

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human
Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

1a2æ. 49-54

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 49-54

de habitibus in generali

Post actus et passiones, considerandum est de principiis humanorum actuum: et primo, de principiis intrinsicis; secundo, de principiis extrinsicis. Principium intrinsicum est potentia et habitus; sed quia de potentiis in Prima Parte dictum est, nunc restat de habitibus considerandum. Et primo quidem, in generali; secundo vero, de virtutibus et vitiis, et aliis hujusmodi habitibus, qui sunt humanorum actuum principia.

Circa autem ipsos habitus in generali, quatuor considerata sunt:

primo quidem, de ipsa substantia habituum;

secundo, de subjecto eorum;

tertio, de causa generationis, augmenti et corruptionis ipsorum;

quarto, de distinctione ipsorum.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

ON DISPOSITIONS IN GENERAL

on dispositions in general

Having discussed action and feeling we now turn to the sources of human action within and without the agent. The sources of action within the agent are faculties and dispositions; faculties were considered in the *Prima Pars*, but dispositions remain to be discussed. We shall deal first with dispositions in general; and then turn to those particular dispositions, such as virtues and vices, which are sources of human action.

Concerning dispositions in general, four topics call for discussion:

first, what sort of thing is a disposition? (49)

second, what things have dispositions? (50)

third, how are dispositions produced (51), increased (52), and destroyed? (53)

fourth, how can dispositions be classified? (54)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2æ. 49, I

Quæstio 49. de ipsa substantia habituum

Circa primum quærentur quatuor:

1. utrum habitus sit qualitas;
2. utrum sit determinata species qualitatis;
3. utrum habitus importet ordinem ad actum;
4. de necessitate habitus.

articulus 1. utrum habitus sit qualitas

AD PRIMUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod habitus non sit qualitas. Dicit enim Augustinus quod *hoc nomen habitus dictum est ab hoc verbo quod est habere*.² Sed habere non solum pertinet ad qualitatem, sed ad alia genera: dicimur enim habere etiam quantitatem, et pecuniam, et alia hujusmodi. Ergo habitus non est qualitas.

2. Præterea, habitus ponitur unum prædicamentorum; ut patet in libro *Prædicamentorum*.³ Sed unum prædicamentum non continetur sub alio. Ergo habitus non est qualitas.

3. Præterea, *omnis habitus est dispositio*, ut dicitur in *Prædicamentis*.⁴ Sed dispositio est *ordo habentis partes*, ut dicitur in *v Meta*.⁵ Hoc autem pertinet ad prædicamentum Situs. Ergo habitus non est qualitas.

SED CONTRA est quod Philosophus dicit quod habitus est *qualitas de difficili mobilis*.⁶

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod hoc nomen *habitus* ab habendo est sumptum. A quo quidem nomen habitus dupliciter derivatur. Uno quidem modo, secundum quod homo, vel quæcumque alia res, dicitur aliquid habere; alio modo, secundum quod aliqua res aliquo modo se habet in seipsa vel ad aliquid aliud.

Circa primum autem, considerandum est quod habere, secundum quod dicitur respectu cujuscumque quod habetur, commune est ad diversa genera. Unde Philosophus inter postprædicamenta *habere* ponit, quæ

¹cf *In III Sent.* 23, 1, 1. *De veritate* XX, 2. *In Meta.* v, lect. 20

²*Octaginta Trium Quæst.* 73. PL 40, 84

³Aristotle, *Categories* 6. 8b26

⁴*Categories* 6. 9a10. See Appendix 2

⁵*Metaphysics* v, 19. 1022b1

⁶*Categories* 6. 9a3, 10-13

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

WHAT DISPOSITIONS ARE

Question 49. what dispositions are

Under the first of these questions there are four points of inquiry:

1. are dispositions qualities?
2. are dispositions qualities of a particular type?
3. have dispositions a special connection with action?
4. are dispositions necessary?

article 1. are dispositions qualities?

THE FIRST POINT:¹ 1. It seems that dispositions are not qualities. The Latin for 'disposition' is '*habitus*', and according to Augustine² that word comes from the verb '*habere*' which means 'to have'. But *having* has no exclusive connection with qualities: we speak, for instance, of people having money, or having a certain size. So dispositions are not qualities.

2. Moreover, in the Latin versions of Aristotle's *Categories*³ one of the categories is called '*habitus*'. But the categories are mutually exclusive. So dispositions (*habitus*) are not qualities.^a

3. Moreover, according to Aristotle,⁴ *all dispositions are states*. But a state, he says elsewhere,⁵ *is a relation between the parts of a complex*. But this belongs to the category of Posture. So dispositions are not qualities.^b

ON THE OTHER HAND, Aristotle says that a disposition is *a quasi-permanent quality*.^{6c}

REPLY: '*Habitus*', the Latin word for 'disposition', does indeed come from the verb '*habere*'. But it has two different senses corresponding to two uses of the verb from which it is derived. '*Habere*' means *to have*, in the sense in which a human being, or anything else, *has* or *possesses* something; but '*se habere*' means *to be in a certain state*, whether absolutely or relatively.

Now '*habere*' in its first sense, which applies to anything that can be possessed, may be used in several categories. That is why Aristotle includes *having* in the list at the end of the *Categories* of things which apply

^aSee Appendix 1.

^bIn the *Categories* Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of quality: *διάθεσις*, *diathesis* (such as being hot, being ill) and *ἕξις*, *hexis* (such as virtue and skill). Every *hexis* is a *diathesis*, but not *vice versa*; a *hexis* is a more permanent *diathesis*. *Diathesis* can also mean an arrangement, e.g. of building blocks: it is this sense which is defined in the *Metaphysics* (1022b1). St Thomas translates '*hexis*' as '*habitus*' (disposition) and '*diathesis*' as '*dispositio*' (state). See Appendix 3.

^cLiterally: a quality difficult to change. See Appendix 2.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 49, I

scilicet diversa rerum genera consequuntur; sicut sunt *opposita*, et *prius* et *posterius*, et alia hujusmodi.⁷

Sed inter ea quæ habentur, talis videtur esse distinctio, quod quædam sunt in quibus nihil est medium inter habens et quod habetur: sicut inter subjectum et qualitatem vel quantitatem nihil est medium. Quædam vero sunt in quibus est* aliquid medium inter utrumque, sed sola relatio: sicut dicitur aliquis habere socium vel amicum. Quædam vero sunt inter quæ est aliquid medium non quidem actio vel passio, sed aliquid per modum actionis vel passionis, prout scilicet unum est ornans vel tegens, et aliud ornatum aut tectum.† Unde Philosophus dicit⁸ quod *habitus dicitur tamquam actio quædam habentis et habiti*, sicut est in illis quæ circa nos habemus. Et ideo in his constituitur unum speciale genus rerum, quod dicitur prædicamentum habitus: de quo dicit Philosophus⁹ quod *inter habentem indumentum, et indumentum quod habetur, est habitus medius*.

Si autem sumatur habere prout res aliqua dicitur quodammodo se habere in seipsa vel ad aliud; cum iste modus se habendi sit secundum aliquam qualitatem, hoc modo habitus quædam qualitas est. De quo Philosophus dicit¹⁰ quod *habitus dicitur dispositio secundum quam bene aut male disponitur dispositum, et aut secundum se aut ad aliud, ut sanitas habitus quidam est*. Et sic loquimur nunc de habitu. Unde dicendum est quod habitus est qualitas.

1. Ad primum ergo dicendum quod objectio illa procedit de habere communiter sumpto, sic enim est commune ad multa genera, ut dictum est.

2. Ad secundum dicendum quod ratio illa procedit de habitu secundum quod intelligitur aliquid medium inter habens et id quod habetur. Sic enim est quoddam prædicamentum, ut dictum est.

3. Ad tertium dicendum quod dispositio quidem semper importat ordinem alicujus habentis partes: sed hoc contingit tripliciter, ut statim ibidem Philosophus subdit, scilicet *aut secundum locum, aut secundum potentiam, aut secundum speciem*. In quo, ut Simplicius dicit,¹¹ *comprehendit omnes dispositiones. Corporales quidem, in eo quod dicit 'secundum locum'*: et hoc pertinet ad prædicamentum situs, qui est ordo partium in loco. *Quod autem dicit 'secundum potentiam' includit illas dispositiones quæ*

*Piana reads *non est*

†For *tegens* . . . *tectum* Piana reads *regens* . . . *rectum*, ruler . . . ruled

⁷*Categories* 12. 15b17

⁸*Metaphysics* v, 20. 1022b4–5

⁹*ibid.* 1022b7–8

¹⁰*ibid.* 1022b10–12

¹¹In *Aristotelis Categoriarum Commentarium*, ed. Kalbfleisch, 240. Simplicius was a sixth-century neo-Platonist commentator on Aristotle; his commentary on the *Categories* was translated into Latin in 1266

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

WHAT DISPOSITIONS ARE

to more than one category, such as the notions of *opposite* and of *before* and *after*.^{7d}

Different sorts of things, however, may be had or possessed; and what *having* is differs from case to case. In some cases the word 'has' stands for nothing: when something *has* a certain quality, or a certain size, there is no third term which relates the subject to its attribute. There are other cases where the word 'has' stands for a relationship: as when we say that a man *has* a companion, or a friend. There are yet other cases where the word 'has' stands for something which is more like an activity or a passivity, without being exactly either: this is when one thing is the adornment or clothing by which the other is adorned or clothed. Aristotle says⁸ that when one thing *has* another in this sense, the *having* is a relation between the two things: it is the relation which we have to the things which we *have on*. For such cases there is a special category, the category of *Habitus* or *Having On*: *Having On*, according to Aristotle,⁹ is the relation which holds between a man wearing clothes and the clothes he is wearing.^e

If, however, '*habere*' is taken in the other sense in which it means to be in a certain state either absolutely or relatively, then, since such a state involves the possession of some quality, '*habitus*' in the corresponding sense means a quality of some sort. *A disposition*, says Aristotle,¹⁰ *is a state which is either a good state or a bad state for its possessor either absolutely or relatively: health is a disposition of this kind*. It is dispositions, so defined, which are our present concern. We must conclude, therefore, that dispositions are qualities.

Hence: 1. The first objection takes '*habere*' in its broad sense, in which, as has been said, it may be used in more than one category.

2. The second objection takes '*habitus*' in the sense of *having on*, or the relation which holds between a man and what he has on. In that sense, as has been said, '*habitus*' is the name of one of the categories.

3. It is true that a state is always *a relation of the parts of a complex*. But this may be *either spatial, potential or formal*, as Aristotle goes on immediately to say. *These words*, says Simplicius,¹¹ *cover all possible states. Physical states are referred to by the word 'spatial'—and this fits the category of Posture, because posture is the arrangement of the parts of a complex in space. The word 'potential' refers to those states which are at*

^{4d}These transcategorical notions, which are dealt with in *Categories* 10–15, were called by medievals *postprædicamenta*.

^eOn activity and passivity, see Appendix 1. 'Relationship', in this paragraph and elsewhere, is used for an entity in the fourth of Aristotle's categories. 'Relation', which here translates *ἐνέργεια*, '*energeia*' ('*actio*'), is used in the broad modern sense according to which any two-placed predicate (such as '*... wears ...*', '*... is next to ...*', '*... loves ...*') is a relational predicate.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 49, 2

sunt in præparatione et idoneitate nondum perfecte, sicut scientia et virtus inchoata. Quod autem dicit 'secundum speciem', includit perfectas dispositiones, quæ dicuntur habitus, sicut scientia et virtus complete.

articulus 2. utrum habitus sit determinata species qualitatis

AD SECUNDUM sic proceditur:¹ 1. Videtur quod habitus non sit determinata species qualitatis. Quia, ut dictum est, habitus, secundum quod est qualitas, dicitur *dispositio secundum quam bene aut male disponitur dispositum*. Sed hoc contingit secundum quamlibet qualitatem: nam et secundum figuram contingit aliquid bene vel male esse dispositum, et similiter secundum calorem et frigus, et secundum omnia hujusmodi. Ergo habitus non est determinata species qualitatis.

2. Præterea, Philosophus² caliditatem et frigiditatem dicit esse dispositiones vel habitus, sicut ægritudinem et sanitatem. Sed calor et frigus sunt in tertia specie qualitatis. Ergo habitus vel dispositio non distinguuntur ab aliis speciebus qualitatis.

3. Præterea, *difficile mobile* non est differentia pertinens ad genus qualitatis, sed magis pertinet ad motum vel passionem. Nullum autem genus determinatur ad speciem per differentiam alterius generis; sed oportet differentias per se advenire generi, ut Philosophus dicit.³ Ergo, cum habitus dicatur esse *qualitas difficile mobilis*, videtur quod non sit determinata species qualitatis.

SED CONTRA est quod Philosophus dicit⁴ quod *una species qualitatis est habitus et dispositio*.

RESPONSIO: Dicendum quod Philosophus⁵ ponit inter quatuor species qualitatis primam, *dispositionem et habitum*. Quarum quidem specierum differentias sic assignat Simplicius⁶ dicens quod *qualitatum quædam sunt naturales, quæ secundum naturam insunt, et semper: quædam autem sunt adventitiæ, quæ ab extrinseco efficiuntur, et possunt amitti. Et hæc quidem, quæ sunt adventitiæ, sunt habitus et dispositiones, secundum facile et difficile*

¹cf *De virtutibus* 1²*Categories* 6. 8b36-7³*Metaphysics* 7, 12. 1038a9-18⁴*Categories* 6. 8b26-7⁵ibid⁶In *Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium*, 228⁷In his commentary on the *Metaphysics* St Thomas has a different but equally unsatisfactory explanation of Aristotle's words (*Cathala* 1058-60). In fact it seems

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

WHAT DISPOSITIONS ARE

a preparatory and undeveloped stage, like the knowledge and virtue of a beginner. *Finally the word 'formal' refers to the fully developed states which are called 'dispositions'*, like knowledge and virtue when they are ripe.¹

article 2. are dispositions qualities of a particular type?^a

THE SECOND POINT:¹ 1. It seems that dispositions are not qualities of any particular type. A disposition, as we saw when discussing the senses of '*habitus*', is a state which is either a good state or a bad state for its possessor. But this description applies to qualities of all kinds: something can be in a good state or a bad state because of its shape or because of its temperature, or because of many other things. So dispositions are not qualities of any particular type.

2. Moreover, Aristotle says that hotness and coldness, like sickness and health, are states or dispositions.² But heat and cold are qualities of the third type. So dispositions and states do not constitute a distinct type of quality.

3. Moreover, the differential term 'quasi-permanent' does not belong to the category of quality, but concerns change and passivity. But a generic term cannot be made into a specific term by the addition of a differential term appropriate to a different generic term; a differential term, according to Aristotle, must be one which, if attached to the generic term, becomes a *per se* predicate.³ '*Quasi-permanent quality*', therefore, which is the definition of 'disposition', does not seem to be a specific term indicating any particular type of quality.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Aristotle says⁴ that one of the types of quality consists of dispositions and states.

REPLY: In the *Categories* Aristotle lists four types of quality, the first of which consists of dispositions and states.⁵ The differences between the four types are thus explained by Simplicius in his Commentary.⁶ *Some qualities are natural: they belong to their possessors by nature and remain for all time. Others are adventitious: they are produced by external agents and can be lost. These qualities—the adventitious ones—are either dispositions*

that Aristotle is referring cryptically to three different part-whole relationships: (i) of spatial parts to spatial wholes, (ii) of particular abilities to a general faculty, in the sense in which the memory is a part of the mind, (iii) of species to genus, as humankind is part of the genus *animal* (cf Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, I, 335). See note *i* to 1a2ae. 54, 4.

^aSee Appendix 3.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-02930-8 - Summa Theologiae: Volume 22 - Dispositions for Human Acts, (1a2ae. 49-54)

Anthony Kenny

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUMMA THEOLOGIAE, 1a2ae. 49, 2

amissibile differentes. Naturalium autem qualitatum quaedam sunt secundum id quod aliquid est in potentia: et sic est secunda species qualitatis. Quaedam vero secundum quod aliquid est in actu: et hoc vel in profundum, vel secundum superficiem. Si in profundum quidem, sic est tertia species qualitatis: secundum vero superficiem, est quarta species qualitatis, sicut figura et forma, quæ est figura animati.

Sed ista distinctio specierum qualitatis inconueniens videtur. Sunt enim multæ figuræ et qualitates passibiles non naturales, sed adventitiæ; et multæ dispositiones non adventitiæ, sed naturales, sicut sanitas et pulchritudo et huiusmodi. Et præterea hoc non convenit ordini specierum: semper enim quod naturalius est prius est.

Et ideo aliter accipienda est distinctio dispositionum et habituum ab aliis qualitibus. Proprie enim qualitas importat quemdam modum substantiæ. Modus autem est, ut dicit Augustinus,⁷ *quem mensura præfigit*: unde importat quamdam determinationem secundum aliquam mensuram. Et ideo sicut id secundum quod determinatur potentia materiæ secundum esse substantiale dicitur qualitas quæ est differentia substantiæ; ita id secundum quod determinatur potentia subjecti secundum esse accidentale dicitur qualitas accidentalis, quæ est etiam quædam differentia, ut patet per Philosophum.⁸

Modus autem sive determinatio* subjecti secundum esse accidentale, potest accipi vel in ordine ad ipsam naturam subjecti, vel secundum actionem et passionem quæ consequuntur principia naturæ (quæ sunt materia et forma), vel secundum quantitatem.

Si autem accipiatur modus vel determinatio subjecti secundum quantitatem, sic est quarta species qualitatis. Et quia quantitas, secundum suam rationem, est sine motu et sine ratione boni et mali; ideo ad quartam speciem qualitatis non pertinet quod aliquid sit bene vel male, cito vel tarde transiens.

Modus autem sive determinatio* subjecti secundum actionem et passionem, attenditur in secunda et tertia specie qualitatis. Et ideo in utraque consideratur quod aliquid facile vel difficile fiat, vel quod sit cito transiens aut diuturnum. Non autem consideratur in his aliquid pertinens

*Many mss: *terminatio*, the definiteness or 'being bounded' of a subject

⁷*Super Gen. ad litteram* IV, 3. PL 34, 299

⁸*Metaphysics* V, 14. 1020a33–b2

^bFor a paraphrase of this difficult passage, see Appendix 5. On differential terms, see Appendix 4.

^cThis does not mean that things cannot, for instance, lose their shape easily, or have a good shape, but simply that their having a shape is as such a quality of the fourth type, their losing their shape easily is not. Aristotle in fact places being soft