

QUESTION 41

Fear in Itself

Next we have to consider, first, fear (*timor*) (questions 41-44) and, second, daring (*audacia*) (question 45).

As for fear, there are four things to consider: first, fear itself (question 41); second, the object of fear (question 42); third, the causes of fear (question 43); and, fourth, the effects of fear (question 44).

On the first topic there are four questions: (1) Is fear a passion of the soul? (2) Is fear a specific passion (*passio specialis*)? (3) Is there such a thing as natural fear? (4) What are the species of fear?

Article 1

Is fear a passion of the soul?

It seems that fear (*timor*) is not a passion of the soul:

Objection 1: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “Fear is a virtue (*virtus*) that involves *sustole*—that is, being drawn inward (*contractio*)—“and that desires the essence” (*desiderativa essentiae*). But as is proved in *Ethics* 2, no virtue is a passion. Therefore, fear is not a passion.

Objection 2: Every passion is an effect that has its source in the presence of an agent. But as Damascene points out in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2, fear has to do with something that is future and not with anything present. Therefore, fear is not a passion.

Objection 3: Every passion of the soul is a movement of the sentient appetite that follows upon an apprehension by the sensory power. But the sensory power apprehends the present and not the future. Therefore, since fear has to do with a future evil, it seems that it is not a passion of the soul.

But contrary to this: In *De Civitate Dei* 14 Augustine numbers fear among the other passions of the soul.

I respond: With the exception of sadness (*post tristitiam*), fear has more of the character of a passion than any of the other movements of the soul.

For as was explained above (q. 22, a. 1), the first thing relevant to the character of a passion is that a passion is the *movement of a passive power*, i.e., a movement to which its object is related in the manner of an active mover, so that a passion is the effect of an agent. And in this sense even acts of sensing and of intellectual understanding are called passions or instances of being acted upon (*etiam sentire and intelligere dicuntur pati*). Second, what is more properly called a passion is a *movement of an appetitive power*. And what is even more properly called a passion is a movement which (a) belongs to an appetitive power having a corporeal organ and which (b) occurs along with some *corporeal change*. And, beyond that, what are most properly of all called passions are those movements that imply *some sort of harm*.

Now it is clear that since fear has to do with what is bad, it belongs to an *appetitive* power; for it is appetitive powers that have to do *per se* with the good and the bad. Moreover, fear belongs to the *sentient* appetite, since it occurs along with a certain change, viz., “being drawn inward” (*cum contractione*), as Damascene puts it. And it also implies a certain relation to what is bad, insofar as what is bad in some sense gains a victory over something good. Hence, the character of being a passion belongs to fear in the truest sense (*verissime*).

Still, fear comes after sadness, which has to do with a present evil; for fear has to do with a future evil, and a future evil does not effect movement in the same way that a present evil does.

Reply to objection 1: ‘Virtue’ (*virtus*) names a principle of action, and so insofar as an appetitive power’s interior movements are principles of exterior actions, they are called ‘virtues’. By contrast, the Philosopher is denying that a passion is the sort of virtue that is a habit.

Reply to objection 2: Just as a passion in the case of a natural body has its source in the corporeal

presence of an agent, so, too, a passion in the case of the soul has its source in the ‘soul-like’ presence of an agent without a corporeal or real presence (*ex animali praesentia agentis absque praesentia corporali vel reali*), viz., insofar as the bad thing that is future in reality is present through the soul’s apprehension (*inquantum malum quod est futurum realiter est praesens secundum apprehensionem animae*).

Reply to objection 3: The sensory power does not apprehend the future, but on the basis of what it apprehends as present, an animal is moved by natural instinct to hope for a future good or to fear a future evil.

Article 2

Is fear a specific passion or a generic passion?

It seems that fear is not a specific passion (*timor non sit specialis passio*):

Objection 1: In *83 Quaestiones* Augustine says, “He whom fear does not distress is such that desire does not harass him, and sickness [read: sadness] does not wound him, and gesticulating and empty joy do not toss him around.” From this it seems that if fear is removed, then all the other passions are removed as well. Therefore, fear is a generic passion and not a specific passion (*non passio est specialis sed generalis*).

Objection 2: In *Ethics* 4 the Philosopher says, “Approaching and withdrawing (*prosecutio et fuga*) are related in the appetite in the same way that affirming and denying are related in the intellect.” But negation is not a species in the intellect, as neither is affirmation, but is instead something common to many things. Therefore, neither is withdrawal a species in the appetite. But fear is nothing other than a certain sort of withdrawal from what is bad. Therefore, fear is not a specific passion.

Objection 3: If fear were a specific passion, then it would exist principally in the irascible part of the soul. But fear also exists in the concupiscible part. For in *Rhetoric* 2 the Philosopher says, “Fear is a certain sort of sadness,” and Damascene says, “Fear is a virtue of desire” (*virtus desiderativa*), and, as was explained above (q. 23, a. 4), sadness and desire exist in the concupiscible part. Therefore, fear is not a specific passion, since it belongs to diverse powers.

But contrary to this: As is clear from Damascene in *De Fide Orthodoxa* 2, fear is divided off on the same level with the other passions of the soul (*condividitur aliis passionibus animae*).

I respond: The passions of the soul take their species from their objects. Hence, a specific passion has an object that is specific. But fear has a specific object, just as hope does. For just as the object of hope is something good that is future, arduous, and possible to attain, so the object of fear is something bad that is future, difficult, and cannot be resisted (*cui resisti non potest*). Hence, fear is a specific passion of the soul.

Reply to objection 1: All the passions of the soul are derived from a single source, viz., love, in which they have a connection to one another. And it is by reason of this connection—and not because fear is a generic passion—that if fear is removed, then the other passions of the soul are removed as well.

Reply to objection 2: Not every instance of an appetite’s withdrawing is an instance of fear; instead, as has been explained, fear is withdrawal from a specific object. And so even though withdrawal is something generic, fear is nonetheless a specific passion.

Reply to objection 3: There is no sense in which fear exists in the concupiscible part of the soul, since it has to do not with something bad simply speaking, but with something bad that is accompanied by some difficulty or arduousness that makes it almost impossible to resist (*sed cum difficultate vel arduitate ut ei resisti vix possit*).

However, because, as was explained above (q. 25, a. 1), the passions of the irascible part have their source in the passions of the concupiscible part and are terminated in them, what belongs to the

concupiscible part is attributed to fear. For fear is said to be sadness insofar as the object of fear would produce sadness if it were present; hence, in the same place the Philosopher says that fear proceeds “from imagining a future evil that is corruptive and produces sadness.” Similarly, Damascene attributes desire to fear, since just as hope arises from the desire for something good (*a desiderio boni*), so fear arises from an aversion to something bad (*ex fuga mali*). For as is clear from what was said above (q. 25, a. 2 and q. 29, a. 2 and q. 36, a. 2), the aversion to something bad arises from the desire for something good.

Article 3

Is there such a thing as natural fear?

It seems that there is such a thing as natural fear (*timor aliquis sit naturalis*):

Objection 1: In *De Fide Orthodoxa* 3 Damascene says, “There is a sort of natural fear by which the soul is unwilling to be separated from the body.”

Objection 2: As has been explained (a. 2), fear arises from love. But as Dionysius explains in *De Divinis Nominibus* 4, there is such a thing as natural love. Therefore, there is likewise such a thing as natural fear.

Objection 3: As was explained above (q. 40, a. 4), fear is opposed to hope. But there is such a thing as a hope that belongs to nature, as is clear from what Romans 4:18 says of Abraham, viz., that “against hope”—the hope of nature—“he believed in hope”—the hope of grace. Therefore, there is likewise such a thing as natural fear.

But contrary to this: What is natural is found generally among all things, animate and inanimate. But fear is not found among inanimate things. Therefore, there is no such thing as natural fear.

I respond: A movement is called ‘natural’ because nature inclines a thing toward it. But there are two ways in which this happens:

In one way, the whole of the movement is completed by the nature without any operation on the part of an apprehensive power, in the way that moving upwards (*moveri sursum*) is fire’s natural movement, and in the way that growth (*augeri*) is a natural movement belonging to plants and animals.

In a second way, what is called ‘natural’ is a movement that the thing’s nature inclines it toward, even if the movement is completed only through an apprehension—in the way that, as was explained above (q. 10, a. 1 and q. 17, a. 9), the movement of the cognitive and appetitive powers is traced back to the nature as its first principle. And in this sense, even the acts of an apprehensive power, e.g., understanding, sensing, and remembering, along with an animal’s appetitive movements as well, are sometimes called ‘natural’. This is the sense in which an instance of fear can be called ‘natural’.

And this natural fear is distinguished from non-natural fear by the diversity of their objects. For as the Philosopher explains in *Rhetoric* 2, there is a sort of fear that has to do with a corruptive evil that a nature shies away from because of its natural desire to exist (*refugit propter naturale desiderium essendi*); and it is this sort of fear that is called ‘natural’. Again, there is a sort of fear that produces sadness and that is repugnant not to the nature but to the appetite’s desire, and this sort of fear is called ‘non-natural’. In the same way, love, concupiscence, and pleasure were likewise divided into *natural* and *non-natural* above (q. 26, a. 1 and q. 30, a. 3 and q. 31, a. 7).

However, notice that certain passions of the soul, e.g., love, desire, and hope, are sometimes called ‘natural’ in the first sense of ‘natural’, whereas the others cannot be called natural in that sense. This is because *love* and *hatred* and *desire* and *aversion* imply a certain inclination toward pursuing what is good and avoiding what is bad, and this sort of inclination belongs to a natural appetite as well. And so a certain natural love and desire (or hope) can in some sense be attributed even to natural things that lack cognition. By contrast, the other passions of the soul imply certain movements for which a natural

inclination is in no way sufficient. This is so either because (a) sensation and cognition are part of the nature of these passions, in the sense, explained above (q. 31, a. 1 and q. 35, a. 1), in which apprehension is required by the nature of pleasure and pain, so that things which lack cognition cannot be said to take pleasure or to be saddened; or because (b) movements of the sort in question are contrary to the character of a natural inclination; for instance, despair withdraws from a good because of some difficulty, and fear withdraws from fighting against a contrary evil, even though there is a natural inclination toward doing this. And so passions of this sort are in no sense attributed to inanimate things.

Reply to objection 1 and objection 2 and objection 3: The replies to the objections are clear from what has been said.

Article 4

Does Damascene correctly assign the species of fear?

It seems that Damascene incorrectly assigns six species of fear, viz., sluggishness (*segnities*), shamefacedness or embarrassment (*erubescencia*), shame (*verecundia*), wonder (*admiratio*), amazement (*stupor*), and agony (*agonia*):

Objection 1: As the Philosopher says in *Rhetoric* 2, “Fear has to do with something bad that produces sadness (*de malo contristativo*).” Therefore, the species of fear ought to correspond to the species of sadness. But as was explained above (q. 35, a. 8), there are four species of sadness. Therefore, there should be just four species of fear corresponding to them.

Objection 2: Whatever consists in an act of ours is subject to our power. But as has been explained (a. 2), fear has to do with something bad that exceeds our power. Therefore, sluggishness, shamefacedness, and shame, which involve our action, should not be posited as species of fear.

Objection 3: As has been explained (aa. 1-2), fear has to do with the future. But as Gregory of Nyssa explains, “Shame (*verecundia*) has to do with a base act that has already been committed.” Therefore, shame is not a species of fear.

Objection 4: Fear has to do only with what is bad. But wonder (*admiratio*) and amazement (*stupor*) have to do with what is great and unusual, regardless of whether it is good or bad. Therefore, wonder and amazement are not species of fear.

Objection 5: As it says at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, philosophers are moved by wonder to inquire into the truth. But fear moves one to put off inquiry instead of moving one toward inquiry. Therefore, wonder (*admiratio*) is not a species of fear.

But contrary to this: The authority of Damascene and Gregory of Nyssa suffices for the contrary.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 2), fear has to do with something bad that is future and that exceeds the power of the one who has the fear, with the result that it cannot be resisted.

Now just as a man’s good can be thought of either (a) as involving his own operation or (b) as involving exterior things, so too in the case of what is bad for him.

As for an operation that belongs to the man himself, there are two sorts of evil that can be feared:

The first sort of evil is work that weighs heavily on his nature (*labor gravans naturam*). And this is the cause of *sluggishness* or *dilatoriness* (*segnities*), viz., when someone shies away from acting because of his fear of too much work (*propter timorem excedentis laboris*).

The second sort of evil is disgrace that damages his reputation (*turpitude laedens opinionem*). And so if disgrace is feared in an act about to be committed, then there is *shamefacedness* (*erubescencia*), whereas if the fear has to do with a disgraceful act that has already been committed, then it is *shame* (*verecundia*).

On the other hand, there are three ways in which what is bad in exterior things can exceed a man’s

power to resist:

First, by reason of its magnitude (*ratione magnitudinis*), viz., when someone thinks about a great evil, the unfolding of which he is unable to take in (*magnum malum cuius exitum considerare non sufficit*). And this is *wonder* (*admiratio*).

Second, by reason of its unfamiliarity (*ratione dissuetudinis*), viz., because some evil that we are not used to thinking about is encountered, and so it is a great evil in our estimation. And then there is *amazement* (*stupor*), which is caused by imagining something unusual (*ex insolita imaginatione*).

Third, by reason of its unexpectedness (*ratione improvisionis*), viz., since it cannot be provided for ahead of time (*provideri non potest*)—in the way that future misfortunes are feared (*sicut futura infortunia timentur*). And this sort of fear is called ‘*agony*’ (*agonia*).

Reply to objection 1: The species of sadness that were posited above (q. 35, a. 8) are taken not from the diversity of their objects, but from their effects and from certain special characteristics. And so those species of sadness do not have to correspond to these species of fear, which are taken from a proper division of the object of fear.

Reply to objection 2: Insofar as it is now being done, an operation is subject to the agent’s power (*subditur potestati operantis*). But something that exceeds the agent’s power, and because of which the agent shies away from the action, can be thought of with respect to the action. Accordingly, sluggishness, shamefacedness, and shame are posited as species of fear.

Reply to objection 3: Future insults or reproaches can be feared because of a past act. Accordingly, shame is a species of fear.

Reply to objection 4: Not every instance of wonder and amazement is a species of fear, but rather wonder that has to do with a great evil and amazement that has to do with an unfamiliar evil.

An alternative reply is that just as sluggishness shies away from the work of an exterior operation, so wonder and amazement shy away from the difficulty of thinking about great and unfamiliar things, regardless of whether they are good or bad, so that wonder and amazement are related to an act of the intellect in the same way that sluggishness is related to an exterior act.

Reply to objection 5: Someone who has wonder shies away at present from passing judgment about the thing he wonders about, fearing a mistake; but he will inquire into it in the future. The one who is amazed fears both to judge in the present and to inquire in the future. Hence, wonder is a source of philosophizing, whereas amazement is an impediment to philosophical thinking.