**What is the end of the *Passions*?**

**Course’s Conclusions**

**1.** *The begin of the “Passions”.* Given that the soul of a human being is only a thinking substance, how can it affect the bodily spirits, in order to bring about voluntary actions? The question arises because it seems that how a thing moves depends solely on (i) how much it is pushed (ii) the manner in which it is pushed or (iii) the surface-texture and shape of the thing that pushes it. The first two of those require contact between the two things, and the third requires that the causally active thing be extended. Your notion of the soul entirely exclude extension, and it appears to me that an immaterial thing can’t be possibly touch anything else. So I ask you for a definition of the soul that homes in on its nature more thoroughly than does the one you give in your *Meditations*, i.e. I want one that characterizes what it is as distinct from what it does (namely to think). [Elizabeth to Descartes, 6.5.1643]

**2.** But I’ve never been able to conceive of ‘what is immaterial’ in any way except as the bare negative ‘what is not material’, and *that* can’t enter into causal relation with matter! **[**Elizabeth to Descartes, 10.6.1643]

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* What is the relation between mind/body?
1. The primitive notions: conceiving of things distinctively, almost as the objects of different disciplines
2. Which disciplines would then treat the passions, which are the most evident example of the interaction between the mind and the body?
3. Metaphysics – Physics – Moral: from the correspondence to the *Principia* to the *Passions*

Ways of conceiving the union: I. Thomas Aquinas

1. The strong unity of Thomas Aquinas’ conception of soul: the form of the body
2. The intellect is such form, organizing and encompassing every other power of the human being
3. Such union is not **accidental** but **essential**: not the model of the captain/ship…
4. … but the “corpse-model”: the intellective soul/form is what makes of a certain matter a certain human being. Once such form parts from matter, there is no more, to speak strictly, any human being (**ST Ia q. 76 a. 1**)
5. The intellective soul/form of the body is a major thesis, that makes of the soul the incorporeal, bodily-independent and immortal principle of life
6. There is some aporia: for, according to Aquinas, there is also a strict union between mind/body (to rephrase intellective soul/form and body/matter)
7. An example from epistemology: the soul never thinks without phantasms (**ST Ia q. 84 a. 7**)

II. Ways of striking back against Aquinas. Descartes

1. the soul is really, truly distinguished from the body
2. it does not inform matter, as Thomas Aquinas portrayed: it is something completely different
3. BUT: it is important to disambiguate between soul and intellect, for Descartes maintains, already from the *Meditations*, that sensations and perceptions are also to ascribe to the soul
4. Already from the *Meditations*, he adopts a physical solution: the pineal gland is the locus where mind and body, truly distinguished, meet
5. This solution is expounded, if possible, in an encyclopedic way twice: *Principia philosophiae* IV and *Passions* I
6. Scholastic ambition: Descartes fights, in the two mentioned texts, to be assimilated to the school thought. He is cautious about avoiding any confusion between his position on the soul and the Averroistic thesis of the soul/*forma assistens* (cf. letters to Regius)
* Is there any place, for the initial strict dualism criticized by Elisabeth?
1. The places, the “loci” to answer this question: *Passions* I and III
2. Physics and Moral
3. Every passion has a double aspect: as regard to the body, it is a passion (the body is affected by something external) as regard to the soul, it is an emotion

