about meant by intelligere. We cannot understand without understanding something; we cannot understand something without first knowing what is to be understood; since we cannot understand without a prior knowledge, that prior knowledge cannot be understanding ~~but~~ but must be sense; finally, since the priority in question is not merely of time but also of nature, sense is necessary not only for the first occurrence but also for every repetition of the act of understanding. Sense gives us the external accidents of ~~the~~ material things; understanding reaches in to the substance, the quiddity essence, the quod quid est, the why the sensible data, which are manifold and moving, none the less are the data of one, permanent thing. Since our understanding supposes sense, it is only by reflecting on ~~our~~ acts, ~~of~~ understanding sensible things, that we can understand our acts of understanding and through them the essence of the soul whence they proceed. Again, since understanding supposes sense, there can be no question of our understanding directly the separate substances. Finally, if we are to understand when our souls are separated from our bodies and so have no senses, then our understanding will have to differ in mode from the understanding we have in this life; now ~~we~~ by understanding we know intelligible substance in sensible accidents; then by understanding we shall know, as separate substances now know, the intelligibilia simpliciter I 89 1 cf 84 7; now we distinguish between what we understand and what we know by understanding, for what we understand is the res materialis and what we know by understanding is its quidditas; ~~but then we shall know ourselves by our own essences understand ourselves not, by reflecting on our understanding of things but directly by our own essences~~ I 89 2; and since that essence then is separated from matter, it is intelligible in act; since it is ~~of itself~~ intelligible in act, it is at once res and quidditas.

by which

I 87.1-3

of itself/

Heracleitus and Plato both stumble against the fact that natural science is possible [The Thomist appeal to the possibility of natural science (I 84 1 Sed contra) differs from the Kantian inasmuch as it seeks its solution through Aristotelian metaphysics while the Kantian endeavors to dispense with all metaphysics and so necessarily ends without a knowledg knowable reality for natural science to know]. ~~Apart-from-the-fact-that-Heracleitus~~ Heraclietus, ~~with~~ even apart from the error of thinking all reality to be corporal and from the failure to distinguish between intellect and sense, went astray by conceiving bodies to be in an absolute flux and so unassimilable by the mind with its fixed certitudes; as one knows; through Aristotelian analysis, all movement presupposes something fixed; thus, accidental change does not modify substance; substantial change leaves prime matter intact; and between variable terms there are invariant relations [I 84 1 c et 3m]. A similar error lurks in Plato, for though he grants us intellectual knowledge, still it is not knowledge of moving bodies, as is natural science, but of separate ideas or species which subsist apart from bodies and movement; thus, really, Plato fails to meet the issue. If, however, one cannot go along with him, reflection on his position is instructive. He was quite right in observing that that the form of what we understand is in the understanding universally, immaterially, immutably; for the modal attributes of an activity follow from the modal attributes of the form whence the action proceeds; and the actions of our understanding involve universality and some type of necessity. But he was wrong in urging that the same modal attributes also must pertain to the form of the thing that is known. For modal attributes vary, not through variations in the form, but through variations in the subject in which the form is received. Hence the species that is material and mutable when received in a material subject will be immaterial and immutable when received in an immaterial subject: "receptum est in recipiente scdm modum recipientis."