

knowing its own act, but as knowing the proportion of its act to the thing. Now this proportion cannot be known without knowing the nature of the act; and the nature of the act cannot be known without knowing the nature of the active principle, that is, the intellect itself, to whose nature it belongs to conform to things.

According to Dr. Fay, first, we see the ^{conformity} ~~formity~~ of the act to the thing and, secondly, we deduce that it is the nature of intellect to conform. According to St. Thomas we cannot know the proportion of the act to the thing without knowing the nature of the act.

But while Dr. Fay has to contradict St. Thomas, his own position is quite coherent. When he writes:

. . . we can see that it is the nature of intellect to conform to things because we can see the conformity which it is capable of. Truth is the conforming judgement. It is not the judgement but the conformation which is the priceless epistemological ingredient. The plain sense of the passage is that this priceless ingredient can be seen. The mind can see the thing and it can thus see that its judgement conforms, that its word is good.

it seems clear that he is drawing the proper conclusions from his own premisses. For him, ". . . being is what we see. Knowledge is the seeing of being. The ^{verb} ~~verb~~ 'to see' is used analogously, of course." When knowing is seeing in the literal sense or some analogous sense, then knowing conformity has to be seeing conformity. That is all there is about it. St. Thomas may prattle about sense not knowing its own nature and so not knowing its own truth, while intellect knows its own nature and so knows ~~its own truth. For Dr. Fay that does not pertain to the plain meaning of the passage.~~

An Ambiguity of Realism

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In my little book, Insight, I remarked that there are two quite different realisms, an incoherent realism, half animal and half human, that poses as a halfway house between materialism and idealism and, on the other hand, an intelligent and reasonable realism between which and materialism the halfway house is idealism. Naturally enough, those that know only of one realism may retort that the second realism is not realism at all but a mistaken step towards idealism. Perhaps a certain interest may be attached to the questions (1) whether any ambiguity exists and, if so, (2) what precisely is its nature.

The Existence of the Ambiguity

Expounding what he considers both the common interpretation and the plain sense of De Veritate, q. 1, a. 9, Dr. C. R. Fay has written:

Now in the order of being it is most plainly true that the principle of the act of knowledge, ~~is~~ the intellect, conforms because it is its nature to conform. But in the order of knowledge, we know that the nature of the principle of the act of knowledge is to conform because we see that it does conform.

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It happens that this interpretation ~~is~~ directly contradicts the passage it purports to interpret. Let me ~~xxxxxx~~ italicize the relevant words in the translation of St. Thomas quoted by Dr. Fay.

And truth is known by the intellect in view of the fact that the intellect reflects on its own act, not merely as

pertain to a single context, in which the words, real, reality,
have their meaning fixed