



## The *Passio Corporalis* and the *Passio Animalis* in Aquinas

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### Abstract

Contemporary discussions of Aquinas' understanding of the passions often mention the *passio corporalis* and the *passio animalis*, but no recent scholarship has paid close attention to what these terms mean, largely because many scholars wrongly assume that '*passio animalis*' simply means the same thing as '*passio animae*'. However, this paper argues that '*passio corporalis*' and '*passio animalis*' are specialized terms that Aquinas uses in order to explain the ways in which Christ experienced suffering on earth. Furthermore, understanding these terms properly bears important implications for understanding the development of Aquinas' thought on the passion of pain.

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In four places in his extant corpus, Aquinas draws a distinction between what he calls a *passio corporalis* and a *passio animalis* (hereafter, I will refer to this as the "*corporalis-animalis* distinction").<sup>1</sup> The basic distinction between these two kinds of passion is that the *passio corporalis* "begins in the body and ends in the soul", while the *passio animalis* does the opposite, beginning in the soul and ending in the body.<sup>2</sup> Straightforward as this may seem, an examination of the secondary literature on Aquinas' understanding of the passions shows that scholars do not know what to make of it. Despite the confusion, most scholars who do treat of the *corporalis-animalis* distinction do so briefly, usually without making reference to other scholars who do so, and often giving only a cursory overview. This is likely due to the fact that the *corporalis-animalis* distinction can seem relatively unimportant. Not only does Aquinas discuss this distinction a mere four times in his writings, but, as some point out, it does not come

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<sup>1</sup> See *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2; *De ver.* q. 26, aa. 3-4; *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4; and *Comp. Theol.* II, ch. 232. As I will argue below, much confusion in the secondary literature has arisen due to the ways in which the terms '*passio corporalis*' and '*passio animalis*' have been rendered in vernacular languages. Consequently, I will leave them untranslated in the body text. All translations from Latin will be my own.

<sup>2</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 2, co. "incipiat a corpore et terminetur in anima".

up in Aquinas' lengthiest and most mature treatment of the passions, the so-called "Treatise on the Passions," in *STh* I-II, qq. 22-48.<sup>3</sup>

However, there are several considerations that should give one pause before writing off the *corporalis-animalis* as insignificant. While it is true, for example, that Aquinas does not discuss the *corporalis-animalis* distinction in his long treatment of the passions in the *Prima secundae*, he nevertheless does discuss it in two places that he wrote late in his career.<sup>4</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4 and *Comp. Theol.* II, ch. 232 both discuss the *corporalis-animalis* distinction, and both were written about the same time: between 1272 and 1273, shortly before Aquinas' death. These works thus represent some of the most mature parts of Aquinas' thought; if he uses the *corporalis-animalis* distinction here, he must have still thought it significant at this time. Furthermore, it is especially important to note that both of these discussions of the *corporalis-animalis* distinction take place within the context of analyzing Christ's passions. As will be seen in more detail below, this distinction serves as a tool that Aquinas uses to explore the various ways in which Christ suffered. Understanding it, therefore, is a key component of understanding Aquinas' thought on the salvific work of Christ.

In addition, the confusion regarding the *corporalis-animalis* distinction in the secondary literature bears important implications for understanding Aquinas' thought on the passions in general. For example, a number of scholars have taken note of the fact that Aquinas refers to the passion of pain (*dolor*) as a *passio corporalis* in his early work, but calls it a *passio animae* in the *Summa*.<sup>5</sup> Many scholars, taking "*passio animae*" to mean the same thing as "*passio animalis*", conclude from this that Aquinas changed his mind on how to categorize pain; it was a *passio corporalis* in his early work, but it was a *passio animalis* in his later work. This poses a problem: if pain is a *passio animae* or *passio animalis*, then how does it differ from sorrow (*tristitia*)? This recategorization of pain thus seems to add a redundancy to Aquinas' enumeration of the passions. On the other hand, if pain were to remain outside the category of *passio animae*, since, as Aquinas had said in the *De veritate*, it involves "nothing on the part of the soul except mere apprehension", then this would mean that pain is a mere sensation of a bodily injury.<sup>6</sup> Innocuous as this claim may seem, it becomes problematic when considered in light of Christ's suffering. If Christ's pain was merely

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<sup>3</sup> See Nicholas E. Lombardo, *Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2011), 46 and Marcel Sarot, 'God, Emotion, and Corporeality: A Thomist Perspective', *The Thomist* 58, no. 1 (1994), 68, n. 21.

<sup>4</sup> For the dating of Aquinas' works, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, *Initiation à Saint Thomas d'Aquin: Sa personne et son œuvre*, 3<sup>e</sup> édition (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2015), 429-486.

<sup>5</sup> Journet D. Kahn, 'A Thomistic Theory of Emotion', (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1957), 28-57; Howard Gil Weil, *The Dynamic Aspect of Emotions in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Angelicum, 1966), Rémi Tittley, 'La douleur sensible est-elle une passion corporelle ou une passion animale selon Saint Thomas d'Aquin?' (PhD diss., Université de Montréal, 1967); Marcel Sarot, 'God, Emotion, and Corporeality', 69, n. 21; Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22-48* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 190; and Lombardo, *Logic of Desire*, 44-46.

<sup>6</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 4, "ex parte animae nisi apprehensionem tantum".

a sensation and did not involve a passion at the level of sense appetite, this would seem to deny that Christ truly suffered.<sup>7</sup>

In view of these difficulties, the purpose of this article will be to uncover the natures of the *passio corporalis* and the *passio animalis* in Aquinas' thought. It will begin with a historical analysis of the terms themselves and then move on to an analysis of their underlying psychology. In view of these psychological findings, it will argue that the passion of pain should be categorized, at all stages of Aquinas' thought, as a *passio corporalis*, not a *passio animalis*. It will, finally, discuss the implications that the underlying psychology of the *passio corporalis* and the *passio animalis* as well as the proper categorization of the passion of pain bear for understanding Christ's suffering.

### 1. Historical Analysis of the *Passio Corporalis* and the *Passio Animalis*

A brief analysis of the places in Aquinas' corpus where he discusses the *corporalis-animalis* distinction would seem to back up the position that Aquinas drew up this distinction early in his career, but later decided that it was not as helpful as he had once thought, except perhaps when it came to trying to understand the passions of Christ.<sup>8</sup> A closer examination of Aquinas' first discussion of the *corporalis-animalis* distinction, however, shows that Aquinas did not invent this distinction and did not change his mind regarding its usefulness. Rather, Aquinas inherited this distinction from his intellectual forebears and employed it with a particular purpose: to enumerate and analyze the ways in which Christ suffered.

Aquinas' first discussion of the *corporalis-animalis* distinction takes place in *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2. There, he differentiates pain, which he calls a *passio corporalis*, and sorrow, which he calls a *passio animalis*, primarily on the basis that the former pertains to the sense of touch, while the latter pertains to the sensitive appetite. He further explains that this is why Augustine had said that sorrow was "of the soul according to itself," while pain was "of the soul through the body".<sup>9</sup> Having drawn this distinction, Aquinas then discusses how each of these two passions would have affected Christ's soul and the various powers thereof. While it may at first seem that Aquinas simply came up with this distinction since he found it useful at the time, that

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<sup>7</sup> This is Gondreau's concern in Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co., 2002), 384-388.

<sup>8</sup> This is the position of Lombardo, *Logic of Desire*, 45-46, who comes to this conclusion after noting that Aquinas discusses the *passio corporalis* in the *Tertia pars* of the *Summa*, but not in the *Treatise on the Passions*. Sarot, "God, Emotions, and Corporeality", 69, n. 21 makes similar observations, but stops short of drawing any hard conclusions. Nicholas Kahm also notes that Aquinas does not discuss the *corporalis-animalis* distinction in the *Treatise on the Passions*, and suggests that this is because Aquinas' main concern there, as he states in the prologue to the *Secunda pars*, is to consider man as the principle of his own acts, which would exclude a discussion of the *passio corporalis*. See Nicholas Kahm, *Aquinas on Emotion's Participation in Reason* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2019), 144, n. 60.

<sup>9</sup> In *III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "dolorem animae secundum se qui proprie dicitur tristitia, et dolorem animae per corpus, qui proprie dicitur dolor".

Aquinas sees this distinction in Augustine shows that this is not likely to be the case. A look at the context in which Aquinas here draws the distinction shows that it clearly is not.

Distinction XV of *In III Sent.* is dedicated to the defects that Christ assumed when he took on human nature. It begins with a *prooemium*, which provides an outline of the text of Peter Lombard that Aquinas plans to examine in the first question of Distinction XV, and it ends with an *expositio textus*, which explains Lombard's text in light of the topics that Aquinas analyzes throughout Distinction XV. In the *prooemium*, Aquinas makes a clear reference to the *corporalis-animalis* distinction, saying that one part of Lombard's *Sentences*, Lombard "first solves objections concerning the passions that are said to be of the soul alone, such as sorrow, and other such things, and second, he solves [objections] concerning those [passions] that are of the soul through the body, such as sensible pain".<sup>10</sup> Aquinas is clearly drawing on the *corporalis-animalis* distinction here, even if he does not use either of those terms in this quotation. One kind of passion is of the soul, while the other is of the body and affects the soul through the body. Further, sorrow is an example of the first kind and pain of the second kind. Clearly, then, Aquinas does not invent the *corporalis-animalis* distinction on his own initiative: he sees it in Lombard. And the *expositio textus* clarifies why: Lombard draws this distinction in order to refute Hilary of Poitiers, whose writings "seem to exclude the passion of pain and fear from Christ."<sup>11</sup>

A look at Peter Lombard's text shows that one of the major purposes of Distinction XV is to refute Hilary's positions that Christ experienced neither pain nor sorrow. Regarding pain, Hilary argues that although Christ assumed human nature, he "[did] not have a nature able to feel pain."<sup>12</sup> Hilary's argument is essentially an *a fortiori* argument based on the actions of Christ that are revealed in Scripture. Christ could walk through walls, he could walk on water, and he could heal. In view of such, Hilary asks, "How can we judge the flesh conceived from the Spirit by the nature of the human body?"<sup>13</sup> In other words, although Christ did assume human nature, his flesh was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was able to accomplish many things that naturally conceived human beings could not. From this, Hilary concludes that it is unreasonable to say that Christ, who was capable of such marvels, would be so weak as to experience pain.

Hilary's arguments regarding sorrow are similar. While Hilary must acknowledge that Christ did experience sorrow, since Scripture says as much, he insists that Christ never experienced sorrow for his own sake. Regarding Mt. 26, 38, for example, where Scripture records Christ saying that he is sorrowful unto death,

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<sup>10</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 1, pro., "primo solvit objectiones de passionibus, quas dixerant esse animae tantum, sicut tristitia, et huiusmodi; secundo solvit de illis quae sunt animae per corpus, sicut est dolor sensibilis".

<sup>11</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, *exp. text.*, "videntur a Christo dolorem passionis et timorem excludere."

<sup>12</sup> Hilary, *De Trinitate*, bk. 10, n. 23 (CCSL 62A, 478), "naturam non habens ad dolendum".

<sup>13</sup> Hilary, *De Trinitate*, bk. 10, n. 23 (CCSL 62A, 478), "quid per naturam humani corporis conceptam ex Spiritu carnem iudicamus?"

Hilary argues that he was “not sorrowful for himself,” but for Peter, James and John, who were with him in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>14</sup> As with the passion of pain, Christ’s strength precludes the possibility of his experiencing sorrow due to some evil that he encounters, but he is able to experience sorrow on behalf of somebody else, who, not having Christ’s strength, would be prone to experience sorrow.

Lombard’s refutation of Hilary is based more on authority than theory; he amasses a collection of quotations from Scripture and from Church Fathers that contradict Hilary’s claims. But Lombard does give a theoretical response to Hilary. Drawing on Augustine, he makes a distinction, which is operative throughout the whole of *Distinction VX*, between those passions that affect the soul “through the body”, such that “without the body it would not feel”, and those passions that it feels “not through the body, indeed even without the body”.<sup>15</sup> Lombard places hunger and thirst in the first category and fear in the second. This distinction, in conjunction with Lombard’s insistence that Christ took on a true human nature and all that pertained thereto, implies a conclusion that Lombard leaves the reader to draw for himself: Christ, having a human body, experienced those passions that affect the soul through the body, and Christ, having a soul, experienced those passions that the soul experiences alone, without the help of the body. Therefore, if Christ was injured, it follows that he must have felt the pain of this injury.

This consideration alone does not shed much light on Christ’s affective experience, and does not, on its own, serve as a strong refutation of Hilary’s arguments, but Aquinas draws it out further in his commentary on this text. Following Lombard, in his discussion of Christ’s experience of pain and sorrow, Aquinas distinguishes between those passions that affect the soul through the body, in which category pain belongs, and those passions that are proper to the soul in itself, in which category sorrow belongs. Aquinas strongly limits the degree to which pain involves the soul; “The perception of an injury, what is formal in pain”, Aquinas says, “consists only in touch”.<sup>16</sup> Pain is merely a perception of the sense of touch that the body has been injured. Sorrow, however, is a matter of “interior apprehension”.<sup>17</sup> Although Aquinas does not define this term here, it is clear that this interior apprehension causes a movement of the sensitive appetite, while the perception of the sense of touch that Aquinas identifies as pain does not. For this reason, Aquinas places pain in the sense faculties as its subject, while sorrow is located in the sensitive appetite.

Although pain is in the sense of touch as its subject and sorrow is in the appetite, Aquinas explains here that ways in which pain and sorrow affect Christ’s soul involve more than the sense of touch and the sensitive appetite. Even though pain

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<sup>14</sup> Hilary, *De Trinitate*, bk. 10, c. 37 (CCSL 62A, 491), “Non ergo sibi tristis est”.

<sup>15</sup> Lombard, *III Sent.* d. 15, ch. 1 (Ed. Coll. Bonav. 611), “per corpus ... quae sine corpore non sentierit ... non per corpus, immo etiam sine corpore sentit”.

<sup>16</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., “quae est formale in dolore, sic consistit in solo tactu”.

<sup>17</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., “quantum ad perceptionem ... in tristitia [est] secundum apprehensivam interiorem”.



involves no other faculty of the soul than the sense of touch, it nevertheless affects the soul in other ways. Aquinas points out that pain is the sense of an injury, and this injury affects Christ's soul in two ways. The soul is the form of the body, which means that when the body is injured, the soul is also affected. Furthermore, the powers of the soul "are rooted in the essence of the soul," which means that bodily injury affects them as well.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the passion of sorrow, this passion belongs in the sensitive appetite, but it can affect Christ's reason all the same. Sorrow is caused by the interior apprehension of some present evil, which can cause Christ's reason to be saddened. As Aquinas explains, Christ's superior reason, the object of which is "eternal goods," was never saddened by anything.<sup>19</sup> But Christ's lower reason, which concerned temporal things, could be saddened by this apprehension, but only insofar as it was understood "as nature" (*ut natura*) not "as reason" (*ut ratio*). Reason as nature, Aquinas explains, "judges concerning things that are good or bad according to themselves", while reason as reason "judges concerning things that are good or bad in relation to something else".<sup>20</sup> That is, reason as nature is more an instinctive or intuitive mode of reasoning. A person may recoil, for example, at the thought of getting a shot in a doctor's office. Reason as reason, however, is deliberative. The same person who recoils at the thought of getting a shot may recognize, through deliberation, that it is good for the sake of his health to receive the shot. In the case of Christ, he experienced sorrow regarding his sufferings in his rational faculties because of his intuitive judgment of reason as nature. It is natural, after all, to sorrow in the face of suffering. However, Christ also experienced joy in view of the good that would come out of his suffering, due to his reason considered as reason.

From this overview of Aquinas' discussion of the *corporalis-animalis* distinction in his *Commentary* on Lombard's Sentences, it is clear that Aquinas inherited the *corporalis-animalis* distinction from Lombard and that he found it an important piece of the puzzle in explaining, *contra* Hilary, why Christ did indeed feel pain and sorrow. Aquinas' additions to Lombard's original arguments provide a more robust theoretical response to Hilary's problematic Christology. Pain not only affects Christ's soul insofar as he feels it, but also insofar as the soul is the form of the body, and so suffers when the body is injured. And Christ, despite his divine strength, still had a human nature, to which it is natural to experience sorrow in the face of present evils, as Christ did. Problems, however, remain. As Gondreau points out, if pain is merely a matter of the sense of touch, does pain really cause Christ to suffer in any meaningful sense?<sup>21</sup> As was noted above, Aquinas does later argue in the *Summa* that pain does

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<sup>18</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "in essentia animae radicanetur".

<sup>19</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "bona aeterna".

<sup>20</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "quia ratio ut natura dicitur secundum quod iudicat de eo quod est secundum se bonum vel malum, naturae conveniens vel noxium; ratio autem ut ratio, secundum quod iudicat de eo quod est bonum vel malum in ordine ad alterum".

<sup>21</sup> See the discussion in Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag GmbH & Co., 2002), 384-388.

involve a movement of the sensitive appetite, and so is not a matter of sensation alone, but this change of mind carries its own problems. Aquinas argues in the *Summa* that pain, now entailing a movement of the sensitive appetite, is a *passio animae*. Does this term mean the same thing as *passio animalis*? If so, what becomes of the category *passio corporalis*? If not, how do they differ? Finally, what implications with the answers to these questions bear for understanding Christ's suffering? To begin to answer these questions, this paper will now turn to look at the question of whether *passio animalis* and *passio animae* carry the same meaning.

## 2. *Passio Animalis* and *Passio Animae*: Different Words ... Different Meanings?

There is a general presumption in the secondary literature on Aquinas' understanding of the passions that when Aquinas says '*passio animalis*', he means the same thing as when he says '*passio animae*'.<sup>22</sup> This is not an unreasonable presumption; the words '*animalis*' and '*anima*' are clearly similar in etymology and share some shades of meaning. This also explains why such little attention has been paid to the *passio animalis* in the secondary literature: it does not make sense to focus on Aquinas' use of this term if it simply means the same thing as *passio animae*, on which there are innumerable studies. There is good reason, however, to think that Aquinas does not mean the same thing by the terms '*passio animalis*' and '*passio animae*'. And if this is indeed not the case, then an examination of what precisely '*passio animalis*' means is justified. In this section, I will argue that these terms do in fact have different meanings.

First, a simple observation: Aquinas does not often use the term '*passio animalis*'. When he does, it is usually within the context of one of the four loci where he takes up an explicit discussion of the nature of the *passio animalis*, which he always compares to the *passio corporalis*. Three of these four loci concern the passions of Christ primarily and the fourth, though not specifically on Christ's passions, does nevertheless discuss them.<sup>23</sup> These observations suggest that '*passio animalis*' is a specialized term, while '*passio animae*' is a general term, given that it occurs in a greater number of contexts and with greater frequency in Aquinas' texts.

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<sup>22</sup> For examples of scholars who presume that the terms '*passio animae*' and '*passio animalis*' share the same meaning, see Kahn, 'A Thomistic Theory of Emotion', 28-57; Shawn D. Floyd, 'Aquinas on Emotion: A Response to Some Recent Interpretations', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15 (1998), 163-64; Sarot, 'God, Emotion, and Corporeality', 67-70; Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul*, 252; Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 190; Craig Steven Titus, 'Passions in Christ: Spontaneity, Development, and Virtue,' *The Thomist*, 73 (2009), 75; Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 46; and Kahm, *Aquinas on Emotion's Participation in Reason*, 139.

<sup>23</sup> The four loci again, are: *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2; *De ver.* q. 26, aa. 3-4; *STh III*, q. 15, a. 4; and *Comp. Theol.* II, ch. 232. It is only in the *De ver.* that Aquinas does not have Christ's passions as his primary focus.

Aquinas confirms as much in the *Summa*. In his discussion there of how Christ was affected by the *passio animalis*, he writes:

The soul is said to suffer with a *passio animalis* according to an operation that is either proper to the soul or is more principally of the soul than of the body. And although according to understanding and sensing the soul is said to suffer in this way to some extent, however, as it was said in the second part, the affections of the sensitive appetite are most properly called *passiones animae*, which were in Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Here, Aquinas specifically compares the *passio animalis* with the *passio animae*. The *passio animalis* refers to a passion that is caused by some activity that is either proper to the soul alone, or that is more on the part of the soul than of the body. Note that in this context, Aquinas had just described how the *passio corporalis*, which is a passion of the body specifically, could affect Christ. So now he is contrasting the *passio animalis* with the *passio corporalis*, explaining that Christ can suffer not just because of some ailment that is proper to his body, but also on account of things proper to the soul. But Aquinas adds a clarifying remark at the end. The term '*passio animalis*' is used to describe those passions that are caused by a variety of operations, so long as they are proper to the soul or more principally of the soul than of the body, but this is not the proper understanding of the term '*passio animae*', which, "is most properly said of the affections of the sensitive appetite" specifically.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, these terms do not perfectly overlap in meaning: a *passio animalis* is the opposite of a *passio corporalis*. It refers to a passion, any kind of passion, that is more proper to the soul than to the body. A *passio animae*, on the other hand, refers to a movement of the sensitive appetite in particular.

This conclusion is further confirmed by the various labels that Aquinas applies to the passion of pain. In the *De veritate*, Aquinas insists that pain is not a *passio animae*, since it "has nothing on the part of the soul except mere apprehension."<sup>26</sup> Pain is merely a perception of a bodily injury, so it does not qualify to be called a *passio animae*. In the *Summa*, however, Aquinas says that "pain, according as it is in the sensitive appetite, is most properly called a *passio animae*."<sup>27</sup> The only change between Aquinas' description of pain in the *De veritate* and his description of it in the *Summa* is that in the latter pain is a movement of the sensitive appetite, which can be the only reason why Aquinas thinks that it should now be categorized as a *passio animae*. It is worth

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<sup>24</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4 co., "Passione autem animali pati dicitur anima secundum operationem quae vel est propria animae, vel est principalius animae quam corporis. Et quamvis etiam secundum intelligere et sentire dicatur hoc modo anima aliquid pati, tamen, sicut in secunda parte dictum est, propriissime dicuntur passionibus animae affectiones appetitus sensitivi, quae in Christo fuerunt".

<sup>25</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4, "propriissime dicuntur passionibus animae affectiones appetitus sensitivi."

<sup>26</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 4, ad 4, "nihil habet ex parte animae nisi apprehensionem tantum."

<sup>27</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 1, co., "dolor, secundum quod est in appetitu sensitivo, propriissime dicitur passio animae."



pointing out further that Aquinas clearly still thinks in *STh* III, q. 15, a. 4 and *Comp. Theol.* II, ch. 232 that pain is a *passio corporalis*. Pain has not, although Aquinas now categorizes it as a *passio animae*, also become a *passio animalis*. Therefore, the terms *passio animae* and *passio animalis* are truly distinct. But of course this conclusion raises a new question: what does it mean, now, to say that pain is a *passio animae* and not a *passio animalis*? Answering this question will be the subject of the next section.

### 3. The Natures of the Passion of Pain, of the *Passio Corporalis*, and of the *Passio Animalis*

The purpose of this section will be to uncover how Aquinas understands pain. To do so, it will first examine the *passio corporalis*, and then the *passio animalis*, before finally turning to pain itself.

Aquinas' descriptions of the psychological mechanisms underlying the *passio corporalis* remain fairly consistent over the course of his writing career. Such a passion takes place when a conjunction occurs between the body and something that is harmful to the body and this conjunction is perceived. This perception is proper to the sense of touch, which, Aquinas explains, "is the sense of those things out of which an animal is composed and similarly of those things through which the animal is corrupted".<sup>28</sup> When the sense of touch senses that the body has joined with something that is good for it according to its nature, a person experiences the sensation of pleasure. When, however, the sense of touch perceives a conjunction between the body and something that is harmful to it, a person experiences pain, which is "only the perception of an injury, insofar as it harms".<sup>29</sup> The mechanism of the *passio corporalis* is thus quite simple: the body forms a kind of union with something that is either beneficial or harmful to it and the sense of touch, in whose domain it falls to sense such things, perceives this union as either pleasurable or painful.<sup>30</sup>

The mechanism by which a *passio animalis* arises differs in a number of important ways. The object that causes the *passio animalis*, first of all, causes it not in relation to its suitability or unsuitability for the body, but rather in its relation to the appetite. Sorrow, Aquinas' prime example of a *passio animalis*, for example, is caused by "the repugnance of the appetite toward that which the person hates".<sup>31</sup> Since the

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<sup>28</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3, co., "est sensus eorum ex quibus componitur animal, et similiter eorum per quae animal corrumpitur".

<sup>29</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "est solus percipere laesivum in quantum laedit".

<sup>30</sup> Aquinas only ever names pain as a *passio corporalis*, but he does imply in certain places that other passions could be included in this category (see especially *In I Sent.* d. 8, q. 5, a. 3, exp.). Pleasure is clearly experienced by the same psychological mechanism as pain, so it is reasonable to include it in this category (see *De ver.* q. 26, a. 4, ad 5.) Given, e.g., their bodily origin and the fact that Peter Lombard includes them among the passions that the soul experiences via the body as instrument (*III Sent.* d. 15, ch. 1), it would be reasonable to include hunger and thirst in this category. Aquinas implies as much regarding hunger (*De malo* q. 14, a. 1, ad 4).

<sup>31</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., "repugnantiam appetitus ad aliquid quod quis odit".

object of the *passio animalis* causes this passion because of its relation to the appetite, not the body, it must be perceived by some means other than the sense of touch. Aquinas confirms this, saying that the object of a *passio animalis* is perceived “according to interior apprehension.”<sup>32</sup> The precise meaning of this “interior apprehension” is something that Aquinas is largely silent about until the *Compendium theologiae*, wherein he clarifies that interior apprehension is a perception of the imagination or of lower reason.<sup>33</sup> Unlike the *passio corporalis*, therefore, the *passio animalis* is caused by a sensitive or rational perception of something that is suitable or unsuitable with respect to the sensitive appetite, which perception causes a corresponding movement in the sensitive appetite.<sup>34</sup>

The difference between pain and sorrow would therefore seem to be straightforward. Pain occurs when the body encounters something harmful to it and this encounter is perceived by the sense of touch. Sorrow occurs when a person perceives something evil – whether on the level of sense perception or of lower reason – and experiences a resulting movement in his sensitive appetite. But a wrench is thrown into this understanding when it is taken into account that Aquinas argues in the *Summa* that pain, which earlier had been a matter of exterior sensation alone, now entails a movement of the sensitive appetite, for which reason he calls it a *passio animae*. This shift in position has caused some confusion in recent scholarship, since, as mentioned above, many scholars presume that ‘*passio animae*’ and ‘*passio animalis*’ mean the same thing.<sup>35</sup> If pain is now a *passio animalis*, then it seems that the category of *passio corporalis*, of which pain is a prime example, has been rendered futile. But this cannot be the case, since Aquinas continues to use the category of *passio corporalis* and to treat pain as such a passion. Furthermore, if pain is a *passio animae*, as it now involves a movement of the sensitive appetite, this would imply that it is also involves sense perception. But if this were the case, then it would be unclear how to differentiate pain from sorrow.

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<sup>32</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, a. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co., “secundum apprehensivam interiorem”.

<sup>33</sup> *Comp. Theol.* II ch. 232.

<sup>34</sup> I have referred in this sentence to sensitive perception and not the perception of the imagination in particular because I take Aquinas here to be using the term “imagination” to refer to the interior sense powers of imagination, memory, and cogitation working in concert, an interpretation for which Daniel D. De Haan has argued persuasively. See Daniel D. De Haan, ‘Moral Perception and the Function of the *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas’s Doctrine of Antecedent and Consequent Passions’, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 25 (2014), 301-302, especially n. 35, and 319.

<sup>35</sup> Miner takes this shift to mean that Aquinas thinks in the *Summa* that pain and sorrow belong in the same category (which he calls “*passio animalis/animae*”) and are differentiated on the basis that pain pertains to things perceived by the exterior senses, while sorrow pertains to things that are perceived by the interior senses. This position is overall sound, but it removes pain from the category of *passio corporalis*, which Aquinas himself does not do. See Miner, *Thomas Aquinas*, 190-91. Gondreau also argues that Aquinas shifts pain into the same category as sorrow and argues that this must mean that pain, in Aquinas’ later text, can arise from an “internal psychical sense perception,” (381), which not only contradicts Aquinas’ own description of the difference between pain and sorrow in *STh* I-II q. 35, a. 2, but renders the distinction between pain and sorrow meaningless. See Gondreau, *Passions of Christ’s Soul*, 380-384.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution to this problem that becomes clear in light of a few considerations. First, in the *Summa*, right after Aquinas argues that pain is a *passio animae*, he still differentiates pain from sorrow on the basis that the former is caused by exterior apprehension and the latter by interior apprehension.<sup>36</sup> Second, it is proper to the sense of touch to apprehend those things that are suitable or harmful for the body.<sup>37</sup> As Aquinas argues, evil is an object of the appetite.<sup>38</sup> Since the sense of touch is able to perceive that something is evil for the body, and evil is an object of appetite, this perception of the sense of touch suffices to move the sensitive appetite.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the sensitive appetite can be moved by *either* exterior apprehension *or* interior apprehension. When the former occurs, pain is the result. When the latter occurs, the resulting passion is sorrow.

In sum, the development that takes places in Aquinas' thought is a small one. Pain remains a *passio corporalis* throughout his writings. It never becomes a *passio animalis*. Nevertheless, it does become a *passio animae*. The only difference regarding the passion of pain between Aquinas' earlier and later writings is that in the earlier writings pain was a matter of perception of the sense of touch alone, but in the *Summa* Aquinas argues perception of the sense of touch can move the sensitive appetite. Now that the natures of the passion of pain, the *passio corporalis*, and the *passio animalis* have been elucidated, this paper will now turn to discuss the implications that this bears for understanding Christ's suffering.

#### 4. Conclusion: How Christ Suffered

This paper has explored the nature of the *passio corporalis* and the *passio animalis* in Aquinas' thought. It has also uncovered that the *corporalis-animalis* distinction is not something that Aquinas thought of early in his career only to lay aside later. It is rather the case that Aquinas inherited this distinction from Lombard and that he used it in order to understand the ways in which Christ suffered. Understanding the *passio corporalis* and the *passio animalis* allows one to paint a fuller picture of Christ's suffering in body and in soul so as to counter the sort of Christology defended by Hilary of Poitiers, which would deny that Christ experienced pain when his body was injured. Given this special role in his thought, it is no surprise that Aquinas does not discuss the *corporalis-animalis* distinction in the *Prima secundae*. This distinction was drawn specifically to show the ways in which Christ could suffer. Since Christ's passions are not the subject of discussion in the *Prima secundae*, the lack of a discussion of the

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<sup>36</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3, co.

<sup>38</sup> *STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 1.

<sup>39</sup> For a lengthy discussion of the different ways in which the sensitive appetite can be moved by the sense of touch, the interior sense powers, and reason, see Daniel D. De Haan, 'Delectatio, gaudium, fruitio: Three Kinds of Pleasure for Three Kinds of Knowledge in Aquinas', *Quaestio* 15 (2015), 543-552.

*corporalis-animalis* distinction should not indicate that Aquinas no longer thinks of this distinction as useful.

What remains, however, is for this paper to complete the picture of how Aquinas views Christ's suffering, taking into account not only the *corporalis-animalis* distinction, but also Aquinas' changed view on the passion of pain. The soul, Aquinas points out, is both the form of the body and also the mover of the body.<sup>40</sup> Aquinas connects the soul considered as the form of the body to the *passio corporalis* and the soul considered as the mover of the body to the *passio animalis*. As the body's form, the soul is affected by anything that happens to the body, since matter and form in a hylomorphic unity are not two separate things, but rather two principles of one thing. Consequently, any bodily injury, which is the matter of a *passio corporalis*, necessarily affects the soul.<sup>41</sup>

Although this consideration, on its own, does not seem at first to shed much light on how Christ suffered, it serves as a fundamental basis for Aquinas' reply to Hilary and for his own understanding of Christ's suffering. Hilary had acknowledged that Christ's flesh was indeed pierced, but argued that he did not feel pain.<sup>42</sup> Aquinas counters that it was necessary that if Christ's flesh was injured, then he must have felt pain.<sup>43</sup> The reason is because Christ assumed human nature, which includes a body capable of undergoing corruption and a soul that is united to it as its form. Since form and matter are not separate, but rather united in a composite, whatever affects the matter must affect the form. Therefore, when Christ underwent a bodily injury, this injury necessarily affected his soul.

With respect to how, exactly, such an injury could have affected his soul, Aquinas enumerates the ways in which a *passio corporalis* can be attributed to a particular faculty of the soul. First, each power of the soul is rooted in the essence of the soul. So when the soul is affected by something, each power is also affected.<sup>44</sup> This sounds like an unnecessary claim. It sounds like saying that if a person lifts a red chair, then the chair's redness is not left on the ground. But it does further drive home Aquinas' first point about the hylomorphic unity of body and soul. When the body is injured, the soul is affected, along with all of its powers, by necessity.

Second, a power of the soul can be affected by a bodily injury if the power in question depends on a bodily organ that was injured. Straightforwardly, if an eye is injured, a person is less able to see by it.<sup>45</sup> However, such an injury can also affect the immaterial rational powers. If the imagination, which depends on an organ, is injured, then a person will also suffer intellectually, since "the intellect needs phantasms in its

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<sup>40</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3. See also *STh III*, q. 15, a. 4.

<sup>41</sup> For Aquinas' comments about what is material and formal in a *passio corporalis* see *In III d.* 15, a. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co.

<sup>42</sup> Hilary, *De Trinitate*, bk. 10.

<sup>43</sup> *STh III*, q. 15, a. 5, ad 1.

<sup>44</sup> *In III Sent.* d. 15, a. 2, a. 3, qc. 2, co. and *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Comp. Theol.* II, ch. 232.

operation."<sup>46</sup> But thirdly and finally, a bodily injury also pertains to a power of the soul if the power's operation involves perceiving such injuries. And this is the case with the sense of touch, which "is the sense of those things out of which an animal is composed and similarly of those things out of which it is corrupted."<sup>47</sup> The sense of touch, in short, can perceive that something is good or bad according to the nature of the body. Consequently, when the body is injured, a person perceives this as pain with the sense of touch. Since this is natural to human beings, to have corruptible bodies and a sense of touch able to perceive such corruption, and since Christ assumed true human nature, Christ necessarily felt pain when his body was injured. And, in Aquinas' later thought, Christ experienced this pain as a passion of the sensitive appetite, not just as a sensation, which drives home the gravity of his suffering, and integrates it more fully into the operation of his soul.

As for the *passio animalis*, the logic would seem to be completely straightforward. When Christ perceived something via sense perception or through lower reason as harmful, he would experience the passion of sorrow. This is true, but Aquinas adds an interesting point. The hylomorphic union of body and soul goes both ways. That is, whatever affects the body affects the soul, since the soul is the form of the body. However, the soul is also the mover of the body, so that, in a *passio animalis*, "from an operation of the soul, the body undergoes change."<sup>48</sup> Both kinds of passion, then, the *corporalis* and the *animalis*, involve the whole of Christ's human nature, body and soul.

There is, however, a difficulty. Aquinas holds that Christ, by his human soul, beheld the beatific vision, and, consequently, experienced "the joy of divine contemplation."<sup>49</sup> But since sorrow is antithetical to joy, this would normally mean that Christ would not be able to experience sorrow.<sup>50</sup> Aquinas, however, argues that "by a dispensation of divine power" the joy of contemplation was held in Christ's mind.<sup>51</sup> As such, this joy did not inhibit Christ from experiencing the *passio animalis* of sorrow in his sensitive appetite. It is worth noting, however, that this is important not just for the *passio animalis*, but also for the *passio corporalis*. Since in Aquinas' early thought, pain was a mere matter of sensation, it seems that Christ could have experienced pain with or without such a divine dispensation. But since in the *Summa* Aquinas argues that pain involves a movement of the sensitive appetite, this dispensation becomes necessary, otherwise Christ would not have experienced pain. The activities of the higher powers of the soul, as Aquinas explains elsewhere, can redound onto the lower powers of the soul, including the sensitive appetite, which

<sup>46</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3, "intellectus indiget phantasmatibus in sua operatione".

<sup>47</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3, "est sensus eorum ex quibus componitur animal, et similiter eorum per quae animal corrumpitur".

<sup>48</sup> *De ver.* q. 26, a. 3, "ex operatione animae transmutetur corpus".

<sup>49</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 6, "delectatio divinae contemplationis".

<sup>50</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 6. See also *STh* I-II, q. 35, a. 3 for a consideration of the opposition between pleasure and pain (and, relatedly, joy and sorrow).

<sup>51</sup> *STh* III, q. 15, a. 6, "per dispensationem divinae virtutis".



means that, if a person is contemplating something that brings him joy, this contemplation will inhibit his ability to experience pain.<sup>52</sup> Given that in Aquinas' later thought he considers the passion of pain to involve a movement of the sensitive appetite, this divine dispensation seems even more necessary for Christ to experience not only sorrow, but also pain.

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<sup>52</sup> Aquinas is clear that the movements of the will, the rational appetite, can overflow into the sensitive appetite. See *STh*, I-II, q. 59, a. 5.