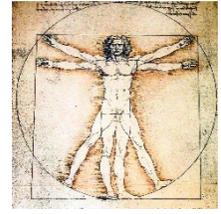




Aquinas 101: The Human Soul



Week 3: The Powers of the Soul

Discerning the Powers of the Soul

- Aristotle arrives at his definition of the soul through **an inductive process** based on the ten categories, the principles of nature, his theory of hylomorphism (matter-form composites), and his general description of the soul as a type of first actuality.
- After the definition of the soul as **the first act of a natural organized body**, Aristotle identifies as the **form of the body** and that which is responsible for the activities of life.
- Life is a type of activity, but we identify it because of other activities: self-nutrition, growth, reproduction, movement, etc. What in the soul is responsible for those activities?
- To perceive the inner realities of the soul, Aristotle proceeds from the outside in—he looks at the objects of our activities, then the activities themselves, and finally the **power of the soul** responsible for that activity.
- Just as the soul is the form of the body (first act), it is the form of each activity oriented toward a particular object (second act). The powers of the soul are parts of the soul, but the soul is still one.

Vegetative and Animal Powers

- **Self-nutrition, growth, and reproduction:** the basis of all life. Each species seeks to maintain its own existence and to expand itself in the world.
- The **five sense powers:** sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Reveal **sensible forms** in the world around us, which are the **formal objects** of each sense power. The **material object** is the object as a whole, without regard to its color, sound, smell, etc.
- Interior sense powers:
 - The **common sense** integrates the five sense powers into one “picture” for our mind.
 - The **imagination** allows us to deal with these pictures and manipulate them.
 - The **memory** stores sense images and recalls them when needed.
 - The **cogitative power** allows us to see possible uses of objects. In lower animals it is called the **estimative power** and allows them to do things like build nests.
- The **sense appetite** attracts animals toward what is fitting for their natures. It causes passions.
- **Locomotion** allows animals to move towards the goods they sense.
- All of these powers deal with sensible particulars and are rooted in organs. Without an intact organ, the power still exists in the soul but it cannot be actualized.

Intellectual Powers

- The intellect operates through abstract thought: it is not bound to sensible particulars. It has the ability to become all things according to their form or definition. These are the **intelligible species**. Its **formal object** is universal truth.
- The intellect operates by abstracting the intelligible species from the sensible species presented to it by the common sense and imagination.
- The **will** is the intellectual appetite: like the sense appetite, it attracts toward good, but **universal**.
- We are like angels because able to know and love God, but we live still in bodies as animals.