Question 78
The Soul’s Pre-Intellective Capacities

Next we must consider the soul’s specific capacities. Now a theologian, in his investigations, has to be concerned with making a specific inquiry only into the intellective and appetitive capacities; it is here that the virtues are found. But because a cognition of these capacities depends in a certain way on the others, our consideration of the soul’s specific capacities will have three parts. For we must consider

- first, the capacities that come before intellect [Q78];
- second, the intellective capacities [Q79];
- third, the appetitive capacities [QQ80–83].

As regards the first, there are four subjects of inquiry:

a1. The kinds of capacities belonging to the soul.

a2. The species of the vegetative part.

a3. The external senses.

a4. The internal senses.

Article 1. The kinds of capacities belonging to the soul.¹

It seems that we should not distinguish five kinds of capacities belonging to the soul—vegetative, sensory, appetitive, locomotive, and intellective:

1. The soul’s capacities are said to be its parts.² But only three parts of the soul are generally assigned by everyone: the vegetative soul, the sensory soul, and the rational soul. Therefore there are only three kinds of capacities belonging to the soul, not five.

2. The soul’s capacities are the bases for the functions associated with life. But a thing is said to be living in four ways. For the Philosopher says in De anima II [413a22–25] that “because living is spoken of in many ways, we say that a thing lives even if only one of these is present: intellect, sense, local movement and rest, and finally the movement involved in feeding, decay, and growth.” There are, then, only four kinds of capacities belonging to the soul—leaving out the appetitive.

3. No specific kind of soul should be devoted to that which is common to all capacities. But appetite belongs to each of the soul’s capacities.

¹ST 1a 18.3; QDV 10.1 ad 2; QDA 13c; InDA 1.14, II.3, II.5.
²E.g., Aristotle, De anima 15, 411a26–b30.
For sight has an appetite for an agreeable visible object, so it is said in Ecclesiasticus 40.22 that the eye will desire grace and beauty and, beyond this, green sown fields. Every other capacity, for the same reason, desires an object agreeable to it. Therefore appetite should not be held to be a single specific kind among the soul’s capacities.

4. The basis of movement in animals is either sense, intellect, or appetite, as is said in De anima III [433a9–10]. Therefore the motive power should not be held to be a specific kind of soul beyond the ones just listed.

On the contrary. The Philosopher says in De anima II [414a31–32], “we say that these capacities are the vegetative, sensory, appetitive, locomotive, and intellective.”

Reply. There are five kinds of capacities belonging to the soul, as just listed. Three [of these] are called souls, whereas four are called modes of living.

The reason for this discrepancy is that different souls are distinguished in keeping with the different ways a soul’s operation surpasses the operation of corporeal nature. For all corporeal nature lies under the soul, and is related to it as its matter and instrument. So there is one operation of the soul that exceeds corporeal nature to such an extent that it is not even exercised through a corporeal organ. This is the operation of the rational soul. There is another operation of the soul, below that one, which is brought about through a corporeal organ, but not through any corporeal quality. This is the operation of the sensory soul. For even if hot and cold, wet and dry, and other such corporeal qualities are required for a sense to operate, still this is not in such a way that the sensory soul’s operation gets carried out mediated by the power of such qualities; they are instead required only for the proper disposition of the organ. Finally, the lowest of the soul’s operations is that which is brought about both through a corporeal organ and by the power of a corporeal quality. Still, it surpasses the operation of corporeal nature, because the motions of bodies come from an external source, whereas operations of this sort come from an internal source. (For this is common to all the soul’s operations; for everything with a soul moves itself in some way.) The operation of the vegetative soul is of this lowest kind. For digestion and the operations that follow, such as the absorption of food and the release of waste, are brought about instrumentally through the action of heat, as is said in De anima II [416b27–29].

\[^3\text{75.2c34.}\]
The kinds of capacities belonging to the soul are distinguished in terms of their objects. For to the extent that a capacity is loftier, to that extent it is concerned with a more universal object, as was said above [77.3 ad 4]. But there are three levels at which the objects of the soul's operations can be considered. For the object of one capacity of the soul is only the body united with the soul. This kind of capacity of the soul is called the vegetative; for the vegetative capacity acts only on the body to which the soul is united. There is another kind of capacity belonging to the soul, a kind concerned with a more universal object—namely, with every sensible body, and not only with the body united to the soul. There is still another kind of capacity belonging to the soul, one that is concerned with a still more universal object—namely, not only with sensible bodies, but universally with all being.

From this it is clear that these latter two kinds of capacities of the soul have an operation that concerns not only a connected object, but also an extrinsic one. But because that which operates must somehow be connected to the object it operates on, an extrinsic thing that is the object of an operation of the soul must be related to the soul in two respects.

- First, inasmuch as it is suited to be connected to the soul, and to be in the soul through its likeness. There are, in this respect, two kinds of capacities: the sensory, which concerns a less common object, a sensory body, and the intellective, which concerns the most common of objects, universal being.

- Second, inasmuch as the soul is inclined and tends toward an external thing. And in regard to this relationship as well, there are two kinds of capacities belonging to the soul: One is the appetitive, in virtue of which the soul is related to an extrinsic thing as to its end, which comes first in its intention. The other is the locomotive, inasmuch as the soul is related to an external thing as to the end point of its operation and movement. For every animal that moves does so in order to pursue something desired and intended.

Modes of living are distinguished in terms of the grades of living beings. For there are some living beings that have only the vegetative power, as plants do. Then there are some that have the sensory power as well as the vegetative, but not the locomotive. (This is the case for immobile animals like shellfish.) Some, beyond this, have locomotion.

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477.3.
as do complete animals, which need many things for their lives and so need to move so that they can search out the necessities of life that are not placed right at hand. Finally, there are some living beings in which, along with these, there is the intellective power—namely, human beings. The appetitive does not make up a grade of living beings, because whatever has sense also has appetite, as is said in De anima II [414b1].

This solves the first two objections.

Ad 3. Natural appetite is the inclination of any given thing, of its own nature, for some thing. Thus any capacity desires, by natural appetite, that which is agreeable to it. But animal appetite is the result of a form that has been apprehended. This sort of appetite requires a specific capacity of the soul: the apprehension alone is not enough. For one has an appetite for a thing as that thing is in its nature, whereas the thing is not in an apprehensive power in virtue of its nature, but in virtue of its likeness. It is clear, then, that sight has a natural appetite for a visible object only as regards its act—namely, as regards seeing. The animal, on the other hand, has an appetite for the thing seen through its appetitive power—not only as regards seeing, but also as regards other uses. However, if the soul were to have no need for the things perceived by the senses, except for the sake of the actions of those senses (namely, so that it would sense them), then we would not have to posit the appetitive as a specific kind among the soul’s capacities. For then the natural appetite of the capacities would be adequate.

Ad 4. Although sense and appetite are the bases of movement in complete animals, nevertheless these powers, considered as such, are not sufficient for producing movement unless another power is added to them. For there is sense and appetite in immobile animals, and yet they lack motive power. This motive power is not only in sense and appetite so as to command movement, but also in the relevant parts of the body, so that they are ready to obey the appetite of the soul that produces the movement. An indication of this is that when one’s limbs are taken out of their natural disposition, they do not obey the appetite for movement.

**Article 2. The capacities of the vegetative part.**

It seems that the parts of the vegetative soul—the powers for nutrition, growth, and generation—are incorrectly set out:

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580.1c39–41.

675.3 ad 3.

7SCG IV.58; QDA 13c; InDA II.5, II.9.
1. Powers of this sort are said to be natural. But the soul’s capacities are above the natural powers. Therefore powers of this sort should not be posited as capacities of the soul.

2. That which is common to the living and the nonliving should not be counted as one of the soul’s capacities. But generation is common to all generable and corruptible things, both living and nonliving. Therefore the generative power should not be posited as a capacity of the soul.

3. The soul is more powerful than corporeal nature. But corporeal nature, through the same active power, gives [a thing] both its species and its proper size. Therefore, a fortiori, so does the soul. Therefore the soul’s capacity for growth is no different than its capacity for generation.

4. Each thing is maintained in existence through that through which it has existence. But it is through the generative capacity that a living thing acquires its existence. Therefore a living thing is maintained through that same capacity. But it is the nutritive power that is directed at the maintenance of a living thing, as is said in De anima II [416b18], since it is “a capacity capable of preserving that which receives it.” Therefore the nutritive capacity should not be distinguished from the generative.

On the contrary. The Philosopher says in De anima II that the functions of this soul are to generate [415a22–26], to make use of food [415b23–28], and also growth* [413a25–31].

Reply. There are three capacities of the vegetative part. For, as was said [78.1c58–61], the vegetative has for an object the body itself that lives through the soul. With respect to this body, three operations of the soul are necessary:

- one through which it acquires existence; the generative capacity is directed at this;
- a second through which the living body acquires the appropriate size; the power for growth is directed at this;
- a third through which the body of the living thing is preserved, as regards both existence and proper size; the nutritive power is directed at this.

There is, however, a notable difference among these capacities. For the capacities for nutrition and growth have their effect on that in which

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878.1c31–33.
978.1c32–33.
they exist, because the body united to the soul grows and is maintained through the powers for growth and nutrition that are in that same soul. The generative power, in contrast, has its effect not on the same body but on another one: for nothing generates itself. And so the generative power in a certain way approaches the stature of the sensory soul, which has its operation on external things, though in a more excellent and universal way. For the highest of lower natures touches the lowest of those higher, as Dionysius makes clear in Divine Names 7.3. Consequently, the generative capacity is the one that is final, chief, and most complete of the three, as is said in De anima II. For it belongs to that which is already complete "to produce another such as it is" [415a26–29]. Also, the capacities for growth and nutrition serve the generative capacity, whereas the nutritive capacity serves the capacity for growth.

Ad 1. Powers of this sort are called natural both because they have an effect like that of nature, which also supplies existence, size, and maintenance (though these powers have this effect in a loftier way), and because these powers carry out their actions instrumentally through the active and passive qualities, which are the principles of natural actions.

Ad 2. In the case of things without souls, generation comes entirely from without. But the generation of living things occurs in a loftier way, through something that belongs to the living thing, its seed, which contains the basis for forming the body. Consequently, a living thing must have a capacity that prepares this seed—and this is its generative power.

Ad 3. Because the generation of living things comes from a seed, an animal must be small in size at the start. For this reason it is necessary that the animal have a capacity of the soul through which it reaches the proper size. A body without a soul, in contrast, is generated from determinate matter by an outside agent, and so it receives its species and its size all at once, in keeping with the state of its matter.

Ad 4. As was already said [78.1c52], the operation of the vegetative principle is completed through heat, which consumes moisture. So in order to restore the lost moisture, it is necessary for it to have a nutritive capacity, through which food is converted into the body's substance. This is also necessary for the action of the powers for growth and generation.

**Article 3. The external senses.**

It seems that the five external senses are incorrectly distinguished.

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10 InDA II.13 [Appendix 1], II.14, II.21–22, II.24, III.1; QDA 13; InDSS 1; II Sent. 2.2.2 ad 5.