

QUESTION 90

The Initial Production of Man with respect to His Soul

After what has gone before, we have to consider the initial production of man. And on this topic there are four things to consider: first, the production of man himself (questions 90-93); second, the goal of this production (question 93); third, the status and condition of man as he was first produced (questions 94-101); fourth, his location (question 102).

As far as the production is concerned, there are three topics to consider: first, the production of man with respect to his soul (question 90); second, the production of man with respect to the male body (question 91); third, the production of the woman.

On the first topic there are four questions: (1) Is the human soul something made, or is it part of God's substance? (2) Assuming that it is made, is it created? (3) Is the soul produced by the mediation of angels? (4) Was the soul produced before the body?

Article 1

Is a [human] soul made, or is it part of God's substance?

It seems that a [human] soul is not made, but is instead part of God's substance (*sit de substantia Dei*):

Objection 1: Genesis 2 says: "The Lord God formed man from the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." But when one breathes, he emits something from himself. Therefore, the soul by which man lives is part of God's substance.

Objection 2: As was established above (q. 75, a. 5), a [human] soul is a simple form. But a form is an actuality. Therefore, a soul is a pure actuality—a feature that belongs to God alone. Therefore, a soul is part of God's substance.

Objection 3: If things exist and do not differ from one another in any way, then they are the same. But God and a [human] mind exist, and they do not differ from one another in any way—since they would have to differ from one another in virtue of certain differences, and if that were so, they would be composite. Therefore, God and a human mind are the same.

But contrary to this: In *De Origine Animae* Augustine enumerates certain positions that he takes to be "exceedingly and openly perverse and opposed to the Catholic Faith," the first among which is the claim, asserted by some, that "God made the soul from Himself and not from nothing."

I respond: There is an obvious implausibility in the claim that a [human] soul is part of God's substance. For as is clear from what has been said (q. 77, a. 2 and q. 79, a. 2 and q. 84, a. 6), the human soul (a) sometimes has intellectual understanding [only] in potentiality, (b) in some sense acquires scientific knowledge from the things themselves, and (c) has diverse powers—all of which are foreign to the nature of God, who, as was proved above (q. 3), (a) is pure actuality, (b) acquires nothing from another, and (c) has no differentiation within Himself.

Now the error in question seems to have originated in two positions held by the ancients.

Those who first began to consider the natures of things were unable to transcend the imagination and so claimed that there is nothing beyond bodies. So they claimed that God is a certain body that they judged to be the source of other bodies. And since, as *De Anima* 1 reports, they claimed that the soul is part of the nature of that body said to be the source, it followed as a result that the soul is part of the nature of God. Verging on this position, the Manicheans, who took God to be a certain sort of corporeal light, claimed that the soul is a part of this light that is tied down to a body.

Second, things progressed to the point that certain thinkers apprehended that something incorporeal

exists—not something separated from a body, but something that is the form of a body. Hence, as Augustine reports in *De Civitate Dei* 7, Varro claimed that God is a soul that governs the world by motion and reason. Accordingly, there were some who claimed that a man’s soul is a part of this whole soul in the same way that a man is a part of the whole world; for they were unable to reach the point intellectually of distinguishing the different grades of spiritual substances except by reference to the distinctions among bodies.

But as was proved above (q. 3), all these claims are impossible. Hence, it is manifestly false that a [human] soul is a part of God’s substance.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Breathe’ should not be taken in a corporeal sense here. Instead, God’s ‘breathing’ is the same as His making a spirit—though it is true in any case that in breathing corporeally a man emits something extraneous to himself and not something of his own substance.

Reply to objection 2: Even though a [human] soul is a simple form in its essence, it is not its own *esse*; instead, it is a being by participation, as is clear from what was said above (q. 75, a. 5). And so, unlike God, a human soul is not pure actuality.

Reply to objection 3: Things that *differ* in the proper sense differ *in* something (*differt aliquo*); this is why a difference is sought in cases where there is agreement. Because of this, things that differ from one another must be composite in some sense, since they differ in something and agree in something.

Given this, as *Metaphysics* 10 points out, even if it is the case that all things that *differ* from one another are *diverse*, it is nonetheless not the case that all things that are *diverse* also *differ* from one another (*licet omne differens est diversum, non tamen omne diversum est differens*). For simple things are diverse in their own right (*seipsis*), but they do not differ by any differences out of which they might be composed. For instance, a man and a donkey differ by the differences *rational* and *non-rational*, but one cannot say of these differences themselves that they differ from one another by still other differences.

Article 2

Is a [human] soul brought into being through creation?

It seems that a [human] soul is not brought into being (*producta in esse*) through creation:

Objection 1: That which has something material within itself is made from matter. But a soul has something material within itself, since it is not pure actuality. Therefore, a soul is made from matter. Therefore, it is not created.

Objection 2: Every actuality that belongs to some matter seems to be brought forth from the matter’s potentiality (*educi de potentia materiae*); for since matter is in potentiality with respect to actuality, every actuality preexists in potentiality within the matter. But a soul is the actuality of corporeal matter, as is clear from the definition of a soul. Therefore, a soul is brought forth from the potentiality of matter.

Objection 3: A soul is a certain form. Therefore, if a soul is made through creation, then by parity of reasoning all other forms are likewise made through creation. And so no form will come into being through generation—which is absurd.

But contrary to this: Genesis 1:27 says, “God created man in His own image.” But man is “in God’s image” because of the soul. Therefore, the soul came into being through creation.

I respond: A rational soul can be made only through creation—something that is not true of other

forms. The reason for this is that since being-made (*feri*) is a path to *esse*, being-made belongs to a given thing in the same way that *esse* belongs to it.

Now what is properly said to exist is that which itself has *esse* in the sense of subsisting in its own *esse* (*quasi in suo esse subsistens*); hence, it is only substances that are properly and truly called beings (*entia*). By contrast, an accident does not have *esse*, but is that *by which* something is such-and-such (*eo aliquid est*). This is the sense in which it is called a being (*ens*); for instance, a whiteness is called a being because by it something is white (*quia ea aliquid est album*). It is for this reason that *Metaphysics* 7 says that an accident “is said to be ‘of-a-being’ (*entis*) rather than ‘a being’ (*ens*).” Moreover, the same line of reasoning holds for every other non-subsistent form. And so being-made does not properly belong to any non-subsistent form; instead, such forms are said to be made by virtue of the fact that subsistent composites are made.

By contrast, as was shown above (q. 75, a. 2), a rational soul is a subsistent form. Hence, both being-made and *esse* belong to it properly speaking. And since a soul cannot be made from preexistent matter—either corporeal matter, since in that case it would have a corporeal nature, or spiritual matter, since in that case spiritual substances would be transformed into one another—one must claim that a soul can be made only through creation.

Reply to objection 1: In a soul the simple essence itself is akin to the material aspect (*sicut materiale*), whereas the formal aspect in it (*formale in ipsa*) is the participated *esse*, which is necessarily simultaneous with the essence of the soul, since *esse* follows *per se* upon form.

The same line of reasoning would hold if one claimed—as some do—that [a human soul] is composed of spiritual matter. For like celestial matter, spiritual matter is not in potentiality with respect to any other [substantial] form; otherwise, a soul would be corruptible.

Hence, there is no way in which a [human] soul can be made from preexisting matter.

Reply to objection 2: For an actuality to be drawn from the potentiality of matter (*actum extrahi de potentia materiae*) is nothing other than for something that previously existed in potentiality to be brought into actuality (*aliquid fieri actu quod prius erat in potentia*). However, since a rational soul has subsistent *esse* and not *esse* that depends on corporeal matter, and since, as was explained above (q. 75, a. 2), a rational soul exceeds the capability of corporeal matter, it follows that it is not brought forth from the potentiality of matter.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, there is no parallel between a rational soul and other forms.

Article 3

Is a rational soul produced directly by God, or is it produced through the mediation of angels?

It seems that a rational soul is not produced directly (*immediate*) by God, but is instead produced through the mediation of angels (*mediantibus angelis*):

Objection 1: There is more order among spiritual things than among corporeal things. But as Dionysius says in *De Divinis Nominibus*, chap. 4, lower bodies are produced through higher bodies. Therefore, lower spirits, i.e., rational souls, are likewise produced through higher spirits, i.e., angels.

Objection 2: The end of things corresponds to their source; for instance, God is both the source and the end of things. Therefore, it is also the case that a thing’s issuing forth from its source (*exitus a principio*) corresponds to its being brought back to its end (*reductio in finem*). But as Dionysius says,

“the lowest things are brought back to their end through the first things.” Therefore, the lowest things likewise proceed into *esse* through the first things; more specifically, souls proceed into being (*procedunt in esse*) through angels.

Objection 3: As *Meteorologia* 4 says, “The perfect is that which can make what is similar to itself.” But spiritual substances are much more perfect than corporeal substances are. Therefore, since bodies make things that are similar in species to themselves, *a fortiori* angels will be able to make something that is lower than they are in its natural species (*secundum speciem naturae*), viz., a rational soul.

But contrary to this: Genesis 2:7 says that God Himself “breathed into man’s face the breath of life.”

I respond: Some have claimed that angels, acting in the power of God, cause rational souls. But this opinion is altogether impossible and alien to the Faith.

For it has been shown (a. 2) that a rational soul can be produced only through creation. But God alone is able to create. For it belongs to the first agent alone to act without presupposing anything, since, as was established above (q. 65, a. 3), a secondary agent always presupposes something that comes from the first agent. But if an agent effects something out of what is presupposed (*quod agit aliquid ex aliquo praesupposito*), then it acts by transforming (*transmutando*). And so every other agent acts only by transforming, whereas God acts by creating. And since a rational soul cannot be produced by the transformation of any matter, it follows that it cannot be produced except directly by God.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: The reply to the objections is clear from what has been said. For the fact that bodies cause what is similar to themselves or what is lower than themselves, and the fact that lower beings are brought back [to their end] through higher beings—all of this occurs through one or another sort of transformation.

Article 4

Was the human soul produced before the human body?

It seems that the human soul was produced before the human body:

Objection 1: As was established above (q. 66, a. 1 and q. 70, a. 1), the work of creation preceded the work of division and the work of adornment. But the soul was brought into being (*producta in esse*) through creation, whereas the body was made at the end of the work of adornment. Therefore, the soul of man was produced before the body.

Objection 2: A rational soul shares more in common (*magis convenit*) with angels than with brute animals. But angels were created either before bodies or right at the beginning along with corporeal matter, whereas the human body was formed on the sixth day, after the brute animals had already been produced. Therefore, the human soul was created before the human body.

Objection 3: The end is proportionate to the beginning. But the soul remains in the end after the body. Therefore, it was likewise created at the beginning before the body.

But contrary to this: A proper actuality is effected in a proper potentiality. Therefore, since the soul is the proper actuality of the body, the soul was produced in the body (*anima producta est in corpore*).

I respond: Origen claimed that not only the first man’s soul, but the souls of all men, were created along with the angels before bodies—and he made this claim because he believed that all spiritual substances, both souls and angels, were equal in the status of their natures and unequal only in merit

(*solum merito distare*). The result is that some of these spiritual substances were tied to bodies—these are the souls of men and the souls of the celestial bodies—whereas others remained in their purity, divided into diverse orders (*secundum diversos ordines*).

We have already replied to this opinion above (q. 47, a. 2), and so we will leave it aside at present.

However, in *Super Genesim ad Litteram* 7 Augustine has a different reason for claiming that the soul of the first man was created along with the angels and before the body, viz., because he holds that (a) in the work of the six days man's body was produced only with respect to its causal principles (*solum secundum causales rationes*) and not in actuality, whereas (b) this cannot be said of the soul, because the soul was not made from any preexisting matter, whether corporeal or spiritual, and because the soul could not have been produced by any created power. And so it seems that (a) the soul itself was created along with the angels during the work of the six days, when all things were made, and that (b) afterwards it was directed by its own will to be in charge of a body (*propria voluntate inclinata fuit ad corpus administrandum*).

However, Augustine does not make these claims by way of assertion, as his words demonstrate. For he says, "As long as no Scriptural passage or sound argument contradicts it, it is permissible to believe that man was made on the sixth day in the sense that the causal principle of the human body was created in the elements of the world, whereas the soul itself had already been created."

Now this view could indeed be tolerated according to those who claim that the soul has a complete species and nature in its own right (*per se*) and is united to the body not as its form, but only in order to be in charge of the body. However, if the soul is united to the body as its form and is naturally a part of a human nature, then this view is altogether impossible. For it is clear that God instituted the first things in a state of natural perfection (*in perfecto statu suae naturae*), in the way required by the species of each thing. But since a soul is part of a human nature, it does not have its natural perfection except insofar as it is united to a body. Hence, it would not have been appropriate for the soul to be created without a body.

Therefore, in order to sustain Augustine's opinion about the work of the six days (cf. q. 74, a. 2), one could claim that (a) in the work of the six days the human soul came beforehand (*praecessit*) by way of a certain likeness of genus, in the sense that it agrees with the angels in being an intellectual nature, but that (b) it itself was created simultaneously with the body. By contrast, according to the other saints, both the soul and the body of the first man were produced during the work of the six days.

Reply to objection 1: If the soul's nature had a complete species, so that it might be created in its own right (*secundum se*), then the argument that the soul was created by itself (*per se*) at the beginning would go through. However, since the soul is naturally the form of a body, it must not have been created separately (*non fuit seorsum creanda*), but instead it had to be created in a body.

Reply to objection 2: The reply to the second objection is similar. If a soul had a species in its own right (*per se*), it would share more in common with the angels. However, because a soul is the form of a body, it belongs, as a formal principle, to the genus *animal*.

Reply to objection 3: The fact that a soul remains after its body stems from a defect of the body, i.e., death. This defect was not supposed to exist at the beginning of the soul's creation (cf. q. 97, a. 1).