Aquinas Reader On Aristotle or The Philosopher

St. Thomas Aquinas is often referred to as one of the greatest commentators of Aristotle. The aim of this work is to make St. Thomas the philosopher more accessible for a concentrated study. In order to accomplish this, his principle work, the Summa Theologica has been currated to only sections including the mention of 'Aristotle' or 'The Philosopher'. This subset of articles has been further divided by book from the Aristotelian corpus. Keywords and a simple summary have been added to enrich the learning experience with overarching snapshots. We have added a reference distribution to illustrate the prominence of his citations. The sections presented are as they appear in the Summa Theologica for each reference book identified by headers. Each reference book in study is highlighted throughout in yellow for convenience. Books identified with multiple matching references have been adjudicated arbitrarily.

This is a smaller reader of Aquinas in so far as Aristotle is referenced in **De Gener. Animal..**

We hope you enjoy this study of Aristotle as he is depicted through the lens of St. Thomas.

# De Gener. Animal.

**Keywords:**

nature, souls, perfect, blood, woman, power, generator, seminally, wherefore, thing, likeness, male, philosopher, hindered, matter, sinned, state, flesh, actually, corrupt, animals, body, instrument, man, offspring, orth, christ, female, spirit thereof, second, certain concupiscence, virginal.

## Volume 4 - Question 28. The virginity of the Mother of God

**Article 1. Whether the Mother of God was a virgin in conceiving Christ?**

Reply to Objection 5. According to the Philosopher (**De Gener. Animal.** i, ii, iv), in conception the seed of the male is not by way of matter, but by way of agent: and the female alone supplies the matter. Wherefore though the seed of the male was lacking in Christ's conception, it does not follow that due matter was lacking.

## Volume 4 - Question 33. The mode and order of Christ's conception

**Article 2. Whether Christ's body was animated in the first instant of its conception?**

Objection 3. Further, whenever there is "before" and "after" there must be several instants. But according to the Philosopher (**De Gener. Animal.** ii) in the generation of a man there must needs be "before" and "after": for he is first of all a living thing, and afterwards, an animal, and after that, a man. Therefore the animation of Christ could not be effected in the first instant of His conception.

## Volume 3 - Question 26. The order of charity

**Article 10. Whether a man ought to love his mother more than his father?**

Objection 1. It would seem that a man ought to love his mother more than his father. For, as the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** i, 20), "the female produces the body in generation." Now man receives his soul, not from his father, but from God by creation, as stated in I:90:2;II-II:118. Therefore a man receives more from his mother than from his father: and consequently he ought to love her more than him.

## Volume 4 - Question 32. The active principle in Christ's conception

**Article 3. Whether the Holy Ghost should be called Christ's father in respect of His humanity?**

Objection 1. It would seem that the Holy Ghost should be called Christ's father in respect of His humanity. Because, according to the Philosopher (**De Gener. Animal.** i): "The Father is the active principle in generation, the Mother supplies the matter." But the Blessed Virgin is called Christ's Mother, by reason of the matter which she supplied in His conception. Therefore it seems that the Holy Ghost can be called His father, through being the active principle in His conception.

## Volume 4 - Question 31. The matter from which the Saviour's body was conceived

**Article 5. Whether the flesh of Christ was conceived of the Virgin's purest blood?**

Reply to Objection 3. Woman's semen is not apt for generation, but is something imperfect in the seminal order, which, on account of the imperfection of the female power, it has not been possible to bring to complete seminal perfection. Consequently this semen is not the necessary matter of conception; as the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** i): wherefore there was none such in Christ's conception: all the more since, though it is imperfect in the seminal order, a certain concupiscence accompanies its emission, as also that of the male semen: whereas in that virginal conception there could be no concupiscence. Wherefore Damascene says (De Fide Orth. iii) that Christ's body was not conceived "seminally." But the menstrual blood, the flow of which is subject to monthly periods, has a certain natural impurity of corruption: like other superfluities, which nature does not heed, and therefore expels. Of such menstrual blood infected with corruption and repudiated by nature, the conception is not formed; but from a certain secretion of the pure blood which by a process of elimination is prepared for conception, being, as it were, more pure and more perfect than the rest of the blood. Nevertheless, it is tainted with the impurity of lust in the conception of other men: inasmuch as by sexual intercourse this blood is drawn to a place apt for conception. This, however, did not take place in Christ's conception: because this blood was brought together in the Virgin's womb and fashioned into a child by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Therefore is Christ's body said to be "formed of the most chaste and purest blood of the Virgin."

Reply to Objection 1. Since the Blessed Virgin was of the same nature as other women, it follows that she had flesh and bones of the same nature as theirs. Now, flesh and bones in other women are actual parts of the body, the integrity of which results therefrom: and consequently they cannot be taken from the body without its being corrupted or diminished. But as Christ came to heal what was corrupt, it was not fitting that He should bring corruption or diminution to the integrity of His Mother. Therefore it was becoming that Christ's body should be formed not from the flesh or bones of the Virgin, but from her blood, which as yet is not actually a part, but is potentially the whole, as stated in **De Gener. Animal.** i. Hence He is said to have taken flesh from the Virgin, not that the matter from which His body was formed was actual flesh, but blood, which is flesh potentially.

I answer that, As stated above (Article 4), in Christ's conception His being born of a woman was in accordance with the laws of nature, but that He was born of a virgin was above the laws of nature. Now, such is the law of nature that in the generation of an animal the female supplies the matter, while the male is the active principle of generation; as the Philosopher proves (**De Gener. Animal.** i). But a woman who conceives of a man is not a virgin. And consequently it belongs to the supernatural mode of Christ's generation, that the active principle of generation was the supernatural power of God: but it belongs to the natural mode of His generation, that the matter from which His body was conceived is similar to the matter which other women supply for the conception of their offspring. Now, this matter, according to the Philosopher (**De Gener. Animal.**), is the woman's blood, not any of her blood, but brought to a more perfect stage of secretion by the mother's generative power, so as to be apt for conception. And therefore of such matter was Christ's body conceived.

## Volume 4 - Question 34. The perfection of the child conceived

**Article 2. Whether Christ as man had the use of free-will in the first instant of His conception?**

Nevertheless it was possible for Him, in the first instant of His conception, to have an operation of the senses: especially as to the sense of touch, which the infant can exercise in the womb even before it has received the rational soul, as is said, **De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3,4. Wherefore, since Christ had the rational soul in the first instant of His conception, through His body being already fashioned and endowed with sensible organs, much more was it possible for Him to exercise the sense of touch in that same instant.

## Volume 5 - Question 52. The impediment of the condition of slavery

**Article 1. Whether the condition of slavery is an impediment to matrimony?**

Reply to Objection 2. Nothing prevents a thing being against nature as to the first intention of nature, and yet not against nature as to its second intention. Thus, as stated in De Coelo, ii, all corruption, defect, and old age are contrary to nature, because nature intends being and perfection, and yet they are not contrary to the second intention of nature, because nature, through being unable to preserve being in one thing, preserves it in another which is engendered of the other's corruption. And when nature is unable to bring a thing to a greater perfection it brings it to a lesser; thus when it cannot produce a male it produces a female which is "a misbegotten male" (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3). I say then in like manner that slavery is contrary to the first intention of nature. Yet it is not contrary to the second, because natural reason has this inclination, and nature has this desire—that everyone should be good; but from the fact that a person sins, nature has an inclination that he should be punished for his sin, and thus slavery was brought in as a punishment of sin. Nor is it unreasonable for a natural thing to be hindered by that which is unnatural in this way; for thus is marriage hindered by impotence of coition, which impotence is contrary to nature in the way mentioned.

**Article 4. Whether children should follow the condition of their father?**

Objection 2. Further, the being of a thing depends on the form more than on the matter. Now in generation the father gives the form, and the mother the matter (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 4). Therefore the child should follow the condition of the father rather than of the mother.

## Volume 5 - Question 65. Plurality of wives

**Article 1. Whether it is against the natural law to have several wives?**

Objection 5. Further, according to the Philosopher (**De Gener. Animal.** i, 20), in the begetting of offspring the male is to the female as agent to patient, and as the craftsman is to his material. But it is not against the order of nature for one agent to act on several patients, or for one craftsman to work in several materials. Therefore neither is it contrary to the law of nature for one husband to have many wives.

Reply to Objection 8. This precept of the natural law, "Do not to another what thou wouldst not were done to thyself," should be understood with the proviso that there be equal proportion. For if a superior is unwilling to be withstood by his subject, he is not therefore bound not to withstand his subject. Hence it does not follow in virtue of this precept that as a husband is unwilling for his wife to have another husband, he must not have another wife: because for one man to have several wives is not contrary to the first principles of the natural law, as stated above: whereas for one wife to have several husbands is contrary to the first principles of the natural law, since thereby the good of the offspring which is the principal end of marriage is, in one respect, entirely destroyed, and in another respect hindered. For the good of the offspring means not only begetting, but also rearing. Now the begetting of offspring, though not wholly voided (since a woman may be impregnated a second time after impregnation has already taken place, as stated in **De Gener. Animal.** vii. 4), is nevertheless considerably hindered, because this can scarcely happen without injury either to both fetus or to one of them. But the rearing of the offspring is altogether done away, because as a result of one woman having several husbands there follows uncertainty of the offspring in relation to its father, whose care is necessary for its education. Wherefore the marriage of one wife with several husbands has not been sanctioned by any law or custom, whereas the converse has been.

## Volume 1 - Question 76. The union of body and soul

**Article 3. Whether besides the intellectual soul there are in man other souls essentially different from one another?**

Objection 3. Further, the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3) that the embryo is an animal before it is a man. But this would be impossible if the essence of the sensitive soul were the same as that of the intellectual soul; for an animal is such by its sensitive soul, while a man is a man by the intellectual soul. Therefore in man the essence of the sensitive soul is not the same as the essence of the intellectual soul.

## Volume 2 - Question 81. The cause of sin, on the part of man

**Article 5. Whether if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would have contracted original sin?**

Objection 2. Further, if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would have been born liable to suffering and death, since it is "the mother" that "provides the matter in generation" as the Philosopher states (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 1,4), when death and liability to suffering are the necessary results of matter. Now liability to suffering and the necessity of dying are punishments of original sin. Therefore if Eve, and not Adam, had sinned, their children would contract original sin.

## Volume 1 - Question 92. The production of the woman

**Article 1. Whether the woman should have been made in the first production of things?**

Reply to Objection 1. As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from defect in the active force or from some material indisposition, or even from some external influence; such as that of a south wind, which is moist, as the Philosopher observes (**De Gener. Animal.** iv, 2). On the other hand, as regards human nature in general, woman is not misbegotten, but is included in nature's intention as directed to the work of generation. Now the general intention of nature depends on God, Who is the universal Author of nature. Therefore, in producing nature, God formed not only the male but also the female.

## Volume 1 - Question 99. The condition of the offspring as to the body

**Article 2. Whether, in the primitive state, women would have been born?**

Objection 1. It would seem that in the primitive state woman would not have been born. For the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3) that woman is a "misbegotten male," as though she were a product outside the purpose of nature. But in that state nothing would have been unnatural in human generation. Therefore in that state women would not have been born.

## Volume 1 - Question 118. The production of man from man as to the soul

**Article 1. Whether the sensitive soul is transmitted with the semen?**

Reply to Objection 4. In perfect animals, generated by coition, the active force is in the semen of the male, as the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3); but the foetal matter is provided by the female. In this matter, the vegetative soul exists from the very beginning, not as to the second act, but as to the first act, as the sensitive soul is in one who sleeps. But as soon as it begins to attract nourishment, then it already operates in act. This matter therefore is transmuted by the power which is in the semen of the male, until it is actually informed by the sensitive soul; not as though the force itself which was in the semen becomes the sensitive soul; for thus, indeed, the generator and generated would be identical; moreover, this would be more like nourishment and growth than generation, as the Philosopher says. And after the sensitive soul, by the power of the active principle in the semen, has been produced in one of the principal parts of the thing generated, then it is that the sensitive soul of the offspring begins to work towards the perfection of its own body, by nourishment and growth. As to the active power which was in the semen, it ceases to exist, when the semen is dissolved and the (vital) spirit thereof vanishes. Nor is there anything unreasonable in this, because this force is not the principal but the instrumental agent; and the movement of an instrument ceases when once the effect has been produced.

**Article 2. Whether the intellectual soul is produced from the semen?**

Objection 2. Further, as shown above (I:76:3), the intellectual, sensitive, and nutritive souls are, in substance, one soul in man. But the sensitive soul in man is generated from the semen, as in other animals; wherefore the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3) that the animal and the man are not made at the same time, but first of all the animal is made having a sensitive soul. Therefore also the intellectual soul is produced from the semen.

Again, the seminal power acts by virtue of the soul of the begetter according as the soul of the begetter is the act of the body, making use of the body in its operation. Now the body has nothing whatever to do in the operation of the intellect. Therefore the power of the intellectual principle, as intellectual, cannot reach the semen. Hence the Philosopher says (**De Gener. Animal.** ii, 3): "It follows that the intellect alone comes from without."

## Volume 1 - Question 119. The propagation of man as to the body

**Article 2. Whether the semen is produced from surplus food?**

On the contrary, The Philosopher proves in many ways (**De Gener. Animal.** i, 18) that "the semen is surplus food."