Thomas Aquinas and the Influence of Imaginatio/
Phantasia on Human Being

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Thomas Aquinas points to several weighty problems which are based on the relation between the world and man. If thinking cannot do without the presence of sensuality then a question arises as to what extent we are dependent on external influences. Are our intellectual activities or decisions governable by passions, separate substances, celestial bodies, dreams or prophetic visions? An explanation of this problem might show these questions in a specific area of medieval thought and turn our attention towards the question of psychic activities.

In this article I would like to concentrate on the activities connected with the imaginative ability which creates phantasmatas. The necessity of phantasmatas for human cognition is obvious but the question of their influence on the sphere of human emotions is still inadequately examined.¹ In contrast to the epistemological contexts, in the sphere of emotions and human passions the role of phantasmatas is somehow forgotten – the reason may be that Aquinas never wrote any thematic work dealing with the influence of fantasy on the sensitive part of the human soul.²

The sensitive part of the human soul (anima sensitiva) is not only the sphere of internal and external senses but also the realm of human sensitivity, the sphere of sorrow, fear, hope, anger, etc.³ The imaginative ability in its specific activities manifests itself in the sphere of sensual desire.⁴ So as physical things seek to reach their natural place, also for all created things in the universe it is natural to tend towards their fulfilment.⁵ This tendency in man is characterized as certain movement from the soul to things.⁶

If fantasy appears in the sphere of human sensuality, then we can pose a question as to how its activity can influence human desires, pleasures, pain, sadness, fear or anger. Aquinas states the difference between sensual and rational desire in this way: appetitus sensitivus differt ab appetitus intellectivo, qui dicitur voluntas, quod appetitus sensitivus est virtus organi corporalis, non autem voluntas.⁷ The activity of sensual desire does not always need to succumb to the rule of reason (imperio rationis). „Movement“ can arise from the imaginative or sensual perception because qualitas and dispositio of the body does not succumb to reason but to “movements” connected with body functions. So as a serf sometimes does not obey the command of his master, so sensual desire does not always need to succumb to the rule of reason.⁸ How can phantasma influence human...
passions? For Aquinas, the image (idea) of a thing is always less than its concrete presence. Therefore the real presence of an object that is the subject of desire is more than its image. However, desire for something may increase with the image of the thing (ex imaginatione rei) but it is only its presence which is the reason for real delight (delectatio), which is the aim of human desire (desiderium).9

Delight and pain (dolor) can arise ex apprehensione exterioris sensus et ex apprehensione interiori sive intellectualis sive imaginationis.10 From this differentiation we can see how pain differs from sadness and delight from joy. Sadness, which is a kind of pain, arises ex apprehensione interiori, i.e. from imaginative or intellectual understanding.11 Differentiation between the external and internal levels points to the difference between external pain (dolor exterior) and internal pain (dolor interior).12 The cause of the external pain is something that goes against the body and the cause of internal pain is something that contradicts the desire (appetitus). Therefore external pain originates in sensual perception, especially the sense of touch, while internal pain originates in imaginative and intellectual (rational) understanding.13 What we perceive by external senses we can perceive by imagination and reason too but, as Aquinas writes, sed non convertitur. So as desire increases with the image of the desired thing, so sadness increases with the gloomy image.14 When Aquinas deals with pain then he represents fantasy as a positive ability by which pain can be eased (as if he wanted to show that fantasy has its therapeutic meaning).15 In this matter Aquinas seems to be a follower of Aristotle. When Aristotle writes on friendship in Nikomachean Ethics, he deals with the compassion of a friend who becomes a natural consolation in grief. He interprets sadness as a burden and therefore everyone who is sad seeks relief. If a sad man knows that his friends are unhappy because of his sadness, then he imagines that they carry this heavy burden with him – in this way they help him in his sadness and he feels better mentally.16

While in this case imagination plays a positive role for the human psyche, in different places in his work Aquinas also emphasizes its negative aspects.17 For example fear (timor), which is a special kind of passion, springs from the image of a future evil (ex phantasia futuri mali) which is difficult to resist.18 For example, fear of falling is caused by an image of falling.19 In some places Aquinas also talks about imagination as vivid fantasy.20 In this context, albeit appearing only in a few places in Aquinas, the strength of visualization with its negative consequences can be seen.

Aquinas is rather modest in his commentaries on these questions but we can nonetheless see that fantasy plays an important role in the sphere of emotionality because phantasma is a stimulus of more subtle psychic processes. The result is the intensification of a passion, be it in a positive or negative sense.21 Aquinas understands apprehensio imaginationis as imaginative apprehension which, however, does not transcend the sphere of images.22 The natural subordination of human faculties is maintained and therefore the real presence of the object of passions and emotions is always more than a mere image of this object.

Another question, which can illuminate the given matter, is a possible influence of separated substances on the sphere of human sensuality. Demonology and angeology, doctrines about the existence and status of separated substances in the universe, extend into the area of subtle theological questions.25 Systematic analyses of these en-
tities are in the history of thinking connected with the Middle Ages, especially with 11th – 15th centuries. At those times faith in such kinds of beings, which in the theological-philosophical context were called the separate substances (substantiae separatae), was a natural part of life. One of the problems connected with the given topic is the relation between these entities and man. Aquinas differs in this question from Arabian thinkers because he had a different opinion about the influence of these substances on mental activities. In this article I want to point to a possible influence of these separated substances on the sphere of internal senses. Therefore, it is important on the level of human sensuality to see the phantasmatas not only in the sphere of cognition but also in the sphere of emotions.

Arabian thinkers whose conceptions were connected especially with the cosmological hierarchy of intelligencies considered the influence as a natural subordination of individual spheres. According to Avicenna, physical substance succumbs to the influence of separated substances. Therefore the reason for fascination, a kind of vertiginousness (fascinatio), is strong imagination, which causes changes to the physical substance. Avicenna’s ideas in his treatise De anima were essential in many ways and the systematic analysis of the conditions of psychosomatic changes had its inherent place for the understanding of magic and demonology.

Aquinas tries to define a clear difference between the angelic and the human worlds and he shows the boundary and the limited possibilities of the influence of the angelic world on the sphere of man. According to him changes in physical substance cannot be occasioned by the influence of separated substances. Changes can arise at the spiritual level where ex forte imaginatione animae immutantur spiritus corporis conjuncti. For example, he explains obsessiveness of the eye by changes in the eye, into which subtiliores spiritus enters. According to Aquinas, those most susceptible to these influences are children, whose body is very sensitive and subtle – therefore acquainting children with good images, especially before they go to sleep, has its psychological-ethical meaning. Strong imagination of the human soul does not therefore have the ability to cause changes in physical substance but it influences the spiritus, which can cause different psychosomatic changes in the body.

Aquinas repeatedly pronounces the opinion that the intellect and will cannot be directly (directe) disrupted but the internal senses, especially fantasy and some of the bodily functions, can succumb to the influence of these substances. What is philosophically and historically interesting is the analysis of the influence of demons. Demons, being the fallen angels who tempt man, are obsessed beings that were created by God with a good nature but became evil due to their own will. Already in the desert Fathers we can see and interpret the understanding of demons on the psychological level. In St. Athanasius’ or St. Evagrius’ works the struggle for the kingdom of God and its values is obvious and this struggle is interiorized and transformed onto the level of the human mind, thinking and heart in prayer. Similar tendencies to interpret these questions psychologically are seen in Aquinas too and they are not unknown in contemporary theological thinking.

The activity and encroachment of demons is a distinctive and independent part, which requires contemporary thinking to detach itself from religious connotations and try to see this problem on the psychological level. The question is how our psychic
states can be changed by influences which are beyond the material world. The influence of separated substances is not, however, the only thing that belongs to these questions; we can also talk about the possible influence of celestial bodies. For medieval thinking it had a specific meaning, the universe being taken as an organic whole, in which it was natural to find mutual relations between its higher and lower spheres.

Thomas Aquinas tried to deal with the problem of demons in De Malo and he sought to explain their subtle influence on the human psyche. Not only here but also in some other treatises did the phrase *phantasia proterva*, „arbitrary fantasy“ appear. *Phantasia proterva* has negative connotations because due to its influence a mistake, deception, or illusion can arise. Metaphorically it appears also in the work of Pseudodionysius Areopagite, who uses this fantasy to characterize one of the basic features of demonic beings. According to Aquinas, fantasy is for demons the reason for the incorrect evaluation of real good, and for man it is the reason for the mistake of thinking that the *phantasmatas* of things are the things themselves. From the above analyses it is clear that we cannot identify the image of a thing with the thing itself. This identification, however, can appear during sleep because fantasy is strongest then. During sleep reason is not able to differentiate a thing from its image and therefore man can believe the dream to be reality. Behind this are demons who cause certain motion, „movement“ in the sensitive part of the human soul. According to Aquinas this influence of demons on human fantasy is induced by higher bodily causes.

As *corpora superiora* affect *corpora inferiora* (the material world affects the bodily system), so *phantasia* changes in relation to the position of celestial bodies. Aquinas states: *Unde cum vires sensitivae sint actus corporalium organis, consequens est quod ex impressione caelestium corporum immutetur quadammodo phantasia.* *Unde cum caelestia corpora sint causa multorum futurorum, fiunt in imaginatione aliqua signa quorumdam futurorum.* These signs (*signa*) are perceptible during sleep because the climate of the night (*fluidum*) has far less excitaments than the climate of the day. Slight inner motion during sleep causes the rise of phantasmatas from which it is possible to anticipate the future. Therefore Aquinas admits that there can be sciences able to talk about the future. We can learn about things and events that concern the future in two ways: *in seipsis* or *in suis causis*. *In seipsis* means that they are cognizable only by God, whose view reaches all of time. *In suis causis* means that they are knowable by man. For example, when an astrologer predicts a future eclipse of the sun he follows his knowledge of necessary causes, which he learns with scientific certainty. For Augustine also the soul has a certain prophetic power to be able to learn about future events by its nature. A kind of disruption – *anima est quando retrahitur corporeis sensibus* – from bodily senses and return – *revertitur* – of the soul to itself becomes the ability to predict the future. Aquinas reacts to Augustine’s statement about certain disposition of disruption by his claim that the soul disposes of the possibility of learning about the future. Augustine accepts and then modifies the platonic thought that the soul participates in ideas and it is the body that prevents it from direct cognition of these ideas; Aquinas, on the contrary, does not believe that the soul needs to be disrupted from corporeal reality to be able to learn about the future. Human reason learns due to sensitive material and therefore, according to Aquinas, from the nature of the soul it is not possible to learn about the future without the senses. The human soul learns rather from the impres-
sions of higher (spiritual) and corporeal reasons – *per impressionem aliquarum causarum superiorum spiritualium et corporalium*. We can understand the spiritual reasons from the fact that God's power illuminates human reason by angelic service or help (*ministerio angelorum*) and phantasmas are organized in such a way that it is possible to predict the future from them. Phantasmas are not newly-created, they are rather arranged (*ordinatur*), i.e., „structurized“ by the interference of divine power so that human reason is able to learn about the future. Man therefore does not learn about the future directly but he has the ability to learn some of its causes; this „cognition“ can also be caused by divine revelation or angelic service. In the example of predicting the future, it is manifest that for cognition it is not only reason that is important but also, for instance, the influence of demons on fantasy.

The influence of dream images appears especially in the changes in bodily functions. Aquinas contemplates the influence of separated substances at the level of local motion (*motus localis*) in physical matter. While an angel can cause a certain kind of *impression* of the intelligible into the intellect by the act of illumination, a demon is able to create *impressiones* in the organic constitution of man, i.e. in the external and internal senses; an angel does not therefore influence the sensitive part of the human soul but is able to illuminate its intellectual part. In dreams strong phantasmas can cause certain bodily changes – disharmony of bodily juices (*humores*). In this way Aquinas explains that, for example, *nocturna pollutio* can be caused by strong imagination. Therefore there are three causes (*corporalis, animalis interior, spiritualis extrinseca*) that explain the psychosomatic changes during sleep. Phantasmas play an unsubstitutable role here because as dream images they influence the bodily functions. If there is a causal relation between dreams and real events, then dreams can sometimes predict the future. A dream can be a cause of acting when the human mind is so disturbed by phantasmas in the dream that it seeks, when awake, to turn it into reality. Aquinas distinguishes two inner (*causa interior animalis, causa intrinseca corporalis*) and two external (*causa exterior corporalis, causa exterior spiritualis*) causes which bring about dreams:

1. *causa interior animalis*: when in the imagination of a sleeping man such phantasmas appear that were also strong when he was awake.
2. *causa intrinseca corporalis*: owing to the inner body structure a motion in fantasy is created (*aliquis motus in phantasia*). Due to the disharmony of inner juices, for example due to the dominance of cold juices, phantasmas of water or snow arise in dreams. That is the reason why doctors should be interested in dream interpretation because the disharmony points to possible illnesses.
3. *causa exterior corporalis*: the imagination of a sleeping man changes according to the influence of celestial bodies. Aquinas believes that fantasy can change due to the influence of celestial bodies by a kind of impression imprinted into the fantastic and appetitive part of human soul. The question of the influence of celestial bodies on man is an important part of the reflections about the place of human intellect and will. Aquinas rejects the idea that celestial bodies could have an impact on the human free decision-making. Celestial bodies can have an influence only as a certain imprint (*imprimare*) into lower psychic faculties whose activities are connected with body organs. The intellect and will, however, are not in a body organ and therefore human acts...
and decisions cannot depend on the influence of celestial bodies. If, however, there is a certain influence on lower psychic faculties, in what way can we talk about the influence on intellectual activities? The intellect and will can be influenced indirectly and accidentally. Incorrect activity of intellect can spring from the incorrect functions of internal senses, lower psychic faculties: *intellectus ex necessitate accipit ab inferioribus viribus apprehensivis: unde turbata vi imaginativa vel cogitativa vel memorativa, ex necessitate turbatur actio intellectus.* Spiritual substances that, according to Aquinas, move the celestial bodies can through these bodies influence the sub-lunar world. These spiritual substances can have a direct impact on the intellect – due to illumination.

4. *causa exterior spiritualis:* a cause from God; due to angels a divine message is revealed in dreams or due to demons future events can be exposed.

This classification of four causes of dreams points to a specific power of imagination which unveils fantasy as a medium which connects the sensual part of soul with the internal and external influences.

Fantasy of animals (*animalia bruta*) is entirely under the influence of celestial bodies. Movements of animals are under the influence of nature (more perfect instinct – *vis aestimativa*), while man „moves“ according to his own intellect and will. Therefore this statement of Aquinas’ is in agreement with Aristotle, who says that some of the most irrational beings are the most foresighted because their reason is not engaged in problems but it is barren and blank from everything, moved by mover.

The analysis of dreams and their causes shows that it is necessary to see phantasmas not only in the context of epistemology but also as important entities influencing behaviour and human emotions and feelings. Thomas Aquinas is really a thinker *par excellence* because he tries to distil the problems that he outlines and that are often very unclear into the interpretation of psychic activities. The difference between sleep and being awake lies in the fact that man disposes with intellect which considers, evaluates and differentiates between an image and reality.

An inherent part of the teachings of medieval thinkers was the specific topic of the philosophical-psychological nature of prophetic visions. Prophecy is generally considered to be a gift that is given to man by God. The exceptionality of prophets lay in their specific vision (*visio*) which transcends the boundary of „normal“ cognition of things. In visions the prophet learns about God’s intentions in different ways – by bodily signs, by voice, or by vision. There is a question of how imaginative vision (*visio imaginaria*) can be explained – how the prophet can see God in physical images. Prophecy consists of cognition of what is far and in the future: *Prophetia est inspiratio et revelatio divina, per quam tum futura contigentia, praenoscuntur ac prae dicentur, tum alia quae naturalem nostram cognitionem superant, cognita enuntiantur.*

Prophecies or dreams play an important role not only for Christian medieval authors but also for Arabian and Jewish thinkers.

I will not address the content or nature of prophecies as it is the division of prophecies that is interesting for our topic and it is this division which points to the hierarchy of individual prophecies. Like Augustine or Alanus de Insulis, Aquinas also differentiates three kinds of supernatural visions: *visio corporalis, visio imaginaria and visio intellectualis.* *Visio corporalis* is a physical seeing, i.e. the divine is revealed in something visible, for example in the Bible the prophet sees a hand writing on the wall. *Visio
imaginaria is imaginative seeing which does not reveal the divine in concrete, physical characteristics but in images. Aquinas writes: secundum imaginariam visionem, quando divinitus aliquae rerum figulae prophetis ostenduntur, ut olla succensa Ieremiae et equi et montes Zachariae. Here, however, Aquinas does not write about phantasmatas but about rerum figulae. The highest level of prophetic seeing is visio intellectualis, by which the prophet sees intelligible substances and which is unreachable by lower natural abilities. According to Anthony Kenny, phantasmatas can, in compliance with their will, rearrange and, in this way, create a phantasma of something we wish to think about. Kenny states that we have the ability to create a form representing Jerusalem and a form representing fire and so create a new image of burning Jerusalem. I consider this interpretation of Kenny as problematic especially because he does not mention the fact that the example of burning Jerusalem appears in Aquinas’ work in the context of specific prophetic cognition which is supernaturalis cognitio. Using this example from the treatise De Veritate does not, in my opinion, testify to human free will to create such images; it is not cognitio naturalis but particularities transcending the level of natural (in the sense of naturalis) cognition. It is possible to “see” God in another way than by senses, i.e. due to visio imaginaria, imaginative seeing which becomes the subject of Aquinas’ commentary on Isaiah. Aquinas tried to explain Isaiah’s statement which is: I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. This statement manifests imaginative seeing which, however, does not grasp God’s substance as visio intellectualis. Imagination is not taken as a creative act; it is God, personified in an image, who reveals Himself to the prophet through visio imaginaria. In the rhetoric of the Bible it is natural to use metaphorical representation of divine attributes by way of things perceptible by the senses. This metaphorical comparison is not, however, the cognition of God’s essence but only a certain kind of vision, dependent on images. This kind of prophetic cognition (visio imaginaria) is therefore a specific kind of understanding of the imaginative manifestation of God and His appearances. In this way Aquinas explains that, for example, in prophetic texts divine things are described metaphorically through sensual things and images. Phantasmata in imaginacione which were not created from human potencies but from divine influence, i.e. it is from divine grace that prophetic visions can arise. The importance and meaning of such exceptional influence of human psychic faculties points to the fact that the existence of phantasmatas does not depend entirely on the existence of sensual things. In the case of prophetic seeing we can see that phantasmata arise not only from sensuality (from the natural order of things) but also from the influence of God, ex gratia dei (“from God’s grace”). In this article I have tried to show some contexts in which Aquinas deals with the ability of fantasy. I reached the question of cognizability and limits of human sensual, imaginative and intellectual abilities. Not a single one of these faculties is able – entirely from its own nature – to become aware of spheres that transcend it. What makes them “cognizable” is love (caritas) through which man can get close to God Himself. That may be the reason why God gave the human intellect the ability to differentiate “pure” and “impure” – the intellect makes it possible to clean the mind (mens) from images and false beliefs so that we do not think about God in the way of imaginative seeing. Phantasmatas are important not only for rational cognition but they also play
an important role in the sphere of emotions, passions and anger. Therefore phantasmata are not only cognitive entities but also images or ideas that stimulate the emotional life of man.

1 I affirm this on the basis of the fact that up till now I have not found, in the voluminous interpretative literature, any adequate studies that would deal with this psychological question. To some extent this theme is dealt with in Manzaneedo, F. M., La Imaginacion y la Memoria segun Santo Tomas, Studia Universitatis S. Thomae in Urbe 9, Herder, Roma, 1978, 201–218; Ingardia, R., Thomas Aquinas: Internati onal Bibliography 1977–1990, Bowling Green State University, Ohio, 1990, 492.

2 In the 13th century for example Raimundus Lullius or Robert Kildwarby tried to cover this theme.


7 ST I–II, q. 17 a. 7 resp: How do appetitive powers affect knowledge? They act indirectly on the intellect by moving it to consider the reasons that please the desire or diverting it from those that displease it, in Dhuavamony, M., Subjectivity and Knowledge in the Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Analecta Gregoriana 148, Gregorian University Press, Roma, 1965,146.

8 This metaphor appears for example in the treatise De Spiritu et Anima. This treatise, written around 1170 and falsely ascribed to Augustine (PL 40, 779–832, the treatise is included in Augustine's works) and to Issac de Stella, played an important role in the history of medieval thinking. Contemporary investigations show that the treatise was a compilation of different works by Augustine, Cassiodor, Isidor de Sevilla, Alcuin, Anselm, Bernard from Clairvaux, Hugo de St. Victor, and Issac de Stella (see McGinn, B., Three Treatises on Man. Introduction: A Cistercian Anthropology, Cistercian Fathers 24, Ka lumazoo, 1977, 63–74). In the treatise we can find also an analogy of the tripartite division of society with the position of faculties in human being. The soul is the city (civitas) and its deliberative authority is the intellectual faculties. These faculties are protected by the knights (reason) and armies of them fight for justice. Rustics, peasants who work hard, represent sensual faculties: Rationales sunt tanquam milites, qui hostes, puta concupiscentias, impugnat per arma justitiae. Animales seu sensuales sunt tanquam rustici et artifices, qui corporalibus rudimentis insistunt, et corpori necessaria ministrant. Hanc non integras, sed virtuales: quia potentiae ejus sunt. (PL 40, 808). As J. Coleman writes: in the De Spiritu et Anima appears the purely sensual psychology as present in animal. This will increasingly be the focus of texts in the thirteenth century (see Coleman, J., Ancient and Medieval Memories. Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, 220); ST I., q.77 a.8 resp: dictur enim in libro de Spiritu et Anima (PL 40, cap. 15, 791) quod anima recepit a corpore, secum traheens sensum et imaginacionem, rationem et intellectum et intelligentiam, concepissebilitem et inscibibilitatem…ergo dicendum quod liber illae auctoritatem non habet. Unde quod ibi scriptum est, eadem facile conteemini, qua dictur.


10 ST I–II, q. 35 a. 2 resp.

11 Similarly joy (gaudium) is a kind of delight. See for example ST I–II, q. 31 a. 3: utrum delectatio differat a gadio; see Gilson, E., The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1994, 273.
ST I–II, q. 35 a. 7: utrum dolor exterior sit maior quam interior; ST I–II, q. 37 a.1 ad 3: ...dolor exterior accidit ex laesione corporali, et ita magis habet transmutationem corporalem adiunctam quam dolor interior, qui tamen est maior secundum illud quod est formale in dolore, quod est ex parte animae. Et ideo dolor corporalis magis impedit contemplationem, quae requirit omnimodam quietem, quam dolor interior. Et tamen etiam dolor interior, si multum intendantur, ita tractit intentionem, ut non possit homo de novo aliquid addiscere.

ST I–II, q. 35 a. 7 resp: apprehensio rationis et imaginationis altior est quam apprehensio sensus tactus. ST I–II, q. 38 a. 2 ad3: quod imaginatio rei contristantis, quantum est de se, nata est augere tristitiam, sed ex hoc ipso quod homo imaginatur quod facit illud quod convenit sibi secundum talem statum, concurrat inde quaedam delectatio.

ST I–II, q. 38 a. 3 resp.

Aristotle, Nik. Ethics 1166a–b; on the origin of friendship in Aristotle see Rist, J. M., Human Value: A Study in Ancient Philosophical Ethics, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1982, 56–57; on friendship and its different forms in medieval thinking see for example De Spirituali amicitia by a Cistercian thinker Aelred from Rievaulx, in: Aelredi Rievellensis, Opera omnia I, Opera ascetica, De spirituali amicitia, ed. by A. Hoste and C. H. Talbot, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medievalis, Turnhout, 1971, 287–350; for Aquinas the higher form of natural relief is love of friends who share sadness with him. ST I–II, q. 38 a. 3 resp: ...melior est quia per hoc quod amici contristantur ei, percipit se ab eis amari; quod est delectabile.

In the small treatise De motu cordis reason or fantasy is the cause of anger or other passions due to which heart gets colder or warmer. De motu cordis, 254–257: Intellectus enim et phantasia factiva passionum afferunt, ut concupiscientiae, irae et huiusmodi, ex quibus cor calescit et infrigidatur.

ST I–II, q. 41–44; q. 43 a.1 resp: ...obiectum timoris est acsimatum malum futurum propter quod resistit de facili non potest.

ST I–II, q. 44 a. 4 ad2: ...quod illi qui cadunt de trabe in alto posita, patiuntur perturbationem imagina- tionis, propter timorem casus imaginati.

For example ST I–II, q. 44 a.4 ad2; ST III, q. 13 a. 3 ad3: ad imaginacionem animae naturaliter corpus immutatur; et tanti magis, quanto anima fuerit fortioris imaginationis.

See for example an interesting chapter dedicated to the origin of human anger, ST I–II, q. 46 a.7 ad1: ad primum ergo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, ira, quamvis sit cum ratione, potest tamen etiam esse in brutis animalibus, quae ratione carent, inquantum naturali instinctu per imaginacionem moven- tur ad aliquid simile operibus rationis. Sic igitur, cum in homine sit et ratio et imaginatio, dupliciter in homine potest motus irae insurgere. Uno modo, ex sola imaginatione nuntiante laesionem. Et sic insur- git aliquis motus irae etiam ad res irrationales et inanimatas, secundum similitudinem illius motus qui est in animalibus contra quodlibet nocivum. Alio modo, ex ratione nuntiante laesionem. Et sic, ut Phi- losophus dicit II Rhetoric, nullum modo potest esse irae ad res insensibiles, neque ad mortuos.

ST I–II, q. 17 a. 7 ad3: Apprehensione autem imaginationis subiacet ordinatio rationis, secundum modum virtutis vel debilitatis imaginativae potentiae. Quod enim homo non posset imaginari quae ratio considerat, contingit vel ex hoc quod non sunt imaginabilia, sicut corporalia; vel propter debilitatem virtutis imaginativae, quae est ex aliqua indispositione organi; for the question of the latin word apprehensio see Pasnau, R., Theories of the Cognition in the Later Middle Ages, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, 203–204.


"Tomáš chtěl ukázat zásadní rozdíl,..." ("Thomas wanted to show the substantial difference which exists between the world of pure spirits and nature of man. This seems to be the right reason of why he assumed this problem and why he was later called Doctor Angelicus.") in Swiezawski, S., Novy výklad Sv. Tomáše, překlad S. Navrátilová, Cesta, Brno, 1998, 97-99; Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, ed. Ch. Baumgartner, III, Beauchesne, Paris 1987, 142-238.

"In no other era has the nature and activity of these beings been studied so much as in that which runs from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. Only St. Augustine, St. Gregory of the Great and Pseudo-Dionysios made an effort to understand systematically the world of the angels and its relations with men. The Middle Ages take up this heritage and develop it to its zenith." in Blanco, A., "The Influence of Faith in Angels on the Medieval Vision of Nature and Man", in: Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter, heraus. von A. Zimmermann und A. Speer, Miscellanea Mediaevalia 21/1, de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 1991, 457; see also the entry Engel (G. Tavard) in Lexikon der Mittelalters, III, Artemis Verlag, München-Zürich, 1986, 1908-1909.


SCG II, cap. 103, De Malo q. 16 a. 9 ad13, ST I, q. 117 a. 3 ad2: Fascination causam assignavit Avicenna ex hoc, quod materia corporalit nata est obediere spirituali substantiae magis quam contrariis agentibus in natura. Etatio quando anima fuerit fortis in sua imaginazione, corporalis materia immutatur secundum eam. Et hanc dicit esse causam oculi fascinantis.; for more detailed arguments on this topic and for criticism of Avicenna see SCG II, cap. 3, lectio I.; Marcos F. M. anzano ed writes: De la fascinazione habla ay A VICENA. Fascinazione significa estrictamente hechizo o encantamiento maléfico por medio de la mirada. Pero en sentido amplio equivale a cualquier engaño o ilusión visual. Según A VICENA, la fascinación se debe a que la materia corporal obedece a la sustancia intelectual más que a las cualidades activas y pasivas de la naturaleza. in: M anzano, F. M., La Imaginacion y la Memoria segun Santo Tomas, Studia Universitatis S. Thomae in Urbe 9, Herder, Roma, 1978,123.


Especially SCG II, cap. 72-78.

see q. 110 dealing with the influence of spiritual substances on physical substance (utrum materia corporalit obediat angelis ad nutum): ST I, q. 110 a. 2.

ST I, q. 117 a. 2 resp.

Aquinas similarly explains the evil eye of people whose soul tends to evil.

In the 9th century Costa Ben Luca called spiritus a certain delicate body. In the treatise De differentia animae et spiritus he writes that spiritus est quoddam corpus subtile. in: Costa Ben Luca, De differentia animae et spiritus, ed. by C. G. Barach, reprint from 1878, Frankfurt a. M., 1968, 102; With the word πνεῦμα, we are at the extreme opposite to any religious connotation… under the name spiritus, they (scholastics) catalogued the phenomena that had to do jointly with body and mind. in: Chenu, M. D., Toward Understanding St. Thomas, trans. by A. M. Landry, Regenery, Chicago, 1964, 101; Chenu states, however, that it is important to differentiate the various meanings of the term spiritus with regards to various contexts in which this term appears.

De Malo q.16 a.11; In II sent. d. 8 a. 5; ST I q. 111 a. 3-4.


De Potentia q. 6 a. 6 ad3: malum daemonis est furor irasibilis, concupiscientia amoris, phantasia proterva; De Malo q. 16 a. 1 ad3; Quest. disp. De Anima q. 19 ad8: malum hominis est secundum tria scilicet phantasiam protervam, quae scilicet est principium errandi, concupiscientiam amentem et irrationalen furorem; ST I, q. 54 a.5; In II Sent., d. 7 q. 2 a.1 et ad1.


ST I, q. 54 a. 5 ad3: dicendum quod phantasia proterva attribuitur daemonibus, ex eo quod habent falso imaginem de verbo bono: deceptio autem in nobis proprie fit secundumphantasiam, per quam interdum simulitudinis rerum inhaeremus sicut rebus ipsis, ut patet in dormientibus et amentibus.

ST I, q. 86 a. 4; 4ad2.

ST I, q. 86 a. 4: Ratioes autem futurorum possunt esse universales, et intellectu perceptibiles; et de eas etiam possunt esse scientiae. ST I, q. 86 a. 4: Sed prout sunt in suis causis, cognosoci possunt etiam a nobis. Et si quidem in suis causis sint ut ex quibus ex necessitate proveniant, cognoscantur per certitudinem scientiae; sicut astrologus praecognit eclipsim futuram. Si autem sic sint in suis causis quod in suis causis possunt per quandam conicuretum vel magis vel minus certam, secundum quod causae sunt vel magis vel minus inclinatae ad effectus; For this tops see Litt, T., Les Corps Çélestes dans L’Univers de Saint Thomas D’Aquin, Philosophes M édiévaux VII, Louvain, 1963, 149–196. Aquinas also wrote a treatise De sortibus in which he deals with the problem of prophesies.

Augustinus Hipponensis, De Genesi ad Litteram, XII, cap. 13 (PL 34, 464); vis sortis (prophecic power) is however refused at other place by Augustine, see Augustinus Hipponensis, Confessionem libri tredecim, IV, cap. 3; VII, cap. 6.

See an inspiring work by Patrick Quinn that deals with Platonism at Aquinas and that refutes the fixed idea about Aquinas being the representative of rigorous Aristotelism: Quinn, P., Aquinas, Platonism and the Knowledge of God, Avebury-Ashgate, Aldershot, 1997; especially ch. 4: The knowledge of God in capture, 66–80.

ST I, q. 86 a. 4.

ST I, q. 86, a. 4ad2: Spiritualium quidem, sicut cum virtute divina ministerio angelorum intellectus humanus illuminatur, et phantasmatum ordinatur ad futura aliqua cognoscenda.

Et il flujo de las especies imaginativas puede tener también un origen orgánico o corporal (causa corporalis intrinsica); como cuando los ensueños provienen de algo que se tiene en la boca, del frío, del calor,

52 De Malo, q. 3 a. 4 resp: ad videm autem alterum in vires interiores imprimerem possit, considerandum est, quod natura corporalis naturaliter nata est moveri localiter spirituali; non autem nata est formari ab ea immediate, sed ab aliquo corporali agente, ut probatur in VII Metaph.; et ideo materia corporalis naturaliter obedit angelo bono vel malo ad motum localem; et per hunc modum daemones semina colligere possunt, quae adhibent aliquibus effectibus mirabiliter faciendis, ut Augustinus dicit in IV De Trin., sed quantum ad formationem, materia corporalis creaturae spirituali non obedit ad nutum. Unde daemones non possunt materiam corporalem formare nisi virtute corporali seminum, ut Augustinus dicit. Quaecessumque ergo ex motu locali materiae corporali accidere possunt nihil prohibet per daemones fieri, nisi divinitus impediantur. Apparitio autem sive repraesentatio specierum sensibilium in organis interioribus conservaturum, potest fieri per aliquem motum localem materiae corporalis, sicut Philosophus in lib. De somno et vigilia, assignans causam apparitionis somniorum, dicit, quod cum animal dormierit, descendente plurimo sanguine ad principium sensitivum, simul descendunt motus sive impressiones derelictae ex sensibilium motionibus, quae in spiritibus sensibilibus conservantur, et movent principium apprehensivum, ita quod apparent, ac si tunc principium sensitivum a rebus ipsis exstirpis immutaretur.

53 ST II–II, q. 154 a. 5 resp; ST III, q. 80 a. 7; In IV Sent., d. 9 a. 4 q. 1; De Veritate q. 28 a. 3 ad7.

54 ST II–II., q. 95 a. 6 resp: ideo considerare oportet quid sit verum circa prae cognitionem futurorum de somnis. Sunt autem somnia futurorum eventuum quandoque quidem causa: puta cum mens alciuus, sollicita ex his quae videt in somnis, inducitur ad aliquid faciendum vel vitandum. Quandoque vero somnia sunt signa aliquorum futurorum eventuum, inquantum reducturum in aliquam causam com- munem somnis et futuris eventibus.


56 ex impressione caelestis corporis, see also Litt, T., Les Corps Célestes dans L’Univers de Saint Thomas D’Aquin, Philosophes Mèdièvaux VII, Louvain, 1963; ST I, q. 115 a. 4; ST II–II., q.95 a. 4; SCG III, cap. 84–85, 87; De Anima III, lectio 4; Comp. Theol., cap.127–128.


58 Sent. De Anima II, cap. 27, …corpora celestia habent directam impressionem in intellectum et voluntatem, idem est ac si ponatur quod intellectus est idem cum sensu. Indirecte vero impressio corporum celestium potest pertingere ad intellectum vel voluntatem, prout intellectus et voluntas coniunguntur in sua operatione virtutibus sensitivis: leso enim organo fantasie, impedirit intellectus in sua operatione; et ex appetitu sensibili inclinatur voluntas ad aliquid volendum vel nolendum. Quia tamen voluntas non ex necessitate trahitur ab appetitu sensibili, set sempe ei liberum manet sequi inclina- tionem appetitus sensibilis vel non sequi, ideo corpora celestia nullam necessitatem humanis corporibus inducunt.

59 ST I, q. 115 a. 4 resp.

60 ST I, q. 115 a. 4 resp: indirecte et per accidens impresiones corporum celestium ad intellectum et voluntatem pertingere possunt, inquantum scilicet tam intellectus quam voluntas aliquo modo ab inferioribus viribus accipient, quae organis corporis alligantur.

61 ST I, q. 115 a. 4 resp.

62 ST I, q. 111 a. 2: utrum angeli possint immutare voluntatem hominis; ST I, q. 111 a. 2: utrum angels possint immutare imaginationem hominis; ST I, q. 111 a. 2 ad4: quod angelus causans aliquam imaginariam visionem, quandoque quidem simul intellectum illuminit, ut cognoscat quid per huilusmodi similitudines significetur, et tune nulla est deceptio. Quandoque vero per operationem angeli solummodo similitudines rerum apparent in imaginione, nec tamen tune causatur deceptio ab angelo, sed ex defectu intellectus eius cui talia apparent. Sicut nee Christus fuit causa deceptionis in hoc quod multa turbis in parabolis propositus, quae non exposuit eis.

63 See especially ST II–II., q. 95 a. 4–6.

64 ST I, q.86 a.4 ad3: …animalia bruta non habent aliquid supra phantasiam quod ordinet phantasmatum, sicut habent homines rationem; et ideo phantasia brutorum animalium totaliter sequitur impressionem


69 *De Veritate*, q.12 a.7 resp.

70 *De Veritate*, q.12 a.7 resp: quando aliqua corporalibus oculis divinitus demonstrantur, ut manus scribens Baltasar; Daniel 5.5 (Vulgata): in eadem hora apparuerunt digitii quasi manus hominis scribentes contra candelabrum in superficie parietis aulae regiae et rex aspiciebat articulos manus scribentis. See Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim* lib. 12: uidit rex Baltasar articulos manus scribentis in pariete continuo que per corporis sensum imago rei corporalietur factae spiritui eius impressa est atque ipso uso facio ac praeterito illa in cogitazione permisist.

71 Ibid., q.12 a.7 resp.

72 ST I q.12 a.2 resp: Actus proportionatur ei cuius est actus. Unde nulla huiusmodi potentia potest se extendere ultra corporalia. Deus autem incorporeus est. Unde nec sensu nec imaginatione videri potest, sed solo intellectu.

73 *De Veritate*, q.12 a.7 resp: secundum intellectualem, quando aliqua intellectui ostenduntur supra naturalum rationem... solum intellectus supernaturales accipit quando videt ipsas substantias intelligibles per essentiam suam, utpote Deum et angelos, ad quod pertingere non potest secundum virtutem naturae suae; Die Kehrseite einer dogmatischen Metaphysik ist jene Schwärmerei des visionären Geistes, als Esoterik heute vielfach verbreitet, die Vorstellungen für die Sache selbst nimmt. Im Hinblick auf die drei Arten des Sehens, nämlich des sinnlichen (visio corporalis), des imaginativen (visio spiritualis, sive imaginaria) und des geistigen (visio intelectualis) (ST I, q.93 a.6), vermögen wir Gottes Wesen nur spiegelartig bzw. spekulativ (visio aenigmatica vel specularis) anzuschauen. Keine Ähnlichkeit vermag aber Gott, so wie er ist, darzustellen (ST I, q.12 a.2). Zwischen der visio specularis und der offenen Anschauung Gottes (visio beatifica) ‘vom Angesicht zu Angesicht’ besteht für Thomas ein in diesem Leben nicht zu überbrückender Unterschied (ST II-II, q.1 a.5). Die Tätigkeit der Phantasie nimmt dann ihren Ursprung in dem, was die Sprache nicht sagen und der Begriff nicht begreifen, findet aber ihre Grenze in dem, was sie nicht versinnbildlichen kann. in: Capurro, R., “Was die Sprache nicht sagen und der Begriff nicht begreifen kann Philosophische Aspekte der Einbildungskraft”, in: *Vorstellungen bilden*, Hrsg P. Fauser und E. Madelung, Friedrich Verlag, Velber, 1996, 52.

prophetab combustionem Jerusalem, habebat in anima sua speciem civitatis illius a sensu acceptam et simuliter ignis comburentem quem frequentor viderat; si igitur aliae species earundem rerum menti prophetae divinitus imprimantur, sequetur quod sint duae formae eiusdem retonis in codem subjecto, quod est inconveniens. …quod illarum rerum quas propheta vidit non oportet et ei denuo species in- fundantur, sed ut ex speciebus reservatis in thesauro virtutis imaginariae fiat quaedam ordinata aggregatio convenientis designationes rei prophetandae.

According to Augustine, images are not able to mediate divine characteristics in an exhaustive way. Through images it is not possible to understand the inner substance of divine justice, intentions and whole spiritual doings … quod unde uiderem usque ad corpus rerum est oculus et animo usque ad phantasma (Augustinus Hipponensis, Confessionum libri tres lib. 3. cap. 7). In other places phantasma is the name of illusion, empty thought as something unsure, imaginary and imperfect. (Augustus Hipponensis, Confessionum libri tredecim lib. 4. cap. 4. …et si dicebam: spera in deum, iuste non obtemperabat, quia uerior erat et melior homo, quem carissimum amiserat quam phantasma, in quod sperare iubebat.); lib. 4. cap. 7.: …non enim tu eras, sed uanum phantasma et error meus erat deus meus.; lib. 7. cap. 17.: …et mirabar, quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma, et non stabam frui deo meo, sed rapturae ad te decore tuo mox que diripiebar abs te decore tuo et ruedam in ista cum gemitu; et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis; lib. 9. cap. 3.: …quamuis enim et ipse nondum christianus in illam foueam perniciosissimi erroris inciderat, ut ureritatis tui carmen phantasma crederet, tamen inde emergens sic sibi erat, nondum imbatus ullis ecclesiæs uiae sacramenti, sed inquisitor ardississimus ureritatis.) Fantasy is identified with the free play of images, creating fictions, and can therefore be a disincentive in spiritual life. As the physical sight is turned to the body, so also the spiritual sight (oculis) is turned to the product of fantasy (phantasma). Augustine tries to show that man can recognize the image of God in his own soul but he does not recognize it through phantasma, through an image that he creates about God due to his body. The mistake of Manichean teaching lies, according to Augustine, just in the in-comprehension of the fact that inner, spiritual sight cannot draw on material, corporeal source as the element of fantasy. God is a spirit, is of immaterial substance, incomparable to any created thing or any image. Augustine is astonished that he can love God and not a thought or a vague image – et mirabar quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma. His astonishment is based on experiencing the co-existence of living God and man.

According to Augustine, images are not able to mediate divine characteristics in an exhaustive way. Through images it is not possible to understand the inner substance of divine justice, intentions and whole spiritual doings … quod unde uiderem usque ad corpus rerum est oculus et animo usque ad phantasma (Augustinus Hipponensis, Confessionum libri tres lib. 3. cap. 7). In other places phantasma is the name of illusion, empty thought as something unsure, imaginary and imperfect. (Augustus Hipponensis, Confessionum libri tredecim lib. 4. cap. 4. …et si dicebam: spera in deum, iuste non obtemperabat, quia uerior erat et melior homo, quem carissimum amiserat quam phantasma, in quod sperare iubebat.); lib. 4. cap. 7.: …non enim tu eras, sed uanum phantasma et error meus erat deus meus.; lib. 7. cap. 17.: …et mirabar, quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma, et non stabam frui deo meo, sed rapturæ ad te decore tuo mox que diripiebar abs te decore tuo et ruedam in ista cum gemitu; et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis; lib. 9. cap. 3.: …quamuis enim et ipse nondum christianus in illam foueam perniciosissimi erroris inciderat, ut ureritatis tui carmen phantasma crederet, tamen inde emergens sic sibi erat, nondum imbatus ullis ecclesiæs uiae sacramenti, sed inquisitor ardississimus ureritatis.) Fantasy is identified with the free play of images, creating fictions, and can therefore be a disincentive in spiritual life. As the physical sight is turned to the body, so also the spiritual sight (oculis) is turned to the product of fantasy (phantasma). Augustine tries to show that man can recognize the image of God in his own soul but he does not recognize it through phantasma, through an image that he creates about God due to his body. The mistake of Manichean teaching lies, according to Augustine, just in the in-comprehension of the fact that inner, spiritual sight cannot draw on material, corporeal source as the element of fantasy. God is a spirit, is of immaterial substance, incomparable to any created thing or any image. Augustine is astonished that he can love God and not a thought or a vague image – et mirabar quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma. His astonishment is based on experiencing the co-existence of living God and man.
formatur, repraesentans deum secundum aliquem modum similitudinis, prout in scripturis divinis divina per res sensibiles metaphoricis describuntur.

82 *ST* I, q.12 a.12 resp.: Lumen naturale intellectus confortatur per infusionem luminis gratuitī. Et interdum etiam phantasmata in imaginatione hominis formantur divinitus, magis experimentia res divinis, quam ea quae naturaliter a sensibilibus accipimus; soicut apparat in visionibus prophetabilis.

83 *ST* I, q.12 a.13 ad2: ex phantasmatibus, vel a sensu acceptis secundum naturalem ordinem, vel divinitus in imaginatone formatis, tanto excellentior cognitio intellectualis habetur, quanto lumen intelligibile in homine fortius fuerit. Et sic per revelationem ex phantasmatibus plenior cognitio accipitur, ex infusione divini luminis.

84 *ST* II-II, q.8. a.7 resp. (utrum dono intellectus respondeat sexta beatitudo, scilicet: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipse Deum videbunt)

85 ibid. … munditia cordis est quasi completiva respectu visionis divinae, et hæc quidem est munditia mentis depuratae a phantasmatis et erroribus, ut scilicet ea quae deo proponuntur non accipientur per modum corporali phantasmatum, nec secundum haereticas perversitates. Et hanc munditiam facit donum intellectus.

**RESUMÉ**