

## 16. KNOWING IN MAN AND BEAST

Now we will explore how it is that the way a man knows differs from the way the brute animal knows. You have seen these distinctions before :

	[ <i>physically</i>	= corporeal substance
	[ (as matter has	
Form	[ has form), or	
can be	[	
had :	[ <i>supra-physically</i>	[ <i>sensibly</i> (via the senses)
	[ (as a knower has	[ or
	[ form), and then	[
	[ either	[ <i>intellectually</i>

There are two ways of having form supra-physically demonstrated by the fact that the brute animal knows singular things, while man, the intellective knower, knows not just singulars but universals. We may say that the brute animal know 'that' or 'this', while a man knows 'what'.

Recall the illustration of you driving in a utility along the country road with your dog in the back compartment and both you and the dog seeing ahead, at some distance, a lump on the road. The dog knows the lump only as some thing among the many he must encounter. He knows *that* it is and, unless it is revealed as something of particular interest—something he is programmed to recognise—such as a live rabbit or another dog, he will pay not the slightest attention to it. But you always want to know *what* it is, that is, *what its nature* is.

What is the chief word every two year old child utters ? **Why**. What is the definition of 'Why' ? Why = *what is the reason for...* From our very earliest years we want to know *what*.

Knowledge is *habere aliquid in se formaliter et non materialiter*, to have something in self formally and not materially. And there are two different ways in which something may be had *formally* by a knower. Remember the proportionality—

natures	powers	acts	ends
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Here is the way it works out with the two different sorts of animal, brute and rational :

<i>sense knower</i>	<i>sense powers</i>	<i>sense acts</i>	<i>sensed ends</i>
<i>intellective knower</i>	<i>intellective powers</i>	<i>intellective acts</i>	<i>intellective ends</i>

What the sense knower takes out of the 'something' it knows is its *material form*. What the intellective knower takes out is its *immaterial form*. Let me explain.

This rock in front of me, this plant (a pansy), each is an instance of a particular form. In the rock, in the plant, it is *this* form and no other. This rock differs from every other similar rock in matter's possession of *this* form. Even though other rocks have a similar form, they do not have *this* particular

form. The same goes for the plant. The pansy in front of me differs from every other pansy in that here matter has *this* form unique to *this plant*. In each case form, which is in itself universal, is had in a *singular* instance.

Now the sense knower knows the singular form only. It does not know it as universal. It knows it as is rendered *material* by matter. In contrast, the intellective knower, man, knows the universal. He knows the form *as it is form*, that is, he knows it in its very *immateriality*. The following schema illustrates the points—

<b>TO</b>	[ sensitively	<b>IS TO</b>	[ material	
	[		[	<b>FORM IMMATERIALLY</b>
<b>KNOW</b>	[ intellectively	<b>HAVE</b>	[ immaterial	

Note that each of the two knowers has form immaterially. They do not have form as matter has form (compositively, physically). They have it non-compositively, metaphysically. They are distinguished from each other by *the way in which* they have form immaterially. It is possible to know the individual material thing in its *singularity*. It is possible to know it in its *universality*. So the brute animal knows the *that-ness* (or *this-ness*) of the form, whereas man knows the *what-ness* of the same form. When Merry the dog encounters a cow he identifies it in its singularity. He, doubtless, recalls other instances from his sensitive memory of the same. His memory of previous interactions with cows will remind him, too, of how he must respect it and treat it but he does not know it as the universal reality, cow.

We distinguish the differing levels of abstraction into *subjective* and *objective*, like this :

			* <i>Subjective immateriality</i>	
TO	sensitively	IS TO	material	
				<b>FORM IMMATERIALLY</b>
KNOW	intellectively	HAVE	immaterial	
			• <i>Objective immateriality</i>	

It is marvelous the way brute animals live in harmony. Consider these three—

cat  
cow  
cattle egret

Each is focussed on the one or more topics it is programmed to recognise. The cat is looking for mice, or perhaps for snakes. The egret seeks the insects disturbed by the cow. The cow is content with grass. Their interests do not conflict and so they live in harmony. St Thomas More's aphorism applies —“God made the animals for their innocence.”



Let us summarise the lessons of the past few months and concerning the genus *animal* in two species.

<i>Animal</i>			
is either			
<i>Brute</i>	or		<i>Rational</i>
& they share			
five <i>external senses</i>			
sight			
hearing			
smell			
taste			
touch – hard/soft			
- hot/cold			
four <i>internal senses</i>			
common sense			
imagination			
estimative sense			
memory			
& <i>sense appetite</i>			
(which has two aspects)			
concupiscible			
irascible			
upon whose acting there derive eleven passions, which operate in this order—			
I	Love	Hatred	[
II	Desire	Horror	[ <i>Concupiscible</i>
III	Hope	Despair	[
IV	Boldness	Fear	[ <i>Irascible</i>
V	Anger		[
VI	Delight	Sadness	[ <i>Concupiscible</i>

But there is one set of powers the rational animal has that the brute (or irrational) animal has not, namely—

*Intellect*  
(& its proper appetite)  
*Will*

The brute animal knows singular things. It does this by grasping the singular form of the thing via its sense powers. The rational animal, man, does much more—*infinitely* much more. For not only does he grasp (via his senses) the *singular* but (via his intellect) he grasps the *universal* form manifested in the singular. He grasps it *as universal*. Merry the dog knows *this cow*, but Julian (the young man)

knows the reality 'cow-ness' manifest in this individual and replicated in millions of others. Merry knows *this* cow ; Julian knows the nature 'cow'. So, while *Merry* does one action only, sensing the individual (using all his senses, but chiefly those of sight and hearing), *Julian* does two ; he senses the individual and he knows the universal which is the essence, or quiddity, or nature, of cow. This is what I mean when I say that the dog knows *that* (or 'this') but the man knows *what*. This the reason why rational animals always want to know *what* something is.

The subtlety of the distinction between the two sorts of animals' *mode* of knowing is reflected in the means the soul of each uses. These means are the *image* and the *concept*.

You can draw (if you have the talent) an image. But you can't draw a concept. How do you manifest it ? Doc Woodbury used to illustrate the point by inviting one of his students to indicate the reality 'triangle' on the blackboard. The neophyte would take the chalk and produce something like this—



And the objection came immediately, "But the triangle you have drawn is *this* triangle. What we want is the concept 'triangle', applicable to each and every single triangle." How do you signify it ? Then one of the Doc's better informed pupils would take the chalk and put up on the board the following—

## TRIANGLE

The only way you can signify the concept is with a written word. Words are signs of concepts. And of course the word (the concept) means that the reality it signifies is definable. Triangle is defined 'a plane figure bounded by three straight lines'. The same goes for something more material like a bridge. Let's define bridge. A bridge is... what ? First, it is a sort of device. So let's start with 'device'. What does it do, or what does it achieve ? It crosses a gap, in the terrain. It enables someone to cross from one side of the gap to the other. So, a reasonable definition of the concept 'bridge' is "a device enabling one to cross a gap in the terrain". Note how this concept applies to all bridges, not just the bridges we may encounter every day. It is a universal.

Where do we store our concepts ? In a dictionary. A dictionary is a collection of perhaps 20,000 concepts. That is why a dictionary is so helpful ; that is why we may keep a dictionary on our shelves for forty years. There is one more thing to consider before we remark the differences between an image and a concept.

Distinguish [ *intellect*  
[ &  
[ *the brain*

Your brain is not your intellect, despite the views of materialists to the contrary. The brain is an organ of the body. Your intellect, in contrast, is an organ of your soul. The brain is material, the intellect immaterial. The relationship between them is of *principal* and *agent*, of superior and inferior. (The immaterial is superior to the material.) The intellect uses the brain as its seat of operations. So when I remarked, back at the start of our lessons, on Catie having the dress she was making in her head, or of John Paul having the table *he* was making in *his* head, I was referring not to their respective brains, but to their intellects (or minds). All our making, all human doing, starts in our intellects.

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE IMAGE AND THE CONCEPT

1. The image is of appearances ; the concept abstracts from appearances.
2. The image is of the singular ; the concept of the universal.
3. An image may be reproduced by a sketch ; the concept cannot be.
4. The image contains the formal and material, the relevant and irrelevant, indifferently ; the concept is confined to what is formal (essential). So, for instance, an image of a dog may include its colour, size, shape etc., but the concept takes no account of these accidents, only of the form that makes a thing be a dog. Just as a car, (a machine for moving us around the countryside) can be of any make, size or colour, and satisfy the definition 'car', whereas an image of a car is always particular in its details ; it is always 'this car'.
5. An image is always of a concrete instance ; whereas the concept may be completely abstract, such as blindness, or justice or mercy.
6. You can vary the images without disturbing a line of thought, whereas varying the concept disrupts thought. Take, for instance, a discussion about what we are having for dinner. We can discuss lamb or beef, pork and peas and potatoes, and remain focussed on the discussion. It will be thrown over, however, if someone introduces the subject of changing the oil in the car!
7. You can vary the image without varying the concept, as when discussing the merits of cattle you can discuss the Jersey, Guernsey or the Angus, or in discussing dogs, you can consider the Fox terrier, the Kelpie or the Boxer.
8. Most importantly, if all we had were images and no concepts it would be impossible for us to talk. For speech is always in concepts –words, which are signs of concepts.

This last explains why Merry the dog and the various kittens we have around us never speak. It's not that they don't have the instruments, the voice and the mouths, that could do the job. It is that they do not have the power of understanding concepts, universals. They don't have intellects.

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