Secundum Quid and the Pragmatics of Arguments. The Challenges of the Dialectical Tradition

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Abstract

The phrase *secundum quid et simpliciter* is the Latin expression translating and labelling the sophism described by Aristotle as connected with the use of some particular expression "absolutely or in a certain respect and not in its proper sense." This paper presents an overview of the analysis of this fallacy in the history of dialectics, reconstructing the different explanations provided in the Aristotelian texts, the Latin and medieval dialectical tradition, and the modern logical approaches. The *secundum quid* emerges as a strategy that is based on the pragmatic dimension of arguments, and in particular the complex passage from an utterance (what is said) to its logical form (a proposition in an argument). The medieval and modern logical theories attempted to explain from different philosophical perspectives how the pragmatically enriched semantic representation can be achieved, justified, and most importantly manipulated. The different analyses of this fallacy bring to light various dimensions of the pragmatics of arguments, and the complex interdependence between context, meaning, and inferences.

Keywords *Secundum quid* · Manipulation · Interpretation · Logic · Dialectics · Pragmatics · Argumentation · Explicatures

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1 Introduction

The Latin phrase "*secundum quid et simpliciter*" is an obscure label for a deceptive strategy that we can observe frequently in different contexts, ranging from political debates to legal discourse, and constitutes the foundation of other mischievous arguments (Walton 1996a). In the most basic and accepted form, this fallacy amounts to a distortion of a viewpoint or statement that is qualified in a specific way or is left unspecified. Instead of preserving its explicit qualifications or limitations (or the lack thereof), a statement is presented as valid in general and not only under the conditions indicated (or in conditions not explicitly provided for) (Walton 1990, 113). A clear example was given by Aristotle: "Suppose an Indian to be black all over, but white in respect of his teeth; then he is both white and not white" (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 167a 7-8- Aristotle 1991a). In this case, the premise "the Indian is white in respect of this teeth" is qualified, as the predicate "to be white" is attributed to the subject only considering a specific part of his body. However, this predication is used in the conclusion without any qualification, thus meaning "white" in general (i.e., considering the most extended external covering of the body). The fallacy stems from an apparent similarity of the premise and the conclusion, which hides a difference in meaning.

The passage from the qualified to the unqualified version of a statement is not the only variant of the *secundum quid*, but it clearly exemplifies its most important characteristics. The most evident feature is a difference of meaning between the qualified and the unqualified use of the same expression – a semantic difference that is at the same time both the cause of deceit and the reason of its unacceptability (Kretzmann et al. 1982, 124). However, how, and why can an unqualified expression have a meaning different from – and not only entailed by – its qualified use? This question led to many different answers in the history of dialectics, which mirrored distinct philosophical views on the relationship between meaning and arguments.

This paper intends to provide a historical overview on the *secundum quid* fallacy, showing how different dialectical theories throughout the centuries tried to explain the cause of its deceitful nature by focusing on its logical, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions. The starting point is the Aristotelian account, which will be addressed in the next section, devoted to the illustration and interpretation of the Aristotelian text and examples. The development of the *secundum quid* in the Middle Ages will be presented in the third section. Starting from Boethius' translation (and interpretation) of Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*, the fallacy will be looked at through the most important philosophical lenses that characterized medieval logic, in particular nominalism and realism. The last part of the paper is devoted to the modern interpretations of the ignoring qualification, showing how 19th century's logicians addressed the complexity of this fallacy, leading to the contemporary challenges.

2 The Aristotelian Account

The phrase "*secundum quid et simpliciter*" is the Latin translation of a passage of Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*, in which he introduced this "nonlinguistic" fal-

lacy as follows (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 166b 38-167a 1, Forster's translation Aristotle 1955):

> Fallacies connected with the use of some particular expression [λέγεσθαι, what is said] absolutely [ἁπλῶς] or in a certain respect and not in its proper sense [κυρίως], occur when that which is predicated in part only is taken as though it was predicated absolutely.

This description consists in two parts: the denomination of the fallacy, and its cause. In the dialectical tradition, the "*secundum quid*" has been commonly associated with its cause, i.e., the elision of the qualifications that can lead to confusion (Kirwan 1979). Thus, the denomination of the fallacy itself was reduced to the first part ("absolutely [or more correctly, plainly] or in a certain respect") neglecting what the use of an expression "simply" or "in a certain respect" is contrasted with, namely "in the proper sense."

The relationship between "in the proper (default) sense" and "plainly" is reversed in the description that Aristotle provides later on in the book (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 180a 23–24, Forster's translation):

> Arguments which turn upon the use of an expression not in its proper sense [κυρίως] but with validity [λέγεσθαι, said] in respect only of a particular thing or in a particular respect or place or degree or relation and not absolutely [ἁπλῶς], must be solved by examining the conclusion in the light of its contradictory, to see if it can possibly have been affected in any of these ways.

On this reading, the fallacy consists in the opposition between "κυρίως" – translated as the "standard" (Schreiber 2003, 141), "common," or "default" use of an expression (Van Ophuijsen 2014, 212; Lewis 1991, 204) – and its *stated* qualified sense, which does not correspond to its "plain" use (ἁπλῶς) (often translated as "absolutely"). The relationship between "without qualification (or absolutely)" and "standard or default use" is clearly explained by Schreiber (2003, 149):

> […] ἁπλῶς in pre-Aristotelian Greek was reserved exclusively for descriptions of a way of speaking. It meant saying something simply, without any additional words. I claim that Aristotle supplants that use of ἁπλῶς by κυρίως and attempts to use ἁπλῶς in a new fashion to distinguish between ontological conditions. But even in Aristotle the linguistic heritage of ἁπλῶς is never so entirely erased that he can deny some causal role of ordinary speech in the production of *Secundum Quid* fallacies. Although ways of speaking cannot affect ways of being, they do affect our beliefs about the way things are.

In this sense, the concept of ἁπλῶς is "without any addition" (μηδενός προστιθέμενου) (Schreiber 2003, 149): "A thing is without qualification [ἁπλῶς] so which without any addition [μηδενός προστιθέμενου] you are prepared to say is honourable or the contrary" (Aristotle, *Topics* 115b 30–31- Aristotle 1991b). Thus, the deceptive effect of the fallacy rests in the fact that what is left without qualifications (or ἁπλῶς) has

a default interpretation (κυρίως), which the interlocutor neglects by providing a different, unusual, and non-defaultive reading (see Jaszczolt 2005). Thus, he takes a non-qualified expression as a qualified one, or a qualified expression as an unqualified one.

The interplay between the lack of any addition and the preferential reading is also pointed out in the *Rhetoric* (1401b35-1402a2- Aristotle 1991c):

> Another line consists in leaving out [ἔλλειψις, defect of] any mention of time and circumstances. E.g., the argument that Paris was justified in taking Helen, since her father left her free to choose: here the freedom was presumably not perpetual; it could only refer to her first choice, beyond which her father's authority could not go. Or again, one might say that to strike a free man is an act of wanton outrage; but it is not so in every case – only when it is unprovoked. Again, a spurious deduction may, as in eristical discussions, be based on the confusion of the absolute [ἁπλῶς] with that which is not absolute.

The source of the fallacy is thus the absence of an addition that specifies the (non-prototypical) respect, time, or manner (Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1402a11-12) that in this specific circumstance can be inferred by default, but still is left unexpressed.

This reading of Aristotle's account can lead to the conclusion that the fallacy is committed when an expression has a prevalent, plain (κυρίως) meaning triggered in lack of any addition (ἁπλῶς), and a distinct, not-standard (qualified or unqualified) meaning, which needs to be signaled through an addition (προστιθέμενου) (see also the legal interpretative canons related to plain meaning, Baude and Doerfler 2017). Thus, the problem is not so much the relationship between the qualified versus the unqualified expression, but between the ordinary, standard, unmarked meaning and the marked one.

Aristotle pointed out distinct species of this strategy (from Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 167a 2–9):

1. A qualified expression with a specific meaning taken as equivalent to an unqualified one with a standard meaning.
2. An unqualified expression with a standard meaning taken as equivalent to the qualified expression (with a meaning different from the standard).

These two options apply to three distinct types of logical arguments.

a. Existential predicate.

   a1. A chimaera is a fantastic animal. Therefore, a chimaera is (exists).
   a2. A chimaera is not. Therefore, a chimaera is not a fantastic animal.

b. Predicates.

   b1. A black Indian has white teeth. Therefore, a black Indian is white.
   b2. An Indian is black. Therefore, an Indian has black teeth.

c. Predicates (necessary contextual variable).

   c1. This doctor is good as a father. Therefore, this doctor is good.
   c2. This doctor is good. Therefore, this doctor is good at repairing houses.

d. The subject.

   d1. To be put to death unjustly is preferable; therefore, what takes place unjustly is preferable.
   d2. Lies are unjust; therefore, denouncing lies is unjust.

e. The whole proposition (temporal specification) (see also Aristotle *Topics* 115b 26).

   e1-2. Bob entered his car and drove to the university. Therefore, he drove while he was entering the car.

f. The whole proposition (frequency/modal specification).

   f1. Yesterday he told a lie (something true); therefore, he tells lies (is not a liar).
   f2. Bob tells lies. Therefore, he is telling something false now.

g. The whole proposition (free variable) (see also Aristotle, *Topics* 115b 27–28).

   g1. Wealth is not good for the fool; therefore, wealth is not good.
   g2. Wealth is good; therefore, wealth is good for the fool (the criminal).

   Aristotle Clearly distinguished different cases, all concerning the distortion of the ordinary attribution of meaning to an expression. This interpretative problem does not lie in the linguistic code, unlike other fallacies deriving from the possibility of attributing more than one grammatical representation to the same sentence. The *secundum quid* is distinguished from the "grammatical" fallacies, i.e. equivocation (presence of homonymic words), amphiboly (ambiguous syntactic construction, see Walton, 1996b, pp. 77–120, Walton 2020), composition and division (ambiguous scope of the predicates – disambiguated only orally – resulting in different syntactic representations, see Schreiber, 2003, pp. 60–62), accent (different topic/focus representations or use vs. mention, see Noh, 2000, Chapter 1; Schreiber, 2003, pp. 58–60; Walton, 1996b, pp. 121–124), and figures of expression (prototypical meaning associated to the expression vs. meaning; literal meaning vs. conventional metaphorical meaning; referential vs. attributive meaning; even scalar implicatures, see Schreiber, 2003, Chapter 3; Walton, 1996b, pp. 156–159). The characteristic of the fallacy of "ignoring qualifications" lies in a dimension that we would call nowadays "pragmatic": a predicate or an utterance, when no additions are provided, is interpreted according to the standard meaning, i.e., the prototypical one; however, this lack of an explicit specification (either indicating a general reading or a specific and qualified one) is used by the sophist for justifying a non-prototypical reading.

The linguistic dimension of the interpretation of an utterance has a crucial logical implication. According to Aristotle, some cases of "*secundum quid*" can be conceived as a *qua* phrase that indicates the relevant respect (or cause) under which the predicate is said of the subject (Bäck 1996, 38–47). For example, in "a doctor *qua* (insofar as) father is good," the qualification represents the reason why the predicate "to be good" is attributed to the doctor. Thus, if a man is a doctor and a father, we can conclude that this man is good as a father. However, if we omit the qualification (the *qua* phrase), the reasoning does not follow, as the middle term of the syllogism is constituted by the qualification. The cause of the attribution of the predicate to the subject provides a bridge between the logical (formal) validity and the soundness of a syllogism (Bäck 1996, 12), blurring the distinction between the formal and the semantic level. As we will see below, Ockham will develop the notion of *qua* phrase in terms of the "deep structure" of the representation of the utterance, guaranteeing the passage from the interpretation of an argument to the analysis of its validity.

The last dimension of Aristotle's analysis of *secundum quid* is its discursive use. A fallacy is defined by Aristotle as a kind of ἔλεγχος, a reasoning to the denial of a conclusion in the prototypical context of a dialectical discussion between the questioner and the answerer (Schreiber 2003, 11). Sophistical refutations are dialectical instruments, and for this reason they need to address the interlocutor's viewpoint, which is can be implicitly or explicitly reproduced or mentioned in the refutation (Clark & Gerrig, 1990; Macagno and Walton 2017). In this sense, a refutation presupposes an interpretation of a viewpoint, which can be more or less acceptable. The examples of *secundum quid* that Aristotle provided in form of arguments need to be regarded as refutations of an implicitly or explicitly reported interlocutor's viewpoint. When the manipulation occurs at the level of the reporting of the other's viewpoint, the *secundum quid* is classified by Aristotle as a strategy used in the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*, namely the manipulation of the other's viewpoint for the purpose of attacking it (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 168b 11–16).

For these reasons, the *secundum quid* can be seen as one of the strategies underlying the fallacy commonly known as "straw man" (Macagno and Walton 2017). For example, if the speaker claims that "medicines are good" without any further indication, two "enriched" semantic representations (Recanati 2012) can be attributed to it by the hearer: the default one, that "medicines are good <in the circumstances that make their use necessary, i.e. when one is sick>," or a non-prototypical one, that "medicines are good <in any circumstance>" (see Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 180b 10–13). The *secundum quid* is a representation of the other's viewpoint that does not correspond to the prototypical meaning signaled by the speaker, who presumes that in lack of any further indication, the most common interpretation applies. The sophistical strategy is not necessarily a fallacy of omission, but rather enrichment. In lack of any "addition," the sophistical interlocutor would not interpret the utterance according to its standard, default specific meaning; instead, s/he would narrow or broaden the meaning of some expressions against the common presumptions.

3 The *Secundum Quid* in the Dialectical Tradition

Aristotle's fallacy of *secundum quid* was at the same time complex, multifaceted, and very shortly explained in the *Sophistical Refutations*. When this book was translated by Boethius and then discussed and rediscovered in the Middle Ages, this fallacy faced many scholars with challenges that led to different approaches, and different interpretations. The *secundum quid* was described by Aristotle as a non-linguistic fallacy, which is, however, rooted in how we interpret a statement. It stems from ignoring qualifications; however, the way these qualifications affect the meaning of a statement – and the inferences that can be drawn therefrom – is unclear. Logicians in the Middle Ages advanced different explanations of his sophism, pointing out the crucial importance of a pragmatics of argument *ante litteram*.

3.1 Boethius

The Latin translation of Aristotle's text was originally made by Boethius in the 6th century (around AD 510–22). This work was rediscovered in the Middle Ages in the 12th century, when together with the book of *Topics* and the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, it constituted the corpus of the *logica nova* (Casey 2012, 203). Boethius's translation was the source that the first medieval scholars used in their rediscovery of the *Sophistici Elenchi* (Minio-Paluello 1952; Gazziero 2015, 261); it was Boethius's translation that was used in the following years (Dod 1982, 50–55) and became the ground for the further treatment of the fallacies.

   Boethius' translation of the *Sophistical Refutations* (Boethius 1847) (which in some cases provides a peculiar interpretation of the original text, see Gazziero 2015) keeps the Aristotelian underlying structure of the fallacy, contrasting "*simpliciter*" (unqualified), and the different types of qualifications that an expression (and what it means) can have, with the adverb "*praecipue*," namely "principally," or "more than in other cases" (Glare 2012, 1567). The translation reads as follows:[1]

> The second fallacy is due to what is said to be or not to be in an unqualified way [*simpliciter*], but in some fashion, or relative to some time, or some places, or for something. […] The fallacy caused by what is simply, while it is after a certain fashion, and not according to what is prevalent [*praecipue*], occurs when what is said in part, is considered to be said simply, e.g. "if something that is not can be an object of opinion, then what is not is;" as a matter of fact, it is not the same to be something, and to be simply. (Boethius, *Elencorum Sophisticorum Aristotelis*, I, 4; PL 64, 1011 C-1012 A) [The fallacies] that result from what is [said] principally [*praecipue*], while it is in some respect, or place, or in some fashion, or in relation to something and not simply, are to be solved by consid-

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[1] "Secunda autem propter id quod simpliciter, vel non simpliciter, sed aliquo modo, aut ubi, aut quando, aut ad aliquid dicitur. […] Propter id autem quod hoc quidem simpliciter, illud autem aliquo modo, et non praecipue, quando quod in parte dicitur, ut simpliciter dictum sumitur, ut si non ens est opinabile quod non ens est; non enim est idem esse quidvis, et esse simpliciter.""Eas vero quae sunt propter id quod praecipue, illud autem, vel qua, vel ubi, vel aliquo modo, vel ad aliquid dicitur, et non simpliciter, solvendum est considerando conclusionem ad contradictionem, si contingit horum aliquid passas esse." Author's translation.

ering the conclusion to the contradictory, if it is possible that they have been affected by some of these. (*ibi*, 1034B)

The analysis of the fallacy of *secundum quid* as a specific type of linguistic equivocation emerges clearly in another Boethius' work, i.e., the commentary to Aristotle's book *On interpretation* (Boethius, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias*, 133, 2-30-134 1-5- Boethius 1880). Here, he refers to the *Sophistici Elenchi* to explain the concept of refutation, identifying another type of source of difference between what is stated by the speaker and what is contradicted by the opponent in addition to equivocation. Boethius acknowledges that sophistical refutations (the fallacies) manipulate the sameness of meaning between the original viewpoint and the target of the refutation. This manipulation is carried out through different strategies: (1) equivocation of the referent, by considering distinct aspects thereof (*ad eandem partem*) (i.e. the eyes are not white <considering the iris>, but white <considering the sclera>); (2) equivocation of relative predicates (*ad idem relatum*) ("the double <verse> has ten <syllables>" depends on the verse considered); (3) equivolcation of time (*ad idem tempus*); and (4) equivocation of modality (*eodem modo*) (the puppy does not see <now that is newborn> vs. the puppy sees <as a capacity>).

3.2 The Medieval Dialectical Tradition - Abelard

Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* became popular in the medieval dialectical tradition from the 1130s onwards (Marenbon 2004, 27). However, it is possible to find a treatment of the fallacy of the *secundum quid* in Abelard's *Dialectica* (written around 1117–1119, see Marenbon 1997, 41–43), and in his later *Logica Ingredientibus*. In both works, Abelard mentions the *Sophistical Refutations* (and in the *Logica Ingredientibus* he explicitly acknowledges to have read it, see Abaelardus, *Glossae super Librum Perihermeneias* LI 3.02, 47- Abaelardus 1919). In these works, he points out that, according to Boethius' comments to the *Peri Hermeneias*, the fallacies are divided in six categories: equivocation, univocation, and the four ways according to which the additions can modify the meaning of a term or a sentence taken without qualifications (Abaelardus, *Dialectica*, 181- Abaelardus 1970).

Here, Abelard acknowledges that the fallacies that Boethius mentions consist of elements added without any reason. Abelard distinguishes to this purpose the meaning (*sententia*) from what constitutes it (*constitutione*), namely its verbal expression: the fallacies of "*secundum quid*" that Boethius describes are conceived by Abelard as spurious changes or additions of what constitutes the meaning, i.e., the expression (Abaelardus, *Dialectica*, 182). The treatment of the *secundum quid* was further specified in the *Logica Ingredientibus*, where he draws a completely new distinction between (a) the fallacies due to the twofold meaning that an expression has (and that the context further specifies), and (b) the "extralinguistic" ones, caused by a new meaning (*significatio*) that the context creates (Rosier-Catch 1999, 137). As Abelard claims (Abaelardus, *Glossae super Librum Perihermeneias* LI 3.02, 47): [2]

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[2] "Tunc uero extra locutionem <aliquis> arguit, quando ad alium sensum locutionem accomodat, in quo non fuit inuenta. Unde etiam recipiunt ueram: "Oculus est albus," "Ouum est animal," "Hic filius non est

Then someone reasons extralinguistically when he adapts the verbal expression to another sense, which was not institutionally given. Therefore, they interpret "The eye is white," "The egg is an animal," This son is not son," according to senses that are not guaranteed by compositionality. Therefore, Aristotle rightly claims against the sophistical insolences. He calls insolent the ones who by placing reason after their loquacity, claim that some propositions are true, namely these meanings, which are not supported by the compositionality of the expressions taken in their proper [institutional] sense, as it happens in a new development of meaning through a contextual variation [*translatio*].

Abelard draws an opposition between the institutional meaning (the link, created by the first "*impositor*" of a word to a specific substance, between "the universal word and the real structure of the objects to which it can be used to refer and on which its signification is based" Marenbon, 1998, p. 162) and the *translatio*, which is the contextual variation beyond the conventional use of the terms (Rosier-Catach 1999; Mews 2005, 93; Pinzani 2013, 51:141–143). In the case of the fallacy later called "*secundum quid*," the new contextual meaning is created by adding something that makes the signification of the words adapt (bend) to the new meaning (Abaelardus, *Glossae super Porphyrium* LI 1.00, 121). The individual who commits the *secundum quid* is modifying the context: instead of taking the word, phrase, or sentence according to its compositional meaning resulting from its imposition, he introduces a new context that qualifies, or rather modifies, the meaning.

This strategy allows Abelard to extend the phenomenon of "*secundum quid*" to explain two logical problems, which he names "*oppositio in adiectio*" and "accidental predication." The first is when an expression is joined with one signifying the opposite, such as "dead man." In this case, the original, proper meaning (*intentio*) of man is opposite to the meaning of "dead," as incompatible things are referred to by the two expressions. Thus, the meaning of "man" is modified to include something external to its original intention – the man who was, and now is a corpse (Abaelardus, *Glossae super Librum Perihermeneias* LI 3.11, 55–57).

The accidental predication is exemplified by the sentences "Homer is a poet" or "The tyrant lives in his children" (Abaelardus, *Glossae super Librum Perihermeneias* LI 3.11, 63–64). Abelard notices in these sentences, the words do not have their institutional meaning; their relationship is not determined by *compositio* – the combination of their meaning preserving their *impositio* or original meaning – but rather by an *ad hoc* meaning, resulting from the specific predication (Bäck 1996, 130–131). With accidental predication, Abelard indicates a specific type of combination between the words, where the additions – the predicates "poet" and "in his children" in our examples – affect the interpretation of the components of the respective sentences, reducing them to a specific component.

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filius".secundum hos sensus ad quos uis constructionis se non habet. Unde bene Aristoteles dicit Contra Sophisticas Importunitates. Importunos namque appellat, qui ratione postposita propter garrulitatem suam propositiones ueras iudicant, scilicet eos sensus, ad quos uis constructionis ex propria inuentione se non habet, sicut in supraposita inuentione per translationem fit.

In this sense, "poet" modifies both "Homer" and "poet," where the "*significatio*" of latter term is reduced figuratively to mean only the poems, while the proper noun is reduced to the relationship of authorship, resulting in the meaning "the poems of Homer exist." Similarly, "in his children" reduces figuratively the *significatio* of "the tyrant" (which now means only an accidental aspect of him – his cruelty, for example) and "to live" (which only refers to the continuation of an activity), resulting in the meaning "The cruelty of the tyrant is continued by the sons." The notion of translation of meaning is thus a contextual adaptation of the signification of the words that cannot bear in the specific context their original ("natural") meaning, which is figuratively modified through the addition.

3.3 The Medieval Dialectical Tradition – The XII Century

The *Sophistical Refutations* became a popular book in the later XII century, as it is acknowledged in John of Salisbury's *Metalogicon* (1159). In this work, the author mentions the fallacy of "whether or not an expression is used absolutely (*simpliciter*)" (John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, 4, XXIII), but he does not provide any further explanation or development.

In the earlier treaties of the *Logica Nova* (De Rijk 1962), the analysis of the fallacies based on the *Sophistical Refutations* was interrelated with the other books by Boethius on interpretation and topics. The fallacy of *secundum quid* was analyzed based on the examples and cases provided by the other Aristotelian books. In particular, four treaties – *Glose in Aristotelis Sophisticos Elenchos, Summa Sophisticorum Elenchorum, Fallacie Vindobonenses*, and the *Fallacie Parvipontane* – distinguish between five distinct mains types of qualifications that can affect the meaning (from Bäck 1996, 131–32):

1. Determination of place (It is good to sacrifice one's father among the Trivalli; therefore, it is good to sacrifice one's father);
2. Determination of time (Monks sleep at night; therefore, they are sleeping);
3. Determination of respect and other determinations (Homer is a poet; therefore, he exists; Socrates is good; therefore, he is a good cithara player);
4. Determination of a part (The Ethiopian is white with respect to his teeth; therefore, he is white);
5'. Determination of cause (I want to sell all my belongings to get out of prison; therefore, I want to sell all my belongings);
5''. Determination through an adverb of quality (Socrates reads well; therefore, Socrates reads).

In these works, this fallacy was explained based on the contrast between the proper or principal meaning (*simpliciter*) and the secondary, accidental meaning that is the result of the determination. In the *Fallacie Parvipontane*, this confusion was classified as a kind of "univocation" (normally conceived as the confusion of the reference of a term), where an expression is taken to refer to a part of the referent, and to its referent as such (Bäck 1996, 134–135).

The *Dialectica Monacensis*, written in the last years of the XII century (De Rijk 1967, Vol 2, Part 1, 414), introduces some original elements in the analysis of this fallacy. First, its name appears clearly as "*fallacia secundum quid et simpliciter*," and a clear distinction is drawn between the cause of the appearance (the source of the deceit), and the cause of the falsity. According to the author of this work, the deceit is caused by the almost complete identity between what is meant by the expression taken without qualifications and what is meant by the qualified one (*Dialectica Monacensis*, 593, 3–6). Unlike the other works of the XII century, in this treatise we find a distinction between two types of fallacies:

1. The ones consisting in the reduction of the *significatio* of the expression, so that the qualified and the unqualified expressions are simply different ones;
2. The ones that modify the *significatio* of the expression in a way that now it means the opposite.

In the first category are included all the examples of determinations of place, part, time, manner, relation, and cause; in the second category the author includes the determinations such as "There is a *dead* man; therefore, there is a man," which would fall in the category of the cases "accidental predication" analyzed by Abelard.

The *Dialectica Monacensis* underscored the clear relationship between the ignoring of the qualifications and the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi* (Walton 1979), which is frequently used to refute of a conclusion that does not correspond to the original one defended by the interlocutor (the "straw man fallacy," see Macagno and Walton 2017). In this medieval work, the fallacy of *secundum quid* is defined as the strategy of not considering all the specific qualifications (the *particulae*) that define the viewpoint to attack. The cause of the deception is identified in the number of qualifications of the original standpoint: the attacker can maintain all of them but one, which is thus left unnoticed (*Dialectica Monacensis*, 603, 19–24).

Another twelfth-century treatise, the *Fallacie Londinenses*, develops the analysis of the *secundum quid* building on Abelard's concept of *translatio*. Here, however, a distinction is drawn between three types of strategies:

1. *Oppositio in adiectio*.
2. Accidental predication.
3. Omitted qualification.

The most innovative aspect that the anonymous author introduces is the specific type of relationship with the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*, which is regarded as the result of specific operations related to the other fallacies. In the *secundum quid*, the source of deceit is detected in different contents that are not expressed, but "mentally supplied" or inferred – an operation called *subintellectio* (Maclean 1992, 120). The different respects (analyzed in the previous works as distinct types of *secundum quid*) are taken here as different ways of completing, or enriching the "logical form" of what

is said, such as in the case of the qualification of place (*Fallacie Londinenses*, 673, 11–14)[3]:

> This fallacy can be generated by different qualifications of place, as if in a discussion the following is claimed "It is good to kill one's own father" by mentally supplying a specific place, and in the same discussion the following is attacked "It is not good to kill one's father" by mentally supplying a different place.

The difference between *secundum quid* and *ignoratio elenchi* becomes thus a pragmatic difference – between omitting a qualification made explicit, and a mentally supplied qualification that does not correspond to what is or should be understood (*Fallacie Londinenses*, 673, 25–27).

3.4 The Medieval Dialectical Tradition – The XIII Century

The treatise *De Fallaciis* (Aquinas 1954) attributed to Thomas Aquinas (written around 1244) represents a different treatment of the fallacy in the XIII century. Aquinas focused on the conditions under which the inference from the qualified expression (*secundum quid*) to the unqualified one is valid. Thus, he compares the two inferences:

a.   Socrates runs quickly; therefore, Socrates runs.
b.   The Ethiopian is white relative to his teeth; therefore, the Ethiopian is white.

To explain the difference between a) and b), Aquinas focuses on the "*ratio*" of the qualified expression. "*Ratio*" as used by Aquinas can be translated as "concept" or "definition" (Klima 1996, 99–100), and corresponds partially to what we call nowadays semantic content (Testi 1996, 17–18). In the XIII century semantics, the *ratio* is the principle that makes a word (*vox*) an expression (*signum* or *dictio*). Things are categorized through names, and when a name is given to a thing, the act of "*impositio*" is performed. The *ratio significandi* or *significatio* is the way a word becomes related to a set of properties that identify the common nature that it will signify (Ebbesen 1979, 46). In Aquinas, this relationship is more complex, as the *ratio* has not only a conceptual (semantic) dimension, but an ontological one as well: the thing to which a concept can refer has a nature corresponding to its (conceptual) *ratio*, which makes a concept apply to all different objects having the same nature (Klima 1996, 303).

 Aquinas explains the *secundum quid* based uniquely on the *ratio significandi*. The qualification *Q* modifies the semantic components that constitute the signification (the proper meaning) of the subject – or rather the predicate *P* to which *Q* is attributed –in two distinct ways (Aquinas, *De Fallaciis*, 13; Testi 1996):

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[3] Secundum diversum locum provenit hec fallatia ut si in ali qua disputatione proponatur hec: *'bonum est mactare patrem'* per subintellectionem unius loci, et in eadem inferatur hec: *'non bonum est mactare patrem'* per subintellectionem alterius loci." Author's translation.

a. *Q* does not affect the *ratio significandi* of *P*; therefore, it is possible to infer [P+Q] (s) →P (s).
b. *Q* affects the *ratio significandi* of *P*, and thus the above inference does not obtain. The ways in which the qualification can affect *P* are five:

   1. Incompatible definitions (*oppositio*): Socrates is a dead man. "Dead" subtracts the semantic content (or definition) of "man," which includes the properties "sensitive animate substance." As "dead" is in conflict with "being animate," it subtracts the ratio to "man."

   The other four modalities are types of reduction of the *significatio* through a qualification.

   2. Reduction of the *ratio* through a predicate indicating mental existence (*actus animae*). Ex: *The Chimaera is thinkable*. "Thinkable" reduces the *ratio* of the predicate "to be" to the existence in the mind.
   3. Reduction of the proper definition through the indication of potentiality. Ex: *The egg is potentially an animate being*. "Potentially" modifies the meaning of "animal" (animate being) and reduces it to what is not animate yet (and not actually animate).
   4. Reduction of the *ratio* through the indication of a part. Ex: *The Ethiopian is white in his teeth*. The qualification reduces the meaning of "white" and the subject itself, which now means "the teeth of the Ethiopian."
   5. Incompatible *de re* vs. *de dicto* interpretations (*materialiter*). Ex: *The thief wanted to get the goods* (bonum); *therefore, he wanted the good* (bonum). The qualification (to get) turns what is interpreted according to its definition (formally) into an expression interpreted referentially (a specific state of affairs that is names as "good") (Aquinas, *De virtutibus* q. 1 a. 7 co., see Aquinas 2005; McCabe, 2008, pp. 19–20)..

Aquinas thus identifies a unique treatment of this fallacy, in which the "perfect" or original meaning (the *ratio*) is reduced through a qualification. Thus, the fallacy of *secundum quid* becomes primarily a fallacy related to the relationship between the definitions and the determinations, which modify the *significatio* of the terms. This type of analysis can be found in Peter of Spain's *Tractatus* and in Lull's *Logica Nova*, which at the beginning of the XIV century mirrors the same distinctions and explanations (Llull, *Logica Nova* XXVII, 104–105- Llull 1744).

The analysis of the *secundum quid* as a fallacy concerning the meaning of individual components of a sentence emerged also in a treatise, William of Sherwood's *Introductiones in Logicam*, whose importance consists also in its influence on the standard logic text of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance – the *Summulae Logicales* (De Rijk 1972, 94). Like Aquinas, William identifies the source of the fallacy in the relationship between the meaning and the expression, and more precisely in the concept (*intellectus*) that is the *significatum* of an utterance.

The *Introductiones* do not analyze in depth this fallacy, detecting the source of the fallaciousness in the similarity between the determined (qualified) meaning and

the unqualified one, and drawing two crucial distinctions. The first is between the strict (and proper) determination and the non-strict (and improper). A determination is strict when it "contracts" the *determinatum* into something less general; in contrast, a non-strict determination has two different effects onto the what is determined, namely alienation (corresponding to Aquinas' fist type of *secundum quid*) and lessening (corresponding to the other four kinds) (William of Sherwood, *Introductiones in Logicam*, VI, 3.2.2 - Sherwood 1966).

A crucial point that William of Sherwood raises is the distinction between *secundum quid* and the *ignoratio elenchi*, or the fallacy of rebutting a proposition different from the one representing the interlocutor's viewpoint. The distinction is drawn purely at a pragmatic level, between how an expression is used in a dialogue (William of Sherwood, *Introductiones in Logicam*, VI, 3.2.2, p. 156):

> The difference between Ignorance Regarding Refutation [*ignoratio elenchi*] and [using a locution] in a Certain Respect as Well as Absolutely [*secundum quid*] is that the latter does not aim at concluding a contradiction, as was shown earlier, although in solving it is necessary to consider the conclusion in relation to its contradiction. In Ignorance Regarding Refutation, even though some determination is involved, still the aim is to conclude a contradiction absolutely. In that way these paralogisms differ from those that are [based on using a locution] in a Certain Respect as Well as Absolutely.

The *secundum quid* is acknowledged to be an instrument for the *ignoratio elenchi*, as the latter is (often) based on the former fallacy (Walton 2004, 42–44).

William of Sherwood's treatise and teachings influenced the logical work of Petrus Hispanus (Peter of Spain), whose *Tractatus* or *Summulae Logicales*, written between 1230 and 1250 (De Rijk 1972, 37; Ebbesen 2013, 69), overshadowed the dialectical theories of the previous century, becoming a reference for the further logical works (Bird 1961). Petrus Hispanus follows closely the same line of thought that is found in Aquinas' work, analyzing the *secundum quid* as the reduction of the *ratio significandi* – the definition (Petrus Hispanus, *Summulae Logicales*, II, 20) or more precisely the components that constitute the concept (see Ebbesen 1979, 44–45) – of the term taken without qualifications (Petrus Hispanus, *Summulae Logicales*, VII, 120; 157 14–28; 157 33-158 5):

> We now take up the Fallacy After-a-Fashion and Simply (*secundum quid et simpliciter*). First notice that "after-a-fashion" is used two ways. "After-a-fashion" diminishes its whole in one way as "white-footed" (*albus pedem*) diminishes "something white" (*album*) simply taken, and "dead man" does "man". Through this sort of after-a-fashion, the Fallacy of After-a-fashion and Simply arises. The other way, "after-a-fashion" does not diminish its whole but simply posits it and makes an inference, as in "curly headed; therefore curly", or "snub nosed; therefore snubbed". […] From this it is clear that "after-a-fashion" as taken here is said to be a determination diminishing the nature of what it is adjoined to. An undiminished thing is called one "simply", whether it is acci-

dent or substance, like "(something) white", "(something) black", "animal", "man".

Peter of Spain distinguishes two directions, namely from the affirmation of what is qualified to the affirmation of what is unqualified, and from the negation of what is said simply to the negation of what is said in a certain respect and five different modes, corresponding to the ones distinguished in Aquinas' work.

3.5 The Realist and the Nominalist Traditions of the XIV Century

The analysis of the *secundum quid* as a form of cancellation or reduction of the semantic components constituting the *ratio* (*significatio*) of the qualified term constitutes the intensional approach to semantics, according to which the meaning of a sentence is a function (or more precisely, in the XIII century, a sum) of the meanings of its terms. The explanation of the fallacy of *secundum quid* is a crucial test for this approach. At the end of the XIII century and in the XIV century, Abelard's concept of *translatio* (contextual variation of meaning, similar to metaphor) and Peter of Spain's and Aquinas' analysis of *secundum quid* as a reduction or cancellation of semantic elements were not considered as fully explanatory, especially concerning the problem of the "dead man" (a dead man is not a body, but a man who was alive, see Ebbesen 1979, 47). This led to different approaches to semantics, grounded on the extensional notion of *suppositio* (Ebbesen 1979, 45), or a different view of compositionality.

The theory of *suppositio* became the dominant perspective of the realism in the XIV century, represented by John Buridan. The theory of *suppositio* is a theory of reference. In Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, this term was used to refer to the actual association between a term (which has its signification) and its referents when used in a sentence. *Suppositio* is an explanation of how to predict the entities that a term is *actually* used to refer to: it is thus variable, as it depends on the signification, but it is contextually restricted, extended, or modified in many different ways. In contrast, its intensional counterpart – signification – is constant as it represents what a term mean in the sense of being able to *potentially* refer to (Petrus Hispanus, 1990, p. xxii).

Buridan's extensional approach to the *secundum quid* reduced all the different modes distinguished by the previous authors (analyzed as modifications in the signification of the terms) to different contextual modifications of the extension of terms. In this sense, the signification of the term remains the same; what changes is their reference. This strategy allows Buridan to preserve the "common nature" or the existence of concepts, which remains unaltered, while the contextual modifications affect only their extensions. Thus, Buridan provides the following distinctions (Buridanus, *Summulae de Dialectica* 7.4.2 - Buridanus 2001).

> The fallacy *secundum quid et simpliciter* arises therefore by believing, on account of the partial identity of what is predicated *secundum quid* with what is *predicated* simpliciter, that the latter follows from the former, although it does not. This fallacy has two modes; one proceeds from what is predicated *secundum quid* to what is predicated *simpliciter*, whereas the other proceeds conversely. And both modes are subdivided in accordance with the relation of

the addition to that which is predicated absolutely and to which it is added; and the first mode occurs if the addition is purely restrictive; the second occurs if it is purely ampliative; the third occurs if it entirely alienates the supposition of that to which it is added; and the fourth mode occurs if it meets all of these three conditions, or only two of them.

The source of the deceit is identified in the "inclusion" of the "*ratio*" (in his nominalist view, the mental concept that corresponds to the proper meaning – *imposition* – of a term, see Maieirù 1976) of the unqualified term in the qualified one. Thus, "man" is included in the mental concept of the phrase "dead man," but the *suppositio* of the latter does not include the supposition of the former. This discrepancy is related to four causes, which result from how the sentential context affects the *suppositio* of the term – the relationship between a term and the entities it refers to, namely the semantic function that a term may have in different sentential contexts (King 1985, 32). The supposition of the term taken without qualifications can be modified by a qualification (an "addition") in the following ways:

1. Restriction. The addition reduces the supposition of the term without qualifications (*Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is a white man*). This effect results in two valid inferences, namely from the qualified to the unqualified affirmatively (if Socrates is a white man, he is a man), and from the unqualified to the qualified negatively (if Socrates is not a man, he is not a white man).
2. Ampliation. The addition broadens the supposition of the term without qualifications (*A chimera is thinkable; therefore, a chimera is*). This effect results in an inference from the qualified to the unqualified negatively (a chimera is not thinkable; therefore, it is not), and from the unqualified to the qualified affirmatively (a chimera is; therefore, it is thinkable).
3. Alienation. The addition results in the lack of supposition (*Socrates is a dead man; therefore, Socrates is a man*). This results in only one possible valid inference, from the negation of the term without qualifications to the negation of the qualified one (Socrates is not a man; therefore, Socrates is not a dead man).
4. Mixed effects. The addition results in different effects on the supposition. For example, in *The Ethiopian is white relative to his teeth; therefore, he is white*, the qualification at the same time broadens the supposition of "white" (which now refers to human beings whose skin color is not necessarily white) and restricts it to the entities that can be "white with respect to its teeth."

These distinctions are based on the logic of the terms. Buridan, however, acknowledges that a different strategy needs to be used for explaining some *secundum quid* fallacies that he names "practical." The propositions that concern human actions, laws, and values involve an additional distinction, between "indefinite" (generally) and particular (in specific circumstances) truth and falsity. Thus, the inference from "Drinking wine is not good for someone feverish; therefore, drinking wine is not good" incorrectly takes a particular proposition as an indefinite one. According to Buridan, the antecedent is particular as it refers to one *suppositum*, while the consequent is indefinite (generally valid).

This second category of *secundum quid* addresses a problematic relation between what we nowadays call a presumptive (defeasible) generalization and a universal one. Moreover, Buridan acknowledges a crucial problem of interpretation: when people claim that "children should love their parents," we do not exclude the fact that in some circumstances, children should hate their parents (for example, if their parents are obstinate in malice).

Ockham's nominalism offers a radically different treatment of this fallacy. Instead of considering the effect that a determination (qualification) has on the *suppositio* of the term taken simply, Ockham analyzes how the composition of different expressions affects the meaning of the complex expression in ways that are not necessarily the sum of the *significatio* of its constituents. He grounds his view on an ontology in which the "common nature" does not exist independently of particulars (Panaccio 2015) and a "mental language" that represents the deep structure of our sentences (King 2005, 247). In this abstract semantic representation, the specific composition can have characteristics that depend not only on the elements constituting the meaning of the constituents, but on how they are related to each other in each specific composition.

Ockham draws a distinction between the two modes of this fallacy (Ockham, *Summa Logicae* III-4.13- Ockham 1974)[4]:

1. Inferring from something that "is," used as a predicate (*secundum adiaciens*), that something "is something else," namely when "to be" is used as a copula (*tertium adiaciens*). For example, *A man is; therefore, a man is a donkey*, or *Socrates is not a donkey; therefore, Socrates is not.*
2. Inferring what is taken without determinations from what is considered with a determination. For example, *Socrates is a dead man; therefore, Socrates is a man*. But *Socrates is a dead man; therefore, Socrates is dead.*

The type of consequence on which this fallacy is grounded is regarded as one of whole to part: the whole is the complex expression resulting from the determination (M) and the predicate (P), and the parts are the constituent expressions[5]. Thus, the inference can be represented as "S is an M-P; therefore, S is a P," which follows from a tacit premise, or intrinsic middle, namely that "an M-P is a P" (Bäck 1996, 167).

This explanation reduces the *secundum quid* to a semantic phenomenon, consisting in determining the intrinsic middle. For Ockham, this is possible by representing the whole complex expression using the "mental language." Thus, a "dead man" is mentally represented through a complex proposition, i.e., "what is not a man, but was a man," bringing to light the "semantic genus" (Macagno 2017; Macagno et al. 2017)

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[4] "Sunt autem huius fallaciae duo modi principales. Unus est quando arguitur ab esse quod est secundum adiacens ad ipsum quando est tertium adiacens, sive affirmative sive negative. […] Secundus modus principalis est quando a parte eiusdem extremi arguitur ab aliquo sumpto cum addito ad ipsum, vel suum convertibile vel superius, per se sumptum, vel e converso."

[5] This consequence is based on four rules: (1) From a distributed superior to a distributed inferior; (2) Negatively from a distributed superior to a distributed inferior; (3) From a superior to an inferior with a preceeding negation; (4) From the affirmative of one genus to the negative of another nonsubalternate genus (Bird 1961, 69).

(a non-man) and the differences (that was a man). The reconstruction of the deep structure of the composite allows determining not only the novel genus-difference relation created by the composition, but also the implicit constituents (such as in "a good thief," defined as "a thief who steals well") or the implicit conditional (for example, the semantic representation of "I want to be in the mud with a hundred marks" would be "I want to be in the mud, if through this I can have a hundred marks") (Bäck, 1996, p. 171; Ockham, *Summa Logicae* III-3.6).

3.6 *The* Secundum Quid *and the Medieval Tradition*

In Aristotle, the fallacy of *secundum quid* can be regarded as a strategy concerning not only our contemporary semantic/pragmatic interface, but also the relationship between soundness and validity of an argument and the dialogical dimension of reporting and attributing commitments to the interlocutor. The fallacy thus lies at the crossroad between interpretation, logic, and dialectics. The complexity of the Aristotelian analysis led to different accounts in the medieval tradition, which were developed by emphasizing its intensional, extensional, or pragmatic dimensions.

Abelard explained it through the concept of contextual adaptation of the meaning of a word, which became the modification of the *ratio* or definition in Aquinas and Petrus Hispanus. The anonymous authors of the *Dialectica Monacensis* and the *Fallacie Londinenses* addressed the dialogical and pragmatic dimension of the *secundum quid* when they explained it as a manipulation of the proper meaning of a word or the addition of qualifications that were left unexpressed and unintended. The nominalist and realist approaches showed two different semantic perspectives on this fallacy. While for Buridan the *secundum quid* involved different types of modification of the "reference" of a term, for Ockham it resulted from different semantic representations of the utterance, corresponding to distinct "deep structures."

The interest in the analysis of the fallacies and their relationship with logic and philosophy of language blurred gradually. In the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, fallacies were mentioned but rarely analyzed in depth. A clear example is Agricola's *De Inventione Dialectica* (Agricola 1992) (written at the end of the XV century), where dialectics is merged with rhetoric in a compendium of instruments for finding the strongest arguments, which leaves almost no room to the concept of fallacy (Spranzi 2011, 79). The logical and semantic analyses of the medieval tradition were gradually replaced by the combined works on dialectics and rhetoric, which led the fallacies to becoming mere tactics in the XVII century's Port Royal Logic (Arnauld and Nicole, *Logic*, 200 - Arnauld 1996).

4   Ignoring Qualifications in the 19th Century's Logical Tradition

The philosophical analysis of fallacies was revived in the 19th century, in which new philosophical frameworks were used for analyzing the fallacies. Curiously, the first and most known work devoted to fallacies of this period, namely Bentham's *Book of fallacies* (Bentham 1824), completely neglects the *secundum quid*, describing instead mischievous tactics of which no trace is found in the tradition. The fallacy of ignoring

qualification is instead deeply analyzed in four crucial works: Whately's *Elements of logic* (1826), Mill's *A system of logic* (1843), De Morgan's *Formal Logic* (1847), and Sidgwick's *Fallacies: A View of Logic from the Practical Side* (1883).

4.1 *Whately*: Secundum Quid *as a Fallacy of Ambiguity*

Whately provides an analysis that echoes the categories used in the Aristotelian and medieval dialectical works (accidental predication, essence), but uses them in a semantic system that is radically different from the traditional one. For Whately the *secundum quid* (classified as the counterpart of the fallacy of accident) is committed when a term is used in a premise "simply, in itself, and as to its essence" while in the other or in the conclusion "so as to imply that its accidents are taken into account with it" (Whately, *Elements of logic*, 131- Whately 1867). He gives the following example (used by William of Sherwood to illustrate the fallacy of figures of speech, see William of Sherwood, *Introductiones in Logicam*, VI, 3.1.5): "what is bought in the market is eaten; raw meat is bought in the market; therefore, raw meat is eaten." According the Whately, while in the second premise "raw meat" is considered "as to its condition and circumstances," in the conclusion it is taken according "to its substance merely."

While this analysis cannot be compared to the complex explanations of the tradition (where the "raw meat" example was explained as a confusion between reference and meaning), Whately introduces a new theoretical framework. For him, the *secundum quid* is as a fallacy of contextual ambiguity, resulting in particular from two causes: (1) the difference between the general signification (first intention) and the specific, circumstantial signification (second intention) of a term; and (2) elliptical language. The first source of ambiguity stems from the specification of the meaning of a term in a specific context of use, such as in the following example (Whately, *Elements of logic*, 132):

> The word "loyalty," which properly denotes attachment to a *lawful* government – whether of a king, president, senate, etc., according to the respective institutions of each nation, – has often been used to signify exclusively, attachment to *regal* authority; and that, even when carried *beyond* the boundaries of the *law*.

Thus, "loyalty" has a circumstantial meaning that is activated in specific contexts; when the contextual information is missing, it is possible to draw inferences that were not warranted by the way the word was used in the specific circumstance. The idea of circumstantial meaning can be somehow compared with Abelard's *translatio*, but for Whately the modulation of meaning does not result only from the co-text, but also from the broad linguistic usage. On this view, this fallacy can be committed by neglecting not only textual qualifications, but also the broader conversational context.

The second source of ambiguity is elliptical language, namely the inference of elements left implicit. Thus, Whately notices the following (*Elements of logic*, 125):

> In respect of any subject concerning which the generality of men are accustomed to speak much and familiarly in their conversation relative to that, they

usually introduce ELLIPTICAL expressions; very clearly understood in the outset, but whose elliptical character comes, in time, to be so far lost sight of, that confusion of language, and then, of thought, is sometimes the result. Thus, the expression of a person's possessing a fortune of £10,000 is an elliptical phrase: meaning, at full length, that all his property if sold would exchange for that sum of money.

The elliptical language allows inferring elements that were not intended, and more importantly not normally meant by the use of an expression. Thus, in the above example it is possible to infer that the person possesses a fortune of 10,000 pounds <presently>, in addition to all his other possessions. This idea of incomplete expressions can be seen as development of the medieval concept of *subintellectio* (see for instance above the treatment of the *secundum quid* in the *Fallacie Londinenses*), emphasizing the conflict between the usual, ordinary inferred tacit elements and the non-presumptive ones.

4.2 Mill and the Fallacy of Ratiocination

Mill analyzes the *secundum quid* as the fallacy of "changing the premises," and classifies it as a fallacy of ratiocinazion (Mill, *A system of logic*, bk V, vi, § 4- Mill 1981). According to Mill, this fallacy is committed when a proposition is asserted with a qualification that is lost sight of in the conclusion (see also an earlier and similar approach in Watts' *Logic*, Hansen and Pinto 1995, 64). The classical case occurs when a generalization (or maxim) is normally taken as qualified (namely with an implicit limitation); however, when it is used as a premise in an argument, it is presented as without qualifications. Mill provides the following argument as an illustration (from Mill, *A system of logic*, bk V, vi, §4, 805–806):

> [The common maxim is that] whatever brings in money enriches; or that every one is rich in proportion to the quantity of money he obtains. From this it is concluded that the value of any branch of trade, or of the trade of the country altogether, consists in the balance of money it brings in; […] that therefore money should be attracted into the country and kept there, by prohibitions and bounties […]. All for want of reflecting that if the riches of an individual are in proportion to the quantity of money he can command, it is because that is the measure of his power of purchasing money's worth; and is therefore subject to the proviso that he is not debarred from employing his money in such purchases.

Mill notices that the generalization (the maxim) is commonly accepted only when it is subject to one condition (a qualification) – namely that the money can be spent. However, it is used in the economic theory as a universal (absolute) generalization.

4.3 De Morgan's Fallacy of Stress

De Morgan's treatment of this fallacy differs noticeably from the other authors of the 19th century. De Morgan describes the *secundum quid* as a fallacy of stress, consist-

ing in emphasizing in the conclusion an accident, or "any view of the subject," in a way that is different from the premise. His concept of stress, however, has a specific meaning, as it refers to a modification of the semantic representation of the utterance that does not correspond to the one that is signalled.

De Morgan illustrated this fallacy with a clear example: from the claim that "The philosophy of the schoolmen, with their logic, is false philosophy," it is possible to infer fallaciously that "The logic of the schoolmen is false philosophy." The semantic representation of the utterance is modified, as an unstressed element (the parenthetical expression) is presented as it were relevant to a specific conclusion – which would be unsupported by the standard representation of the premise. The *secundum quid* is regarded as a manipulation of the function of an otherwise irrelevant accident, which is now presented as having a relevant relation to the subject –thus providing the "connexion" that permits an otherwise unreasonable inference (De Morgan 1847, 251–252).

This analysis was shown to be applicable to a wide range of phenomena, including more complex cases in which the modification of the semantic representation can lead to different inferences that we would classify as "abductive." An example is the case of the legal claim that "This man stole a portion of ham," used by the prosecution without the relevant qualification "a portion of." From the unqualified claim, the jury can conclude that the man robbed a warehouse. However, if the qualification is maintained, the claim would have a different representation – the man stole a portion of food that happened to be ham. From this representation, it would be impossible to conclude that the man robbed a warehouse; the qualification provides instead a connexion to the conclusion that the man stole a portion of *food* (sold in places such as shops, and normally stolen in conditions of hunger). This type of analysis emphasizes the logical function of the qualification, which is explained in terms of "relevance."

4.4 Sidgwick: Ignoring Qualifications as a Fallacy of Relevance

The passage from the 19th century's logical approaches to the renewed interest in argumentation and sophisms in the second half of the 20th century is marked by Sidgwick's work on *Fallacies* (1883). Unlike his predecessors, he addressed the *secundum quid* considering the Aristotelian predicaments – or rather their development in the medival theories. According to Sidgwick, the *secundum quid* is a fallacy of relevance, where the very concept of relevance is defined according to the Aristotelian logic-semantic framework. According to the author, a state of affairs S (e.g., an individual killing himself) can be rightly named as M (e.g., voluntary death), but at the same time a more generic (M^-) or more specific predicate (M^+) can be attributed to it (e.g., death or suicide).

The line between an acceptable and a fallacious predication is drawn in terms of "importance," or rather relevance: it depends on whether the semantic component distinguishing M from M^+ and M^- is essential for the purpose at hand. Thus, using an example by Sidgwick, suicide can be defined as "voluntary death," and from this classification it is possible to draw the conclusion that suicide is heroic. However, in this case "suicide" is described using only a generic predicate, which fails to distinguish it from other concepts (omitting the difference, in this case "to escape, for

ourselves, something which, rightly or wrongly, we regard as worse than death"). The fallaciousness rests in the relevance of the specification (the difference) to the intended conclusion: by omitting the specific description (and providing a generic one), the statement can be used to lead to a different value judgment (Sidgwick 1883, 295–296).

Sidgwick provides an interpretation of the fallacy based on a (*ante litteram*) "pragmatic" reading of the Aristotelian logic-semantic system. In coherence with Ockham's interpretation of the "deep structure" of a statement and the intrinsic middle, Sidgwick distinguishes accidental from essential properties not only considering the definitory elements of a term, but more importantly the implicit or explicit conclusion that a classification is intended to support.

4.5 The Pragmatics of Argument in the Modern Logical Theories

The approach to the fallacy of ignoring qualifications in the 19th century mirrors the insights that resulted from the Aristotelian and the medieval logical and semantic views. The tendency that underlies these modern approaches is to try to find a unitary explanation for different phenomena that lie at the crossroad between semantics, logic, and the contextual effects on meaning. Whately focuses on the semantic representation and the contextual and implicit modulations of meaning. Mill simplifies the fallacy considering only one specific phenomenon – the passage from a qualified generalization to a universal one. De Morgan uses a modern interpretation of the Aristotelian *qua* phrase to bring to light the relationship between the intepretation of an utterance and the logical consequences, introducing the concept of relevance and using a type of semantic representation that reminds of Ockham's mental language. A comparable approach is pursued by Sidgwick, who uses Aristotle's (and medieval) logical notions of genus and difference to account for the phenomenon of the "importance" of the use of a classification, which mirrors Ockham's and De Morgan's views. The Aristotelian and medieval tradition is thus constantly echoed by a new terminology and different examples, which reveal similar strategies for unveiling how the manipulation of the co-text and the context can affect the inference that we can draw from an utterance.

Among these different and complex analyses that combine linguistic and logical considerations, Mill's treatment of the ignoring qualifications as a fallacy of generalization appears to be an isolated approach. His view of the *secundum quid* can hardly be compared with Aristotle's original view or the medieval explanations. However, it was also the one that influenced most the logic textobooks of the following century, starting from Joseph's *Introduction to logic*. In complete coherence with Mill, for Joseph the fallacy rests in taking principles or statements that are "for many purposes true" as they were true always (Joseph 1906, 548–549). This approach was maintained by Copi, who classified the fallacy first under the name of "converse accident," and then as "hasty generalization" (Copi 1961, 64; Copi et al. 2014, 136–137). This logical view of the *secundum quid* became the standard treatment of this sophism in the 20th century.

5 Conclusions

This historical overview of *secundum quid* brings to light the complex nature of a fallacy that in the standard treatment was analyzed merely as an inductive fallacy (Hamblin 1970, 28–31). When Aristotle introduced it, he explained its deceitful effect by pointing at a discrepancy between a common, default interpretation of an assertion (Jaszczolt 2005), and a representation of meaning that is instead specified in a non-protypical way. The Aristotelian texts suggest that this strategy uses the tacit dimension of discourse, namely what is not explicitly said. The problem with stating or omitting a qualification lies in the way a specific meaning representation is normally signalled through such a qualification or lack thereof.

This reading of the Aristotelian passages depicts a tactic that works on what is left unstated, and aims at modifying what we nowadays would call default enrichments (Giora 2003; Jaszczolt 2011) – or the normal specifications of the meaning of an utterance. This fallacious move can target what the interlocutor said – distorting his or her viewpoint – or what has gone on record – namely what is taken to be commonly accepted. According to this analysis, the *secundum quid* can be described as characterized by a "deep" semantic strategy of manipulation of the implicit specifications of meaning (Macagno 2022), which is normally manifested by omissions or additions of qualifications, and that can result in a difference in extension – namely an unintended or unaccepted generalization.

The complexity of this fallacy constituted a challenge in the history of dialectics that led to exploring the relationship between meaning and context in arguments. Abelard depicted the *secundum quid* in terms of contextual specifications of meaning, distinguishing between a-contextual interpretations of words from their meanings in context. By changing or neglecting the context, it is possible to attribute to an expression a different meaning. The medieval logicians looked at the interconnection between meaning and context from different perspectives. Aquinas emphasized the effects of the context on word definitions, and the inferences that can be drawn from them. Buridanus instead explained this sophism by considering what the terms are commonly or contextually used to refer to (their *suppositio*), conceiving the manipulation as a contextual distortion of the extension of a proposition. Finally, Ockham focused on the semantic representation of what is said, translating the co-textual and contentual modulations of meaning into a mental language.

The contextual nature of the *secundum quid* challenged also the modern logical theories. Whately showed how some expressions can be (using the contemporary terminology) "saturated" or completed in different ways (Recanati 2002), by considering their default or their contextual use. De Morgan and Sidgwick analyzed the intended vs. unintended modulations of meaning (Recanati 2012) considering also the relevance and the goal of an utterance or an expression. Finally, Mill and Joseph hinted at another pragmatic dimension of this fallacy, i.e. what we would call nowadays the "common ground" (Kecskes and Zhang 2013; Macagno 2018).

In this latter view, the *secundum quid* is presented as a fallacy of generalization, in which the omission (or the addition) of a qualification changes the premises that are accepted in general or in the dialogue. This latter approach is being continued in contemporary argumentation theories, which tend to classify ignoring qualification

as a fallacy of generalization (Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992, 189; Woods et al. 2000, 236–239), whose fallaciousness depends on what is accepted, granted, or appropriate in the given context of dialogue (Walton 1990, 149).

The analyses of the *secundum quid* advanced in the history of dialectics, from Aristotle until the 20th century precedessors of argumentation theory, reveal how the contemporary attention to the relationship between logic, context, and meaning is simply the continuation of a challenge that runs across the centuries. This overview leaves the present research in argumentation with a dialogue to continue – and per- haps to redescover – with the classical theories on the pragmatics of argument.

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