

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of *Summa Theologiae* Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature

This is a major new study of Thomas Aquinas, the most influential philosopher of the Middle Ages. The book offers a clear and accessible guide to the central project of Aquinas's philosophy: the understanding of human nature. Robert Pasnau sets the philosophy in the context of ancient and modern thought and argues for a series of groundbreaking proposals for understanding some of the most difficult areas of Aquinas's thought: the relationship of soul to body, the workings of sense and intellect, the will and the passions, and personal identity.

Structured around a close reading of the *Treatise on Human Nature* from the *Summa theologiae* and deeply informed by a wide knowledge of philosophy and its history, this study will offer specialists a series of novel and provocative interpretations, while providing students with a reference commentary on one of Aquinas's core texts.

Robert Pasnau is an assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Colorado. He is the author of *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (1997).

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of *Summa Theologiae* Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature

A Philosophical Study of *Summa theologiae*
Ia 75–89

ROBERT PASNAU

University of Colorado at Boulder



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa
Theologiae Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA

10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia

Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain

Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

© Robert Pasnau 2002

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2002

Printed in the United States of America

Typeface Imprint 10/11 pt. *System* QuarkXPress [BTS]

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Pasnau, Robert.

Thomas Aquinas on human nature: a philosophical study of Summa
theologiae Ia, 75-89 / Robert Pasnau.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-80732-8 - ISBN 0-521-00189-7 (pb.)

1. Thomas, Aquinas, Saint, 1225?-1274. Summa theologica. Pars 1. Questio 75-89.

2. Philosophical anthropology. 3. Man (Christian theology) I. Title.

B765.T53 s8166 2002

128 - dc21

2001025403

ISBN 0 521 80732 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 00189 7 paperback

Contents

| | |
|---|------------------|
| <i>List of Abbreviations</i> | <i>page</i> viii |
| <i>Acknowledgments</i> | x |
| <i>A Note to the Reader</i> | xi |
| Introduction | i |
| In.1. Overview | i |
| In.2. The scope of the study | 3 |
| In.3. On human nature | 7 |
| In.4. A philosophical study | 10 |
| In.5. The larger context | 10 |
| PART I. ESSENTIAL FEATURES (QQ75–76) | |
| 1. Body and soul | 25 |
| 1.1. What is a human being? | 25 |
| 1.2. The ancient naturalists | 30 |
| 1.3. The argument for soul as actuality | 34 |
| 1.4. The crucial role of prime matter | 40 |
| 2. The immateriality of soul | 45 |
| 2.1. The essential bodily component | 45 |
| 2.2. The rational soul as a subsistent form | 48 |
| 2.3. The sensory soul as a material form | 57 |
| 2.4. Dualism | 65 |
| 3. The unity of body and soul | 73 |
| 3.1. The failure of nonreductive theories | 73 |
| 3.2. The unity of substances | 79 |
| 3.3. Body and soul as a unified substance | 88 |
| 3.4. Reductive materialism | 95 |
| 4. When human life begins | 100 |
| 4.1. Conception | 100 |
| 4.2. Infusion and abortion | 105 |
| 4.3. Identity and discontinuity | 120 |
| 4.4. The plurality of forms debate | 126 |
| Excursus metaphysicus: Reality as actuality | 131 |

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa

Theologiae Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

PART II. CAPACITIES (QQ77-83)

| | | |
|------|---|-----|
| 5. | The soul and its capacities | 143 |
| 5.1. | What is a capacity? | 143 |
| 5.2. | The distinction between the soul and its capacities | 151 |
| 5.3. | The balancing act | 157 |
| 5.4. | An Aquinian circle? | 160 |
| 5.5. | The hidden essence of soul | 164 |
| 6. | Sensation | 171 |
| 6.1. | Does Aquinas have a theory of sensation? | 171 |
| 6.2. | Functional analysis | 172 |
| 6.3. | <i>Sensibilia</i> | 180 |
| 6.4. | Common sense and consciousness | 190 |
| 7. | Desire and freedom | 200 |
| 7.1. | Natural appetite | 200 |
| 7.2. | Voluntary agents | 209 |
| 7.3. | Rational choice | 214 |
| 7.4. | Freedom | 220 |
| 8. | Will and temptation | 234 |
| 8.1. | Is the will a myth? | 234 |
| 8.2. | Must the will be rational? | 235 |
| 8.3. | Weakness of will | 241 |
| 8.4. | How the passions tempt us | 252 |
| 8.5. | A politic rule | 257 |

PART III. FUNCTIONS (QQ84-89)

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 9. | Mind and image | 267 |
| 9.1. | Forms and intentions | 267 |
| 9.2. | Seeing as: Sensation per accidens | 270 |
| 9.3. | Phantasms | 278 |
| 9.4. | The turn toward phantasms | 284 |
| 10. | Mind and reality | 296 |
| 10.1. | Quiddities | 296 |
| 10.2. | Empiricism and illumination | 302 |
| 10.3. | Abstraction | 310 |
| 10.4. | Universals | 318 |
| 10.5. | <i>Intelligere</i> | 324 |
| 11. | Knowing the mind | 330 |
| 11.1. | The inscrutable self | 330 |
| 11.2. | Reflection, not introspection | 336 |
| 11.3. | The middle ground | 347 |
| 11.4. | Other minds | 355 |

Cambridge University Press
0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa
Theologiae Ia 75-89
Robert Pasnau
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| 12. Life after death | 361 |
| 12.1. <i>Incorruptibilis</i> | 361 |
| 12.2. Can a separated soul continue to function? | 366 |
| 12.3. A foreign state | 377 |
| 12.4. Identity and resurrection | 380 |
| Epilogue: Why Did God Make Me? | 394 |
| <i>Notes</i> | 405 |
| <i>Bibliography</i> | 465 |
| <i>Appendix: Outline of the Treatise (ST Ia 75-89)</i> | 485 |
| <i>Index</i> | 489 |

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa

Theologiae Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| <i>CT</i> | <i>Compendium theologiae</i> (Leonine vol. 42) |
| <i>InIC</i> | <i>In epistolam primam ad Corinthios</i> |
| <i>InDA</i> | <i>Sentencia libri De anima</i> (Leonine vol. 45,1) |
| <i>InDC</i> | <i>In libros De caelo et mundo expositio</i> |
| <i>InDDN</i> | <i>Super librum Dionysii De divinis nominibus</i> |
| <i>InDH</i> | <i>Expositio libri Boetii De ebdomadibus</i> (Leonine vol. 50) |
| <i>InDMR</i> | <i>Sentencia libri De memoria et reminiscencia</i> (Leonine vol. 45,2) |
| <i>InDSS</i> | <i>Sentencia libri De sensu et sensato</i> (Leonine vol. 45,2) |
| <i>InDT</i> | <i>Super Boetium De trinitate</i> (Leonine vol. 50) |
| <i>InGC</i> | <i>In librum primum De generatione et corruptione expositio</i> |
| <i>InJoh</i> | <i>Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura</i> |
| <i>InLC</i> | <i>In librum De causis expositio</i> |
| <i>InMet</i> | <i>In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum expositio</i> |
| <i>InNE</i> | <i>Sentencia libri Ethicorum</i> (Leonine vol. 47) |
| <i>InPA</i> | <i>Expositio libri Posteriorum</i> (Leonine vol. 1*,2) |
| <i>InPH</i> | <i>Expositio libri Peryermenias</i> (Leonine vol. 1*,1) |
| <i>InPh</i> | <i>In octo libros Physicorum expositio</i> |
| <i>InPs</i> | <i>Postilla super Psalmos</i> (Parma vol. 14) |
| <i>InRom</i> | <i>In epistolam ad Romanos</i> |
| <i>QDA</i> | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de anima</i> (Leonine vol. 24,1) |
| <i>QDIA</i> | <i>Quaestio disputata de immortalitate animae</i> |
| <i>QDM</i> | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de malo</i> (Leonine vol. 23) |
| <i>QDP</i> | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de potentia</i> |
| <i>QDSC</i> | <i>Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis</i> |
| <i>QDUVI</i> | <i>Quaestio disputata de unione verbi incarnati</i> |
| <i>QDV</i> | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de veritate</i> (Leonine vol. 22) |
| <i>QDVC</i> | <i>Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communi</i> |
| <i>QQ</i> | <i>Quaestiones quodlibetales</i> (Leonine vol. 25) |
| <i>SCG</i> | <i>Summa contra gentiles</i> |
| <i>SENT</i> | <i>In quatuor libros Sententiarum</i> |
| <i>ST</i> | <i>Summa theologiae</i> |
| | (1a = first part; 1a2ae = first part of second part; etc.) |

References to *ST* 1a typically cite just question and article (e.g., 85.3c, 29.1 ad 4).

I use an abridged version of the title to refer to the following short treatises: *De substantiis separatis* (Leonine vol. 40); *De 43 articulis* (Leonine

Cambridge University Press
0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa
Theologiae Ia 75-89
Robert Pasnau
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

vol. 42); *De unitate intellectus*, *De ente et essentia*, *De principiis naturae*,
De operationibus occultis naturae, *De mixtione elementorum* (Leonine
vol. 43).

In cases where the Leonine reference system might prove inconvenient,
I provide within brackets the older Marietti reference.

Theories refers to Pasnau (1997c).

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

At a time when many young scholars are unemployed or badly underemployed, I've been fortunate (in part just plain lucky) to have had two very good jobs, one now at the University of Colorado, and the other at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia's fine Jesuit college. I drafted this book, in its entirety, over the course of four years at St. Joseph's, and I am grateful to the students, faculty, and administration there for their support and friendship. More recently, CU/Boulder has provided an ideal setting for extensively revising that first draft.

I've been helped by many people in writing this book, particularly by Chris Shields, who patiently read and discussed every chapter with me. Thanks for help with smaller pieces also goes to the late Norman Kretzmann and to Audre Brokes, Christina van Dyke, David Boonin, Michael Gorman, Paul Studtmann, Jeff Hause, Tom Bennigson, Renée Smith, Mark Case, Eleonore Stump, Paul Hoffman, Gyula Klima, Jack Zupko, Gabriela Carone, Richard Cameron, Brian Leftow, Rega Wood, Allen Wood, and the staff at Loom Theological Books. Participants in a fall 2000 graduate seminar at Boulder – particularly Kate Waidler and Theresa Weynand – provided much useful feedback, and the Kayden Manuscript Prize provided financial support. Finally, I was the beneficiary of generous comments from two readers for Cambridge University Press, Richard Cross and Martin Tweedale.

I began preliminary work on this book in 1994, while still in graduate school. As the book has developed, I've been led to pursue many issues that simply would not fit within the confines of this single volume. As a result, most of the articles I've published over the last few years have grown out of the chapters that follow. Though the articles occasionally borrow paragraphs from the book, they are in every case offshoots – detached appendices, if you like – rather than rough drafts. The endnotes provide references to this work where appropriate. I spent a year in 1994–95 translating Aquinas's *Commentary on Aristotle's De anima* (New Haven, 1999), which proved to be the ideal preparatory study for this book. My first book, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), discusses related problems of mental representation and intentionality. Here I mostly pass over those issues.

Cambridge University Press

0521807328 - Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa
Theologiae Ia 75-89

Robert Pasnau

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A Note to the Reader

I have tried to write a book that would help the novice, stimulate the non-specialist, and provoke the specialist. To this end, I have sought to avoid technical philosophical jargon (both scholastic and analytic), or else to explain it clearly. Readers puzzled by a term should look to the index for cross-references. I have also tried to write each chapter, and when possible each section within a chapter, in such a way that it could be read independently. Readers interested in a particular topic can turn directly to the relevant sections, using as their guide the table of contents, the outline of the Treatise, and the summaries that precede each chapter.

I have used endnotes rather than footnotes so as not to distract from the main thread of the argument. These notes largely concern the secondary literature on Aquinas and interesting parallels to other philosophers, old and new. I have tried to make each endnote substantive enough to be worth the effort. From time to time I've placed important notes within boxes in the main text, to provide a kind of rest stop for the drowsing reader (or perhaps an entrance point, for the browsing reader).

In the end, this has become a rather large book (though it is much too small for the range of topics I discuss). Unfortunately, Part I is the most difficult and tendentious. But one needn't start there. Readers most interested in perception and knowledge might begin with Chapter 6 and then skip to Chapters 9–11. Readers most interested in metaphysics will want to start with Part I, and then perhaps skip to Chapter 12. In fact, almost any order will do.