

QUESTION 99

The Condition of the Generated Offspring with respect to their Body

The next thing to consider is the condition of the offspring that are generated: first, with respect to their body (question 99); second, with respect to their justice or moral rectitude (*quantum ad iustitiam*) (question 100); and, third, with respect to their knowledge (question 101).

On the first topic there are two questions: (1) In the state of innocence, would children have had full corporeal power immediately upon birth? (2) Would all children have been born males?

Article 1

In the state of innocence, would children have had full power over the movement of their limbs immediately upon birth?

It seems that in the state of innocence children would have had full power over the movement of their limbs (*virtutem perfectam ad motum membrorum*) immediately upon birth:

Objection 1: In *De Baptismo Pavulorum* Augustine says, “To the weakness of mind corresponds that weakness of body”—viz., the weakness of body that is apparent in children. But in the state of innocence there would have been no weakness of mind. Therefore, neither would there have been weakness of body in little children.

Objection 2: Certain animals are such that they have enough power to use their limbs immediately upon being born. But man is more noble than the other animals. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it is natural for man to have the power to use his limbs immediately upon birth. And so [the lack of such power] seems to be a punishment that followed upon sin.

Objection 3: The inability to attain something pleasant presented to one is a source of affliction. But if children had not had the power to move their limbs, then oftentimes they would have been unable to attain something pleasant presented to them. Therefore, they would have been afflicted. But this could not have been the case before sin. Therefore, in the state of innocence children would not have lacked the power to move their limbs.

Objection 4: The weakness of old age (*defectus senectutis*) seems to correspond to the weakness of childhood (*defectus pueritiae*). But in the state of innocence there would not have been any weakness of old age. Therefore, there would not have been any weakness of childhood, either.

But contrary to this: Every generated thing is imperfect before it becomes perfect. But in the state of innocence children would have been produced through generation. Therefore, at the beginning they would have been imperfect both in size and in bodily power.

I respond: Truths that are supernatural (*ea quae super naturam*) we hold by faith alone, and what we hold on faith (*credimus*) we owe to some authority. Hence, in all our assertions we ought to be guided by (*sequi debemus*) the nature of things, except with respect to what is handed down to us by God’s authority and lies beyond nature.

Now it is clearly natural—in the sense of belonging to the principles of human nature—for children not to have enough power to move their limbs immediately upon birth. For man has by nature a brain that is larger in size, relative to his body, than the other animals do. Hence, it is natural that because of the great moisture of the brain in children, the nerves, which are the instruments of movement, are not fit for moving the limbs.

From the other side, no Catholic doubts that it could happen by God’s power that children have the full power to move their limbs immediately upon birth. But it is clear from the authority of Scripture that “God made man upright” (Ecclesiastes 7:30) and that, as Augustine says, this uprightness consists in the

full subjection of the body to the soul. Therefore, just as there could not have been in the initial state anything in a man's limbs that conflicted with the man's well-ordered will, so too a man's limbs could not have failed to do the human will's bidding.

However, a well-ordered human will is one that tends toward acts that are appropriate for the man, and it is not the case that the very same acts are appropriate for a man at every age. Therefore, one should claim that immediately upon birth the children would have had enough power to move their limbs not for just any acts at all, but for the acts appropriate to a child, e.g., sucking at the breast and other acts of this sort.

Reply to objection 1: Augustine is talking about the sort of weakness that now appears in some children even with respect to those acts that are appropriate for children. This is clear from his previous remark that "even when they are hungry and close to the breast, they are more apt to cry than to suck."

Reply to objection 2: The fact that certain animals have the use of their limbs immediately upon birth does not stem from their nobility, since other animals more perfect than they are do not have such use of their limbs. Rather, this happens to them because of the dryness of their brains and because the acts proper to such animals are imperfect, so that even a little power is sufficient for them.

Reply to objection 3: The reply to this objection is clear from what was said in the body of this article.

An alternative reply is that the children would have desired nothing except what was appropriate for a well-ordered will in their particular state.

Reply to objection 4: In the state of innocence man would have been generated but would not have been corrupted. And so in that state it would have been possible for there to be some childhood weaknesses that followed upon generation, but there could not have been any weaknesses of old age that were ordered toward corruption.

Article 2

In the state of innocence would any females have been born?

It seems that in the state of innocence no female would have been born:

Objection 1: In *De Generatione Animalium* 2 the Philosopher says, "A female is an inadvertent male"—in the sense that a female is produced outside of the intention of nature. But in the state of innocence nothing unnatural (*innaturale*) would have occurred in human generation. Therefore, no females would have been born.

Objection 2: Every agent generates what is similar to itself, unless it is impeded either because of a defect in its power or because the matter is not well disposed, as when a small fire is unable to ignite green wood. But in generation the active power resides in the male. Therefore, since in the state of innocence the male's power would not have been defective and the female's matter would not have been indisposed, it seems that males would always have been born.

Objection 3: In the state of innocence generation was ordered toward the multiplication of men (*ad multiplicationem hominum*). But men could have been multiplied to a sufficient degree through the first man and the first woman, since they were going to live forever. Therefore, in the state of innocence it would have been unnecessary for females to be born.

But contrary to this: Nature would have proceeded in generation in the way that God had instituted it. But as Genesis 1:27 and 2:22 say, within human nature God made them male and female. Therefore, in the state of innocence males and females would likewise have been generated.

I respond: Nothing relevant to the fullness of human nature (*ad complementum humanae naturae*) would have been lacking in the state of innocence. But just as diverse grades of things contribute to the perfection of the universe, so too the difference between the sexes contributes to the perfection of human nature. And so in the state of innocence both sexes would have been produced through generation.

Reply to objection 1: The female is called an ‘inadvertent male’ because she lies outside the intention of a *particular* nature. But, as was explained above (q. 92, a. 1), the female does not lie outside the intention of nature *as a whole* (*non praeter intentionem naturae universalis*).

Reply to objection 2: The generation of a female does not occur just because of a defect in the active power or because of the matter’s indisposition, as the objection implies. Rather, it sometimes occurs because of an extrinsic accident; for instance, in *De Animalibus* the Philosopher says, “The northern wind (*ventus septentrionalis*) favors the generation of males, and the southern wind (*ventus australis*) the generation of females.”

Moreover, the generation of a female sometimes occurs because of a thought on the part of the soul (*ex conceptione animae*) at which the body is readily changed. This could have happened especially in the state of innocence, when the body was more subject to the soul, so that the sex of the offspring might be determined by the will of the one generating.

Reply to objection 3: The offspring would have been generated with an animal life (*vivens vita animali*), which involves generating as well as making use of food. Hence, it was appropriate for all of them to generate, and not just the first parents. It seems to follow from this that as many females would have been generated as males.