

Reply to objection 1: A good that is ordered to an end is called a *useful good* (*bonum utile*). This implies a certain relation, which is why the Philosopher says in *Ethics* 1, “It is with respect to something that a good is useful.” However, in those things that are predicated relatively (*quae ad aliquid dicuntur*) something is denominated not only from that which exists within it, but also from that which touches on it extrinsically, as is clear with *right* and *left*, *equal* and *unequal*, and other similar cases. And so since the goodness of acts exists insofar as they are useful for the end, nothing prevents them from being called *good* or *bad* because of a relation to certain things that touch on them from the outside. 95

Reply to objection 2: Accidents that behave altogether accidentally (*quae omnino per accidens se habent*) are left aside by every art because they are unstable and infinite in number (*propter eorum incertitudinem et infinitatem*). But such accidents do not have the nature of a circumstance (*non habent rationem circumstantiae*), since, as has been explained, circumstances lie outside of the act in such a way that they nonetheless touch on the act in some sense and are ordered toward it; and *per se* accidents do fall under an art. 100

Reply to objection 3: The consideration of circumstances pertains to the moralist and the statesman as well as to the rhetorician (*pertinet ad moralem et politicum et ad rhetorem*). 105

The circumstances pertain to the moralist insofar as the mean of virtue in human acts and human passions is either found or missed in relation to them.

They pertain to the statesman and the rhetorician insofar as acts are rendered praiseworthy or blameworthy, excusable or inexcusable (*laudabiles vel vituperabiles, excusabiles vel accusabiles*) by their circumstances. Yet the circumstances pertain to the statesman and the rhetorician in different ways. For the rhetorician makes a persuasive argument for what the statesman passes judgment on (*quod rhetor persuadet, politicus diiudicat*). 110

Now the circumstances pertain to the theologian, to whom all the other arts are subordinated, in *all* of the ways just mentioned. For the theologian, along with the moralist, conducts inquiry into virtuous acts and vicious acts. And along with the rhetorician and the statesman, he considers acts insofar as they merit punishment or reward. 115

Article 3

Are the circumstances correctly enumerated in *Ethics* 3?

It seems that the circumstances are incorrectly enumerated in *Ethics* 3:

Objection 1: What is called a circumstance of an act is related externally to the act. Time and place are circumstances of this sort. Therefore, *when?* and *where?* are the only two sorts of circumstances. 120

Objection 2: That something is done well or done badly is taken from the circumstances. But something’s being done well or done badly has to do with the mode [or manner] of an act (*pertinet ad modum actus*). Therefore, all the circumstances are included under a single circumstance, viz., *the manner of acting* (*modus agendi*). 125

Objection 3: Circumstances do not belong to the substance of an act. But it seems that the causes of the act itself have to do with the substance of the act. Therefore, no circumstance should be taken from the causes of the act itself. So, then, *who?* and *why?* and *what?* are not circumstances; for *who?* has to do with the efficient cause, *why?* with the final cause, and *what?* with the material cause. 130

But contrary to this is the relevant passage (*auctoritas*) from the Philosopher in *Ethics* 3.

I respond: In *Rhetorica* Tully enumerates seven sorts of circumstances that are contained in the following verse: “*Who? (quis), what? (quid), where? (ubi), by what means? (quibus auxiliis), why? (cur), in what manner? (quomodo), when? (quando).*” For in the case of an act, one has to take account

of *who* did it, *by what means or instruments* he did it, *what* he did, *where* he did it, *why* he did it, *in what manner (quomodo)* he did it, and *when* he did it. In *Ethics 3* Aristotle adds another, viz., *with respect to what? (circa quid)*, which Tully includes under *what?* 135

The explanation for this enumeration can be thought of as follows:

A circumstance is something that, while existing outside the substance of an act, touches on the act in some way. There are three ways in which this happens: (a) the circumstance touches on *the act itself*; 140
(b) it touches on a *cause* of the act; or (c) it touches on an *effect* of the act.

Now it touches on *the act itself* either (a) as a measure, as with *time* and *place*, or (b) as a quality of the act, as with the *manner of acting*.

It touches on an *effect* as in the consideration of *what* someone has done.

It touches on a *cause* as follows: as regards the final cause, *why? (propter quid)*; as regards the material cause (or object), *with respect to what? (circa quid)*; as regards a principal agent cause, *who did it?*; and with respect to an instrumental agent cause, *by what means?* 145

Reply to objection 1: *Time* and *place* are ‘surround’ (*circumstat*) the act as measures, but the other circumstances are such that, while existing outside the substance of the act, they touch on the act itself in some other way. 150

Reply to objection 2: The particular mode or manner *done well* (or *done badly*) is posited not as a circumstance, but as something that follows upon all the circumstances. By contrast, *the manner [of acting]* that is posited as a special circumstance has to do with a quality of the act, e.g., that someone is walking *quickly* or *slowly*, or that someone struck another *forcefully* or *lightly*, and so on.

Reply to objection 3: It is a conjoined condition—and not the condition of a cause on which the act’s substance depends—that is a circumstance. For instance, in the case of the object, it is not a circumstance of theft that the item belongs to someone else, since this has to do with the substance of theft; rather, a circumstance would be that the object is of great value or of small value (*magnum vel parvum*). 155

The same holds for other circumstances that are taken from the other causes. For it is a conjoined end—and not the end that gives an act its species (*dat speciem actus*)—that is a circumstance. For instance, it is not a circumstance that a brave man acts bravely for the sake of the good of courage; instead, it is a circumstance that he acts bravely for the sake of freeing his city, or for the sake of the Christian people, or for something else of this sort. 160

The same holds for *what?*. For instance, it is not a circumstance of someone’s pouring water on another that he makes him wet; but it is a circumstance that, in pouring the water, he makes him cold or hot, or heals him or harms him. 165

Article 4

Is it the case, as *Ethics 3* asserts, that the principal circumstances are *why?* and the things in which the operation exists? 170

It seems that it is not the case, as *Ethics 3* asserts, that the principal circumstances are “*why?*” (*propter quid*) and the “things in which the operation exists”:

Objection 1: The things in which the operation exists seem to be place and time, which do not seem the most important among the circumstances, since they are especially extrinsic to the act. Therefore, the things in which the operation exists are not the most important circumstances. 175

Objection 2: The end is extrinsic to a thing. Therefore, it does not seem to be the most important circumstance.

Objection 3: The most important element in any given thing is its cause and its form. But the