The Summa Theologiæ ranks among the greatest documents of the Christian Church, and is a landmark of medieval western thought. It provides the framework for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy, and is regularly consulted by scholars of all faiths and none, across a range of academic disciplines. This paperback reissue of the classic Latin/English edition first published by the English Dominicans in the 1960s and 1970s, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, has been undertaken in response to regular requests from readers and librarians around the world for the entire series of 61 volumes to be made available again. The original text is unchanged, except for the correction of a small number of typographical errors.

The original aim of this edition was not narrowly ecclesiastical. It sought to make this treasure of the Christian intellectual heritage available to theologians and philosophers of all backgrounds, including those who, without claiming to be believers themselves, appreciate a religious integrity which embodies hardbitten rationalism and who recognise in Thomas Aquinas a master of that perennial philosophy which forms the bedrock of European civilisation. Because of this the editors worked under specific instructions to bear in mind not only the professional theologian, but also the general reader with an interest in the 'reason' in Christianity. The parallel English and Latin texts can be used successfully by anybody with a basic knowledge of Latin, while the presence of the Latin text has allowed the translators a degree of freedom in adapting their English version for modern readers. Each volume contains a glossary of technical terms and is designed to be complete in itself to serve for private study or as a course text.

NIHIL OBSTAT

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Censor deputatus

IMPRIMATUR

✠ GEORGIUS L. CRAVEN
Epus. Sebastopolis, Vic. Gen.

Westmonasterii, die 1 Maii 1964

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

SUMMA THEOLOGIÆ

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

SUMMA THEOLOGIÆ

Latin text and English translation,
Introductions, Notes, Appendices
and Glossaries

PIÆ MEMORIÆ

JOANNIS

PP. XXIII

DICATUM

ALLOCUTIO

PAULI

PP. VI

MCMLXIII

HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI

WAS PLEASED to grant an audience, on 13 December 1963, to a group, representing the Dominican Editors and the combined Publishers of the new translation of the *Summa Theologiæ* of St Thomas, led by His Eminence Michael Cardinal Browne, of the Order of Preachers, and the Most Reverend Father Aniceto Fernandez, Master General of the same Order.

AT THIS AUDIENCE

THE HOLY FATHER made a cordial allocution in which he first welcomed the representatives of a project in which he found particular interest. He went on to laud the perennial value of St Thomas's doctrine as embodying universal truths in so cogent a fashion. This doctrine, he said, is a treasure belonging not only to the Dominican Order but to the whole Church, and indeed to the whole world; it is not merely medieval but valid for all times, not least of all for our own.

His Holiness therefore commended the enterprise of Dominicans from English-speaking Provinces of the Order and of their friends; they were undertaking a difficult task, less because the thought of St Thomas is complicated or his language subtle, than because the clarity of his thought and exactness of language is so difficult to translate. Yet the successful outcome of their efforts would undoubtedly contribute to the religious and cultural well-being of the English-speaking world.

What gave him great satisfaction was the notable evidence of interest in the spread of divine truth on the part of the eminent laymen concerned, members of different communions yet united in a common venture.

For these reasons the Holy Father wished it all success, and warmly encouraged and blessed all those engaged. He was happy to receive the first volume presented to him as a gesture of homage, and promised that he would follow with interest the progress of the work and look forward to the regular appearance of all the subsequent volumes.

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GENERAL PREFACE

BY OFFICIAL APPOINTMENT THE SUMMA PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK for Catholic studies in systematic theology and for a classical Christian philosophy. Yet the work, which is more than a text-book for professional training, is also the witness of developing tradition and the source of living science about divine things. For faith seeks understanding in the contemplation of God's Logos, his wisdom and saving providence, running through the whole universe.

The purpose, then, of this edition is not narrowly clerical, but to share with all Christians a treasury which is part of their common heritage. Moreover, it consults the interests of many who would not claim to be believers, and yet appreciate the integrity which takes religion into hard thinking.

Accordingly the editors have kept in mind the needs of the general reader who can respond to the reasons in Christianity, as well as of technical theologians and philosophers.

Putting the Latin text alongside the English is part of the purpose. The reader with a smattering of Latin can be reassured when the translator, in order to be clear and readable, renders the thought of St Thomas into the freedom of another idiom without circumlocution or paraphrase.

There are two more reasons for the inclusion of the Latin text. First, to help the editors themselves, for the author's thought is too lissom to be uniformly and flatly transliterated; it rings with analogies, and its precision cannot be reduced to a table of terms. A rigid consistency has not been imposed on the editors of the different volumes among themselves; the original is given, and the student can judge for himself.

Next, to help those whose native tongue is not English or whose duty it is to study theology in Latin, of whom many are called to teach and preach through the medium of the most widespread language of the world, now becoming the second language of the Church.

The Latin is a sound working text, selected, paragraphed, and punctuated by the responsible editor. Important variations, in manuscripts and such major printed editions as the Piana and Leonine, are indicated. The English corresponds paragraph by paragraph and almost always sentence by sentence. Each of the sixty volumes, so far as is possible, will be complete in itself, to serve as a text for a special course or for private study.

THOMAS GILBY O.P.

ST THOMAS AQUINAS

SUMMA THEOLOGIÆ

VOLUME 22

DISPOSITIONS FOR HUMAN ACTS

(1a2æ. 49–54)

Latin text. English translation, Introduction, Notes, Appendices & Glossary

ANTHONY KENNY

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EDITORIAL NOTES

THE LATIN TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The text used for this volume is the Leonine (Rome, Polyglot Press, 1891); some variants have been noted by the General Editor, who has also made some changes in punctuation.

It has not been found possible in the translation to use a single English word for each Latin technical term. But though two or three English words may correspond to a single Latin term, consistency has been aimed at in the rendering of each different sense of the original expression. Equivalences between English and Latin terms may be found in the Glossary, and the grounds for the choice of particular translations of technical expressions are given in the relevant Appendices.

FOOTNOTES

Those signified by a superior number are the references given by St Thomas, with the exception of no. 1 to each article which refers to parallel texts in his writings. Those signified alphabetically are editorial references and explanatory remarks.

REFERENCES

Biblical references are to the Vulgate, bracketed numbers to the Psalms are those of versions based on the Hebrew text. Patristic references are to Migne (PG, Greek Fathers; PL, Latin Fathers). Abbreviations to St Thomas's works are as follows:

Summa Theologiæ, without title. Part, question, article, reply; e.g. 1a. 3, 2 ad 3. 1a2æ. 17, 6. 2a2æ. 180, 10. 3a, 35, 8.

Summa Contra Gentiles, *CG*. Book, chapter; e.g. *CG* 1, 28.

Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum, *Sent*. Book, distinction, question, article, solution or *quæstiuncula*, reply; e.g. III *Sent*. 25, 2, 3, ii ad 3.

Compendium Theologiæ, *Compend. Theol.*

Commentaries of Scripture (*lecturæ*, *expositiones*): Job, *In Job*; Psalms, *In Psal.*; Isaiah, *In Isa.*; Jeremiah, *In Jerem.*; Lamentations, *In Thren.*; St Matthew, *In Matt.*; St John, *In Joan.*; Epistles of St Paul, e.g. *In Rom.* Chapter, verse, *lectio* as required.

Philosophical commentaries: On the *Liber de Causis*, *In De causis*. Aristotle: *Peri Hermeneias*, *In Periherm.*; Posterior Analytics, *In Poster.*; Physics,

In Physic.; *De Cælo et Mundo*, *In De Cæl.*; *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *In De gen.*; *Meteorologica*, *In Meteor.*; *De Anima*, *In De anima*; *De Sensu et Sensato*, *In De sensu*; *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, *In De memor.*; Metaphysics, *In Meta.*; Nicomachean Ethics, *In Ethic.*, Politics, *In Pol.* Book, chapter, *lectio* as required, also for Expositions on Boethius, *Liber de Hebdomadibus* and *Liber de Trinitate*, *In De hebd.* and *In De Trin.*, and on Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, *In De div. nom.* References to Aristotle give the Bekker annotation.

Quæstiones quodlibetales (*de quolibet*), *Quodl.*

Main titles are given in full for other works, including the 10 series of *Quæstiones Disputatæ*.

The views represented in the footnotes and appendices, which are those of the Editor of this volume, are in some cases not shared by the Editorial Board and other collaborators.

INTRODUCTION

Questions 49–54 of the *Prima Secundæ* form part of St Thomas's treatment of Moral Theology. Earlier he has discussed human happiness, human action and its morality, and human emotion, and in Questions 55–89 he will discuss virtue and vice and connected moral subjects. In the Questions which compose this volume he passes from the consideration of human acts themselves to the consideration of their sources, *principia actuum*, and thus prepares the reader for the consideration of virtue and vice by an analysis of a more general concept under which both these topics fall, the concept of *habitus* or disposition.

Take it out of its context and this treatise on *habitus* is a work of philosophy, not of theology: the Bible is quoted only thrice throughout its length, while Aristotle is mentioned on every page; the pagan Simplicius is cited as often as St Augustine and the Areopagite together. It is a work of some originality; the matter it contains does not appear elsewhere in St Thomas's writings, and it seems to have been composed especially for the *Summa*. The treatise modestly pretends to be more Aristotelean than it really is. Incidental remarks of Aristotle in the *De Anima* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* are here worked up into an articulate system along lines suggested, but not dictated, by the eighth chapter of the *Categories* and the dictionary of philosophical terms in *Metaphysics Δ*. In the course of his discussion St Thomas becomes involved in many of the *cruces* of interpretation which had perplexed the Greek and Arabic commentators on Aristotle. He joins debate with Simplicius and Porphyry about the fourfold classification of qualities (49, 2; 50, 1),[1] with Alexander on the nature of health (50, 1), with Averroes on the location of belief (50, 4) and with Plotinus on the intensive magnitude of forms (52, 1). Amid the inexpert philology and the Aristotelean exegesis, he presents philosophical conclusions whose interest is more than antiquarian.

These, however, are not easy to disentangle from their antique apparatus. St Thomas does not, like Plato and Hume and Russell, write for the general educated public, himself setting the problems which he hopes to solve and himself introducing the terminology he employs. Instead, like Aristotle and Wittgenstein, he writes for a professional readership presumed familiar with a technical vocabulary and a traditional method of posing problems. As a result, and especially in the present treatise, the modern reader needs

[1]Numbers, here and in the appendices, refer to Questions and Articles of the *Summa* text in this volume

the aid of frequent notes in order to understand him. The difficulty in coming to grips with his thought is apparent even in the title of the treatise.

A *habitus*, says the introduction to Question 49, is a source of action. The sources of human action within the agent are *potentiæ* and *habitus*. Now *potentiæ* are faculties such as the intellect, the memory, the senses and the will, which have been discussed in the *Prima Pars*; what then are *habitus*, which form the topic of this volume?

The translation 'habit' lies ready to hand, and one can see how somebody might call a habit a source of action. But it is never safe to assume that a transliteration of a word is an accurate translation of it. A word borrowed from one language into another acquires a history independent of its meaning in the parent tongue. The assumption is particularly dangerous in the case of the English transliterations of words used by the *Summa*. For not only have the English words come to us after centuries of independent history, they entered the language from Latin at a date when their philosophical usage had been influenced by theories explicitly opposed to St Thomas's own. We must be wary of assuming, for instance, that '*actio*' means *action*, or that '*causa*' means *cause*, or that '*objectum*' means *object*. In particular, we shall see that very few, if any, habits are *habitus*.

St Thomas defines 'habitus' several times in the course of his treatise. A *habitus*, he tells us, is a condition of a subject which is in a state of unactualized potentiality either with regard to a form or with regard to an operation (50, 1; 54, 1). He adopts Aristotle's definition of the equivalent Greek word ἕξις; a *habitus* is a state which is either a good state or a bad state for its possessor either absolutely or relatively (49, 1, 2). It is clear that these definitions, however excellent as a summary of philosophical analysis, are of use only to someone who already knows well what the word '*habitus*' means. Moreover, they contain a number of technical terms whose meaning is at least as problematic as that of '*habitus*'.

There is only one safe method of finding an English equivalent for a technical expression of philosophical Latin. It is to list the concrete examples to which the expression is applied and to discover which, if any, English philosophical term covers the same range. If we apply this method to '*habitus*' we find that St Thomas uses the word over a wide range. In this volume we are told that *habitus* include sickness and health, beauty and toughness, virtues such as justice, courage, temperance and charity, vices such as intemperance and insensibility, traits of character such as mildness or modesty, knowledge of principles of logic or of scientific facts,[2] knowledge of the Bible, knowledge of foreign languages, beliefs of any kind,

[2]e.g. the knowledge that for all p, not both p and not p; and the knowledge that the earth is round

gifts of intelligence, memory and imagination and the possession of concepts. We are told that different men have different *habitus*, and that dumb animals do not have *habitus*, though the effects of training in them look very like *habitus*. But a swallow, St Thomas says (*De virtutibus* 6), does not need a *habitus* to build his nest, nor does a spider to weave his web.

I think none of the items in this list would naturally be called a habit. But there is an English term whose philosophical use corresponds very closely to '*habitus*' as used by St Thomas: namely, 'disposition'. Virtues, vices, and traits of character are obviously dispositions—so too, more disputably, are beliefs, including the true well-founded beliefs that constitute knowledge. The knowledge of languages and the possession of concepts are skills which would more naturally be called capacities than dispositions; still, they are clearly dispositional rather than episodic properties. Health and beauty seem rather different from dispositions: but then St Thomas explains that they are *habitus* only in a rather extended sense (50, 1) Belief and knowledge would perhaps most naturally be called 'states of mind'. On the other hand, it would seem odd to call a virtue such as justice a state of *mind*; though certainly, if we know that a man is just, we know something about the state of his *soul*. Virtues and vices might also be called, as St Thomas calls them, 'spiritual qualities'; but in English, if not in Latin, it would be odd to think of a man's false beliefs as qualities of soul. So the states of mind and soul which St Thomas calls '*habitus*' will henceforth be referred to by the English word 'disposition', while the Latin word '*dispositio*', on the other hand, which St Thomas uses as a technical term to contrast with '*habitus*', will be rendered 'state': its meaning will be clear enough in the contexts in which it occurs.

The notion of *disposition* is best approached via the notions of *capacity* and *action*. Human beings have many capacities which animals lack: the capacity to learn languages, for instance, and the capacity for generosity. These capacities are realized in action when particular human beings speak particular languages or perform generous actions. But between capacity and action there is an intermediate state possible. When we say that a man can speak French we mean neither that he is actually speaking French, nor that his speaking French is a mere logical possibility. When we call a man generous we mean more than that he has a capacity for generosity in common with the rest of the human race; but we need not mean that he is doing something generous at the moment of our utterance. States such as knowing French and being generous are dispositions. A disposition, said St Thomas, is half-way between a capacity and an action, between pure potentiality and full actuality (50, 4).

Knowing French is an intellectual disposition; generosity is a disposition of the will. There is a difference between dispositions of the two kinds. To

be generous is *inter alia* to be able when the occasion demands to put others' interests before one's own. To know French is *inter alia* to be able when the occasion demands to conjugate correctly irregular verbs. If, when the occasion demands, one fails to put others' interests before one's own, one fails *pro tanto* to be generous. But without detriment to one's knowledge of French one may fail to give to an irregular verb the conjugation which the occasion demands; perhaps as a trap for one's pupils. To be generous it is not enough to be able to put others first: it is necessary to do so. To know French it is not necessary to write one's French verbs correctly; it is enough to be able to do so. This difference between intellectual dispositions and dispositions of the will was clearly marked by St Thomas, though in a passage outside the present volume (1a2æ. 56, 3). Disposition of the will, but not intellectual dispositions, may be called also tendencies, *qualitates inclinantes* (50, 5).

In saying this we depart from a current usage which regards 'disposition' and 'tendency' as synonyms. We must do so, clearly, if we are to regard belief as a disposition. For the belief that the earth is round finds expression in saying 'the earth is round'; but it is not a tendency to say this, for even when the occasion arises to say it, one may not wish to, and yet believe it to be true. Nor, of course, is the belief the mere capacity to say 'the earth is round' which is shared by flat-earthers, provided they know English. Between capacity and action, therefore, there are two possible intermediate states: dispositions which are tendencies and dispositions which are not.

Question 49 begins by seeking to locate dispositions within the scheme of Aristotle's categories. A disposition is a quality, that is to say, it belongs in the third of the ten categories (49, 1). It is a quality in the first of the four classes into which Aristotle divided the class of qualities (49, 2). Dispositions are of two kinds: states of substances in relation to their natures, and states of faculties in relation to their activities (49, 3).

Nature-directed dispositions are such things as health, strength, and beauty and their opposites. Health was regarded as a certain condition of the four humours of the body, namely, choler, phlegm, blood and black bile (54, 1; also IV *Sent.* 44, 1, 2, ii). The state of a body at any time depends *inter alia* on the natural properties (such as the temperature) of these humours, and on the proportion in which they are mixed (49, 2, 4). If the proportion and temperature of the humours suits the nature of the body to which they belong, then the body is healthy; if it does not, then the body is sick. The nature of each kind of animal lays down certain limits within which the proportion and temperature of the humours must fall if it is to be healthy for an animal of that kind: a proportion which would be healthy for a lion would be insupportable to a human being (*In Physic.* VII, *lect.* 3).

But within the species there are individual differences: a proportion which would be perfect health for one man might not be for another (51, 1). A man can be healthy without being in a state of perfect health; provided that the temperament of his humours comes close to the ideal, he can properly be called healthy (52, 1). Beauty, like health, is a matter of proportion. If the colour and shape of the limbs and other visible parts of a body conform to the nature of the species and the individual, then the body is beautiful (49, 2; 54, 1). Strength, finally, depends on the condition of a third set of parts of the body, namely, the muscles, flesh, and bones (54, 1). Conditions such as health, strength, and beauty, St Thomas explains, are not dispositions in the strictest sense; they are not sufficiently permanent states, and do not conform to Averroes' definition of a disposition as 'something which a man can exercise at will' (50, 1). Hence, though he constantly refers to them as examples of dispositions, he prefers to call them 'disposition-like states', *habituales dispositiones* (50, 1). It is obvious that changes in a body's simple properties (e.g. temperature) will cause changes in its quasi-dispositions, e.g. health (52, 2).

Activity-directed dispositions, for example virtues and beliefs, are the 'qualities of the soul', which are *habitus* or dispositions in the strict use of the term. All dispositions, in fact, are sources of action, for there is a conceptual connection between disposition and activity. Even nature-directed dispositions are directed to action at one remove, since a nature itself is a source of activity (49, 3). But it is dispositions of faculties which are *par excellence* dispositions to activity.

Not every activity, however, is an exerc se of a disposition. God's thought and the motion of the planets are activities which spring from no dispositions. Natural agents need no dispositions in order to perform their natural activities. By nature fire heats and water wets: these are the natural activities of fire and water and the only activities for which they have capacities. Where capacity and activity are identical, as in God, or where capacity can be realized only in a single activity, as with the planets and natural agents, there is no room for a third term between capacity and activity. If *A*'s φ-ing is the same as *A*'s existing, or if *A*'s capacity to φ is a capacity only to φ, then there is no need to look for an explanation of *A*'s φ-ing other than *A*'s existence or *A*'s capacity to φ. It is where *A*'s capacity to φ is also a capacity to ψ that we need to point to a disposition to φ as an explanation of why, in a particular case, *A* is φ-ing rather than ψ-ing[3] (49, 4).

[3]I use the Greek letters 'φ' and 'ψ' as variables replaceable according to context by verbs, as I use the Latin capital letters '*A*', '*B*', '*C*' and '*P*', '*Q*', '*R*' as variables replaceable according to context by suitable nouns and adjectives, and the small-case letters '*p*', '*q*', '*r*' as variables replaceable by sentences

Question 50 is entitled, *De subiecto habituum*. Dispositions are qualities: what are they qualities *of*? What is the subject in which they inhere, the possessor to which they belong? It seems obvious enough that a man's beliefs and virtues are *his* beliefs and *his* virtues. St Thomas does not, of course, wish to question this. All attributes, he stresses, are in the last analysis attributes of substances: all a man's dispositions are dispositions of a human being; what believes, or is generous, or is healthy is, strictly speaking, a man, and not his mind or his heart or his body (50, 2). Still, it is not senseless to ask, say, whether skill in writing history is principally a gift of memory or of imagination. To ask whether something is a disposition of mind or of body is to ask whether it belongs to a human being *qua* intelligent being or *qua* animal of a particular constitution. Dispositions of mind, we might say nowadays, are dispositions which belong to human beings *qua* language-users, and St Thomas, who said that the result of any intellectual operation was expressible in words (cf *De veritate* IV, 2), might not have disagreed. To ask which faculty is exercised through a certain disposition is to seek for the conceptual connections between abilities of various kinds. St Thomas asks in turn whether there are dispositions of the body, of the soul as such, of the sense-faculties, of the intellect and of the will. As an appendix, which may seem to break the continuity of the treatise, he asks whether the concept of *disposition* has application to angels (50, 6).

Predictably enough, he decides that the quasi-dispositions of health and beauty are dispositions of the body, and that some virtues and vices are dispositions of the will (50, 1, 5). Following Aristotle, he says that other virtues are dispositions of the sensory appetite, i.e. the capacity for feelings of desire and aversion (50, 3). His other conclusions are more interesting and less expected. No disposition to activity is a purely bodily disposition, he decides. For bodily activities are either subject to voluntary control or not. If they are not, then they are natural activities and as such need no disposition to account for them. If they are, then the dispositions which account for them must be located primarily in the soul (50, 1).

There are no dispositions to activity, St Thomas tells us, in the five senses. This is something of a surprise: one might have expected that the acquisition of a discriminating palate or the cultivation of a musical ear would be said to produce dispositions in the respective senses. There are dispositions, however, in the 'inner senses' of the memory and the imagination. Such dispositions are possessed by those who have good memories and fertile imaginations (50, 3). Dumb animals, however, though they have memory and something like imagination, possess no dispositions since their faculties work not in obedience to reason but by instinct. Only when they have been trained by human beings do they display anything which may at all appropriately be called a disposition (50, 3).

The account of belief[4] in this context is particularly carefully nuanced. Painstaking attempts have been made in our own time to present belief as a bodily disposition: as a tendency, for instance, to make in certain circumstances certain sounds or marks on paper. One difficulty which stands in the way of such attempts is that the bodily movements of jaw and tongue, say, which express a German's belief that the world is round are quite different from the bodily movements by which a Frenchman expresses the same belief. It is therefore doubtful whether the belief that the world is round can be analysed as a tendency to make bodily movements. In the twelfth century the theory that belief was a disposition of body had been put forward by the Arabic commentator Averroes. Averroes believed —on the authority, he said, of Aristotle—that the whole human race shared a single mind. But it was obvious that different men differed in their beliefs. Beliefs therefore must be dispositions not of the mind but of bodily powers such as the inner senses.

St Thomas did not believe in a world-mind, but nor did he accept a behaviouristic account of belief. Beliefs, he maintained, were primarily dispositions of the individual intellects of particular men; but since beliefs were acquired and applied through the work of the senses and imagination, and were affected by bodily states and changes, they must be regarded as dispositions also of the body (50, 4; 53, 1, 2). He remarks, in a theological aside such as is rare in this treatise, that there can be dispositions of the essence of the soul as well as of its faculties. This dark remark is not further clarified at this point (50, 2): we are referred onward to the treatise on grace (1a2æ. 110, 4).

The first article of Question 51 opens a topic which caused bitter debate in post-Renaissance philosophy: the problem of innate dispositions and in particular of innate ideas. Once again, the solution is a balanced one, taking account of arguments on both sides of the question. There are no completely innate dispositions to activity which are present in all members of the human race; but some men, owing to the fortunate constitution of their bodies, are born with gifts of intelligence or advantages of temperament which are denied to other men; and these natural endowments are dispositions of a kind (51, 1). Again, there are no completely innate ideas or beliefs; but belief in self-evident propositions is innate in a specially qualified sense. 'Because of the nature of his spiritual soul,' St Thomas tells us, 'a human being, once he knows what a whole is and what a part is, knows that every whole is greater than any of its parts.' But, he continues,

[4] I use 'belief' not as equivalent to 'religious belief' or 'belief on authority' but as a quite general term derived from the sense of 'believe' in which 'he believes that *p*' is roughly equivalent to 'he thinks that *p*'

a man cannot know what a whole is or what a part is except through the possession of concepts derived through the senses. The understanding of self-evident principles is thus in one sense innate and in another sense acquired by experience (51, 1).

Most dispositions are in no way innate and are the result of the agent's own activity. Self-evident principles act upon the intellect, and the reason acts upon the faculty of desire, we are told, just as fire acts upon what it heats (51, 3). The comparison is bizarre but is repeated insistently. For an Aristotelean the prime example of natural action is the process whereby what is hot heats, what is cool cools, what is wet wets, and what is dry dries: many other actions, however complicated or spiritual, are described by comparison or contrast with this simple paradigm (50, 1; 51, 2, 3; 52, 2; 53, 1, etc). The action of the self-evident propositions leaves a mark on the intellect, the action of the reasoning powers leaves a mark on the faculty of desire: thus dispositions are produced in intellect and will and sensory appetite, qualities of these faculties which are produced by the activity of other more active forces (51, 2, 3). Sometimes a single act can produce a disposition; in other cases many acts are needed. A single knockdown argument based on self-evident principles can produce the disposition of knowledge in the intellect; where outright proof is impossible, many arguments from probabilities are needed to produce belief. To acquire a virtue a man must always perform many virtuous actions, for virtue consists in conformity to reason, but reason can decide on right action only from case to case, and one case differs from another (51, 3).

Besides being innate, or being produced by action, dispositions may be infused into men directly by God. Some dispositions can only be infused by God: such are the supernatural virtues which fit a man for a destiny beyond the power of human nature to achieve. Other dispositions which may be naturally acquired are sometimes infused miraculously into men in order to display God's power. Thus the Apostles acquired without learning the knowledge of the Bible and of foreign tongues (51, 4).

Questions 52 and 53 are the most difficult and I think the least rewarding parts of the treatise. They deal with the increase, decrease, and disappearance of dispositions. The central problem treated is that of intensive magnitude, that is to say, of the meaning of the words 'more' and 'less' as applied to qualities. On this question Aristotelean commentators had split into four schools of thought: St Thomas records their views without very clearly taking sides, and states his own opinions with less than his usual firmness and precision (52, 1, 2).

On the face of it, to say that one man's *P*-ness is greater than another's is simply to say that the first man is more *P* than the other. The equivalence looks as if it cannot be denied under pain of nonsense. St Thomas accepts

this thesis if '*P*' is replaced by a word such as 'white' or 'hot': the heat of *A* is greater than the heat of *B* if and only if *A* is hotter than *B*. But in the case of dispositions such as health and knowledge, he maintains, the equivalence does not hold. We have already seen that one man's health may be closer than another's to the ideal of health, and yet both men be healthy. Now St Thomas goes further: *A*'s health may be greater than *B*'s (i.e. be a more ideal temperament of the humours) and yet *B* may be healthier than *A* (e.g. because his second-rate temperament is more stable than *A*'s finely-tempered but labile condition). The distinction which St Thomas thus makes between health *in se* and health as possessed by the individual is clearly not nonsensical. But it may be doubted whether it conforms to Latin usage any better than it does to English (52, 1).

On the other hand, the parallel distinction which St Thomas makes in the case of knowledge is reflected in the English distinction between *knowing more* and *knowing better*. Mary may know more of Kipling's *If* than Jane, because she knows two verses to Jane's one; and yet Jane may know the bit she knows better than Mary does because she can recite it with less hesitation and stumbling. When a man learns extra theorems of geometry, St Thomas says, a single specific disposition grows in him: his knowledge of geometry becomes greater. But knowledge, without growing greater in this way, may be possessed to a greater degree, as one man may be swifter and surer than another in making use of his knowledge of the same theorems (52, 2).

At this point, if not earlier, the reader may ask how we decide whether the possession of several pieces of knowledge counts as a single disposition or as several dispositions. St Thomas does not give him an answer until the very end of the treatise. The issue is complicated by a quirk of English idiom. If *A* believes that *p* and believes that *q*, then in general we say that *A* has two beliefs; but if *A* knows that *q* and knows that *p*, we do not ever say that he has two knowledges. Thus, though the phrase '*habitus opinionis*' can be translated simply 'belief', '*habitus scientiæ*' must be rendered by some improvised expression such as 'knowledge-disposition'. Even this is not quite accurate, for '*scientia*' means not just *knowledge*, but *scientific knowledge* conforming to very precise specifications.

Following Aristotle, St Thomas believed that everything that can be strictly known consists of conclusions derived by syllogistic reasoning from self-evident propositions. The findings of any science could be laid out as a set of theorems in a deductive system whose axioms were either theorems of another science or self-evident propositions. Thus it was natural for him to say that the knowledge of a particular science, such as geometry or grammar, was a single disposition which extended in its scope to all the theorems provable within the science. The geometer who learns another

theorem is not acquiring a new disposition, but merely extending the scope of a disposition he already possesses (54, 4). Thus one and the same knowledge-disposition may grow in two distinct ways.

In the case of virtues, St Thomas says (1a2æ. 66, 1), there is no room for a distinction parallel to that between *knowing more* and *knowing better*. A man may have the *habitus* of grammar without knowing all the theorems of grammar; he cannot have the virtue of temperance without keeping all the rules of temperance. *A* may be more temperate than *B* only in the sense that *A* falls less short than *B* of the single indivisible ideal of temperance.

Despite this difference, virtues and sciences are more comparable to each other in the thought of St Thomas than they can ever be in the context of a scientific culture. For him, a science is quite literally a disposition of an individual: the science of geometry has no existence independent of Tom's, Dick's, and Harry's knowledge of geometry, and Tom, Dick, and Harry may each know the whole of geometry and thus possess the whole science. We are still similarly positivistic in our attitude to virtues and vices: we do not think of there being any unpunctuality in the world independent of the unpunctuality of Smith, Jones, and Robinson, and unpunctuality has no history other than the biographies of unpunctual men. But we think of physics and botany quite differently, as being somehow independent of physicists and botanists. It is not just that any science nowadays contains more than any single man can master. We think of chemistry as much more than the sum of what Tom, Dick, and Harry know about chemistry. There are things known to Science which are not known by any scientist: facts ascertained by men now dead, and the results of now forgotten experiments, which no-one carries in his head but everyone can look up in a library. Libraries are storehouses of human knowledge which is not the knowledge of any human individual: they are not altogether unlike the world-mind of Averroes. Now it is obvious that there could not be storehouses, say, of human courage, which was not the courage of any individual. It is with reason, therefore, that to our modern minds there is something odd about drawing a close parallel between science and virtue. But if for St Thomas's '*scientia*' we substitute a reference to the individual's *knowledge* of a science, then the comparison holds within the limits which he lays down.

Knowledge-dispositions are increased by acts of reasoning, and virtuous dispositions are increased by acts of virtue. But not every action which springs from a disposition increases the disposition. This point is best made by reference to a disposition mentioned only once, namely friendship (53, 3). Typical acts of friendship are the giving of gifts and the paying of visits. But not every gift given or visit paid to a friend increases a friendship. A gift much smaller than one's usual gifts, a visit much briefer than

one's custom may have the opposite effect and give offence. Generalizing, St Thomas says that actions equal to, or greater than, the intensity of a disposition tend to increase the disposition; whereas actions less than the intensity of the disposition prepare its decay (52, 3).

Dispositions decay and disappear in various ways. It is obvious that knowledge may be forgotten and virtue corrupted into vice. But how can this be, it is asked, since knowledge and virtue are dispositions of an incorruptible subject, namely the immortal soul? The answer is complicated and subtle. A sickness can come to an end in two ways: it may be cured, or it may end with the sick man's death. If beliefs are dispositions of a man's immortal soul, then they cannot be brought to an end by the man's death, since his soul does not die. But can beliefs perhaps be cured? Is there anything which stands to a belief in the relationship in which health stands to sickness? (53, 1).

St Thomas does not say, as perhaps we might have expected, that the belief that *p* is the opposite of the belief that not-*p*. But one proposition, he says, may be the contrary of another proposition, and bad argument is the opposite of good argument. No argument, however powerful, can shake a man's belief in self-evident principles. But his beliefs, and indeed his knowledge, about particular conclusions of science may be sapped by bad argument or argument based on false premisses. Thus false beliefs may drive out true beliefs as sickness drives out health (53, 1).

Virtues, like beliefs, can survive bodily death. But vice is obviously related to virtue as sickness is to health: one may succeed and replace the other. 'These dispositions,' it is explained, 'are produced by the natural power of the reasoning faculty to affect the appetitive part. And so they can be destroyed by any judgment of reason in a contrary sense, either through ignorance, or passion, or deliberate choice' (53, 1).

Beliefs and virtues are not only dispositions of the immortal soul: they are in a secondary sense dispositions of bodily powers. Consequently they may decay or disappear on occasion as a result of bodily changes. The sense-faculties which are employed in the exercise of knowledge may suffer impediment or injury. But alterations in a man's beliefs as a result of bodily changes—e.g. in sickness or intoxication—are less fundamental and lasting than changes of mind produced by argument (53, 2).

Dispositions are not always brought to an end abruptly: they may decay insensibly through lack of exercise. Knowledge may be forgotten, and friendships wither through separation. For dispositions must be exercised if they are to resist the forces which tend to their destruction. Virtue gives a man control over his behaviour and feelings: if it is not constantly exercised unruly impulses will soon destroy it. Knowledge if not employed may be obscured by irrelevant and misleading pictures crowding into the mind.

Dispositions in the soul, like muscles in the body, grow weak and flabby without exercise (53, 3).

The last Question of the treatise is entitled *De distinctione habituum*. It concerns the principles on which the genus *disposition* is to be divided into species: as we would say, it concerns the classification of dispositions. Obviously enough, dispositions of one faculty must be distinguished from dispositions of another faculty; dispositions of the intellect must be classified separately from dispositions of the will. But our classification cannot end there, because there can be more than one type of disposition belonging to a single faculty (54, 1).

Two dispositions may be distinguished by having different objects. *Knowing geometry*, for instance, is a different disposition from *knowing arithmetic*, though they are both dispositions of the intellect. The difference between them is a difference of objects: the direct object of the verb 'knows' is not the same in the predicate '. . . knows geometry' as in the predicate '. . . knows arithmetic' (54, 2). One may ask why in that case *knowing that* $2 + 2 = 4$ is not a different disposition from *knowing that* $3 + 3 = 6$, since the expression 'that $2 + 2 = 4$' is not the same as the expression 'that $3 + 3 = 6$'. St Thomas's answer to this would be that not every difference of objects makes a difference of dispositions, but only a *formal* difference between objects; and that both '$2 + 2 = 4$' and '$3 + 3 = 6$' fall under the same formal concept, *arithmetical proposition*; both are discovered by the same methods (54, 2, 4).

Again, two dispositions may differ simply in that one is a good disposition and the other a bad disposition. Chastity and unchastity are both dispositions of the same faculties; they have a common object, for both of them are attitudes to sex; they differ only in that chastity is a good attitude to sex and unchastity a bad one. What is a good disposition and what is a bad disposition is to be decided by reference to the nature of the possessor of the disposition; in the case of human beings, by reference to reason (54, 3).

The reader who has persevered to the end of the treatise is left in no doubt that a *habitus* is not a habit. A *habitus*, or disposition, we are told more than once, is what can be exercised at will; but an action, in so far as it becomes a habit, to that extent escapes voluntary control. The difference between disposition and habit might be roughly characterized thus. If one has a *habitus* to φ then it is easier to φ than if one has not: examples are *being generous* and *speaking French* (cf *De virtutibus* 1, ad 13). If one has a habit of φ-ing, then it is harder not to φ than if one has not: examples are *smoking* and *saying 'I say!' before each sentence*.

Once the distinction has been made, it is obvious that *habitus* are a far more important topic of inquiry than habits. The concept of *disposition* is

an essential element in the characterization of peculiarly human behaviour and experience, even though great philosophers have sometimes seemed almost unaware of this fact. St Thomas has the merit of having grasped the importance of the concept and of having been the first great philosopher to attempt a full-scale analysis of it. In doing so he had ample opportunity to display that tactical skill in the deployment of arguments and that patience in the unravelling of complications which were his peculiar gifts as a philosopher. As an Aristotelean exegete and historian of philosophy he is too charitable to be altogether accurate; but when he writes in his own person he achieves a dispassionate lucidity and a freedom from rhetoric which other philosophers might well envy.

Even in detail, parts of his analysis will bear comparison with anything written since. The account of belief,[5] for instance, presented in this treatise and in other works, seems in its essentials remarkably correct. In discussing the relationship between the believing mind and the believer's body, St Thomas refused to identify belief either with the actions and dispositions of a body or with the independent experience of an incarnate spirit. In so doing he avoided the traps of spiritualism and behaviourism into which many later empiricists and idealists fell. Yet I find that his positive account of the relationship will not do as it stands. My beliefs, he says, are *my* beliefs because they are beliefs of the soul which is individuated by my body, and because they are acquired and employed with the aid of mental images generated by my brain (50, 4). Is it not rather that my beliefs are *my* beliefs because they are beliefs which find expression in the words and actions which issue from *this body*? On this relationship St Thomas is almost wholly silent.

Again, St Thomas makes good use of the Aristotelean distinction between natural and voluntary causes. A natural cause, unlike a voluntary cause, is 'determined to one thing' (50, 3). That is to say, in the order of nature, if the causal conditions in a situation can be fully specified, a single effect can be infallibly predicted. In the order of voluntary behaviour, it is not so: when a man does something, for instance, because he is asked to, his doing it cannot be predicted infallibly even by somebody who knows everything that has been said by him and to him throughout his life up to the request itself. This distinction seems to me both correct and important. Of course, it does not solve, but only sharpen, the problem of free-will. Natural effects can be predicted from natural causes, voluntary effects cannot be predicted from voluntary causes. Just so: but voluntary actions are also natural events, and the interesting and difficult question is whether voluntary effects can be predicted from natural causes.

[5]cf note 4 above