

THOMAS AQUINAS ON ESTABLISHING THE IDENTITY  
OF ARISTOTLE'S *CATEGORIES* — no italics

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Providing a philosophical justification for the specific number and identity of Aristotle's categories is a task that dates back at least to Simplicius's commentary on Aristotle's *Categories* (ca. 6th century A.D.).<sup>1</sup> Scholastics from the thirteenth century onward addressed this issue, which they called *sufficientia praedicamentorum*, mostly in commentaries on Aristotle's *Categories*.<sup>2</sup> Two related questions were pertinent. The first asked whether Aristotle provided an adequate list of categories and the second asked whether a philosophical justification could be given for the specific items on the list.<sup>3</sup> Although the latter task predates Albertus Magnus (ca. 1208–80), he is credited as being the first scholastic to attempt it.<sup>4</sup> Albertus established a method of arriving at a list of the

<sup>1</sup> For a recent translation of Simplicius's commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, see *Simplicius: On Aristotle's Categories 1–4*, trans. Michael Chase (Ithaca, 2003). See esp. pp. 74–91.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Andrews identifies other texts that offered opportunity for medieval commentators to address the topic of the *sufficientia*, such as Aristotle's *Metaphysics* V, *Physics* III, and *Topics* I, in "Question Commentaries on the *Categories* in the Thirteenth Century," *Medioevo* 26 (2001), 292. Although Aquinas may be the first scholastic to refer to Simplicius, he does not seem to be familiar with Simplicius's justification of the number and identity of the categories. However, Radulphus Brito shows familiarity with Simplicius's treatment. See William E. McMahon, "Radulphus Brito on the Sufficiency of the *Categories*," *Cahiers de l'institut du moyen-âge grec et latin* 39 (1981), 86. For a topical discussion of the various philosophical questions generated around Aristotle's *Categories*, see Jorge J. E. Gracia and Lloyd Newton, "Medieval Theories of *Categories*," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 14 April 2006, <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/medieval-categories>> (8 August 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See Giorgio Pini, "Scotus on Deducing Aristotle's Categories," *La tradition médiévale des Catégories (XII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles): XIII<sup>e</sup> Symposium européen de logique et de sémantique médiévales*, eds. Joël Biard and Irène Rosier-Catach (Louvain, 2003), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Liber de Praedicamentis* 7.1, *Alberti Magni Opera omnia*, 1, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris, 1890), pp. 270–72. For a discussion of Albertus Magnus on the categories, see William E. McMahon, "Albert the Great on the Semantics of the Categories of Substance, Quantity, and Quality," *Historiographia Linguistica* 7, 1/2 (1980), 145–57 and E. P. Bos and A. C. van der Helm, "The Division of Being over the Categories According to Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus," in *John Duns Scotus: Renewal of Philosophy: Acts of the Third Symposium Organized by the Dutch Society for Medieval Philosophy Medium Aevum (May 23 and 24, 1996)*, ed. E. P. Bos, (ELEMENTA: Schriften zur Philosophie und ihrer Problemgeschichte) 72 (Amsterdam, 1998), pp. 183–96.

categories from the modes of predication. Thomas Aquinas followed Albertus's lead and tried to establish an exhaustive categorial division of being by showing that there are only so many ways in which predicates are said of subjects.<sup>5</sup> Although Aquinas never wrote a commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, he provided two closely related justifications for the list of categories (*praedicamenta*) in his commentaries on the *Metaphysics* (Book V, lect. 9) and the *Physics* (Book III, lect. 3).<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Aquinas's account was historically more influential than Albert's, even though Aquinas's discussions of the topic are relatively brief.

Although the division of the categories is metaphysically fundamental and interesting, as well as hotly debated among scholastics, the secondary literature on Aquinas's contribution to the problem of *sufficientia praedicamentorum* is scant. In fact, not only is the literature devoted specifically to it meager, but the discussion is often altogether ignored in broad discussions of Aquinas's metaphysics.<sup>7</sup> This is not surprising given Aquinas's brief and elliptical treatment of it. The issue, however, has not escaped the attention of a few scholars, including John Wippel, who has provided the most detailed treatment of Aquinas's view to date.

The purpose of this article is to offer an alternative interpretation of Aquinas's view. The key passage is his statement that "those things that are said to be *secundum se* <sup>that</sup> which signify in every manner the figures of predication [i.e., the modes of predication]."<sup>8</sup> I argue that this passage is crucial to a proper understanding of Aquinas's derivation

<sup>5</sup> In "Categories in Aristotle," Michael Frede interprets the Aristotelian categories as kinds of predications rather than kinds of predicates. In *Studies in Aristotle*, ed. Dominic J. O'Meara (Washington, D.C., 1981), pp. 1–24. He also claims that in Aristotle's works there is not "any sign of a systematical derivation of the categories, e.g., in terms of a set of formal features" (p. 22). In contrast, Aquinas holds 1) that the categories (*praedicamenta*) are substance and nine accidents, and 2) the list of categories can be established according to formal features of propositions (namely, the modes of predication or *figuras praedicationis*).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis expositio*, eds. M. R. Cathala and R. M. Spiazzi (Turin, 1950); hereafter cited as '*In Met.*' Through the chapter, I either provide my own translations of the text or modifications of John P. Rowan's translation, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics: St. Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, 1995). Thomas Aquinas, *In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis expositio*, ed. P. M. Maggiolo (Turin, 1954); hereafter cited as '*In Phys.*'

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas (The Arguments of the Philosophers)*, (New York, 2005) and Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Boulder, 2004). Etienne Gilson also does not mention it in *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, 1952), p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 889: "quod illa dicuntur esse *secundum se*, quaecumque significant figuras praedicationis." For the passage of Aristotle to which Aquinas refers, see *Metaphysics* 5.7.

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of the categories and that Wippel's account does not adequately take it into consideration. This passage indicates a key feature of Aquinas's approach: that the categories are identified and distinguished from each other based on essential propositions, i.e., *secundum se* or *per se* propositions, which have predicates that are essentially related to their subjects. Consequently, in the first section of this chapter, I present Wippel's interpretation of what Aquinas means by *secundum se* as it relates to the modes of predication and I point out some difficulties with it.<sup>9</sup> To be more precise, problems arise with Wippel's interpretation because he does not take into account Aquinas's focus on *per se* modes of predication. In the second section of this chapter, I offer an interpretation of what Aquinas means by *secundum se* when he describes the modes of predication from which the categories are established. Specifically, I interpret *secundum se* to refer to three of the four *per se* modes of predication as they are discussed in the *Posterior Analytics*: *primo modo*, *secundo modo*, and *quarto modo per se* predication.<sup>10</sup> My claim is that Aquinas determines the number of categories by reflecting on the ways in which the predicates of *per se* propositions are related to the subjects of other such *per se* propositions. Finally, in the third section I show how Aquinas establishes the categories from the modes of *per se* predication. For the sake of brevity, I focus mainly on substance, quantity, and quality and provide only a sketch of how Aquinas deals with the remaining categories.

<sup>9</sup> John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas's Derivation of the Aristotelian Categories (Predicaments)," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 25 (1987), 13-34 and *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C., 2000), pp. 208-28. Other scholars with similar interpretations of Aquinas's view are Giorgio Pini, "Scotus on Deducing Aristotle's Categories," and E. P. Bos and A. C. van der Helm, "The Division of Being over the Categories According to Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus."

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio Libri Posteriorum, Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera omnia*, Leonine edition (Rome, 1989), 1.2; hereafter cited as '*Post. An.*' The fact that the commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* is believed to have been written roughly at the same time as the commentary on the *Metaphysics* (between 1269-72) makes it pertinent for our discussion. See *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, eds. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (New York, 1993), p. 283. In addition, both texts discuss modes of predication. Also, although these three modes of predication are awkwardly named (I refer to three modes of predication but there is no *tertio modo*), I follow the convention in the secondary literature of naming each specific mode according to the Latin ordinal used in the text. See William M. Walton, "The Second Mode of Necessary or *Per Se* Propositions According to St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Modern Schoolman* 29 (1951-52), 293-306. Aquinas identifies *tertio modo* in *Post. An.* 1.10 as not a mode of predication but rather one way to understand the term '*per.*'

For a similar interpretation of *secundum se*, see Ralph McInerny, "Being and Predication," in Being and Predication: Thomistic Interpretations his (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), pp. 173-228.

I. *John Wippel's Interpretation*

In this section I focus exclusively on Wippel's interpretation of Aquinas's derivation as it is presented in his commentary on the *Metaphysics* V, 9, focusing specifically on Wippel's understanding of Aquinas's statement that "those things are said to be *secundum se* that signify in every manner the modes of predication."<sup>11</sup> I also criticize Wippel's interpretation insofar as it is neither sufficient for establishing the number and identity of the categories from modes of predication, as Aquinas claims, nor compatible with the general context of Aquinas's discussion. To be fair to Wippel, however, it should be noted that he offers an accurate overview of the text in which Aquinas establishes the list of categories. He notes that Aquinas identifies three ways in which a predicate can be related to its subject in a proposition. In the first way, (1) "the predicate is really identical with that which serves as the subject,"<sup>12</sup> and these propositions signify substance. The example that Wippel provides to illustrate this is "Socrates is an animal." In a second way, (2) "a predicate may be taken from something which is in the subject."<sup>13</sup> If the predicate is absolutely in the subject and follows from the matter (2a), then the category of quantity results, but if it follows from the form (2b) of the subject, then the category of quality results. Wippel does not give examples of, nor discuss how, a predicate is understood to be in a subject either according to the matter of the subject or according to its form. It is possible that he would say that "Socrates is five-feet tall" and "Socrates is bald" are examples in which the predicate is said to be in the subject because the former signifies how much the subject is and the latter how the subject is. If, however, the predicate is taken not absolutely but in relation to something other than the subject (2c), then relation is expressed. Although Wippel does not provide an example, he might say that "Socrates is the teacher of Plato" is an example of this.

In a third way, (3) "a predicate may be derived from something which is realized outside the subject."<sup>14</sup> Again, Wippel provides no examples to illustrate this, nor does he discuss how a predicate is understood to be realized outside the subject. Rather, he simply claims that the various

<sup>11</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 889.

<sup>12</sup> Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 213.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

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ways in which the predicate is denominated by that which is realized outside the subject yield the remaining categories. For example, if the predicate in any way measures the subject (3a–c), in combination with other conditions, then the categories of place (e.g., “Socrates is in the marketplace”), time (e.g., “The play is at dusk”) and position (e.g., “Socrates is sitting”) result. If the predicate does not measure the subject (3d), then habit (e.g., “Socrates is shod”) results. The last two categories, action (e.g., “Socrates is cutting”) and passion (e.g., “The paper is being cut”) are signified by those predicates that are only “partly present in the subject (3e–f).”<sup>15</sup>

Wippel cites an earlier passage in which Aquinas states that “those things are said to be *secundum se* that signify in every manner the modes of predication.”<sup>16</sup> He notes that “Thomas begins [the derivation] with the observation that according to Aristotle those things are said to be in the proper sense (*secundum se* rather than only *per accidens*) which signify different figures of predication [i.e., modes of predication].”<sup>17</sup> However, Wippel does not expand any further on this passage, leaving us with three questions. First, what does he take ‘figures of predication’ to mean? Second, what is the antecedent to ‘those things,’ i.e., to what do ‘those things’ refer? Do they refer to “predicates,” “subjects,” “the various significations of the copula,” “propositions,” or something else? Third, what does it mean for something to be said to be *secundum se* (‘in a proper sense’) and how is this different from that which is said to be *per accidens*? I will address each question in turn.

#### *Figures of Predication*

In discussing the meaning of ‘figures of predication,’ Wippel refers to both ‘modes of predicating’ (*modus praedicandi*) and ‘modes of predication’ (*modus praedicationis*). Wippel does not distinguish between these two terms and seems to use them interchangeably.<sup>18</sup> He simply says that the categories are distinguished according to different modes or ways of predicating.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>16</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 889.

<sup>17</sup> Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 212.

<sup>18</sup> In keeping with Aristotle’s and Aquinas’s general theory of psychology, I take it that a ‘proposition’ is the object of the second act of the intellect, and that ‘predicating’ is the activity itself. Thus, ‘predication’ would be the abstract form of ‘predicating’.

Of those names which are predicated, continues Thomas, some signify what something is, that is to say, substance. Some signify how it is (quality), and others how much there is (quantity), and so on. Therefore, in accord with each of these supreme modes of predicating, *esse* must signify the same thing, i.e., what something is, or what kind it is, or how much there is, etc. For instance when we say that man is an animal, the term 'is' signifies substance. When we say a man is white, the verb 'is' signifies quality.<sup>19</sup>

In this passage, Wippel identifies “modes of predicating” as the basic ways in which a predicate says something of its subject and he points out that each category is distinguished according to a different mode of predicating. A predicate that expresses what the subject is signifies substance, one that expresses how the subject is expresses quality, etc. For example, since both “Socrates is an animal” and “Bucephalus is a horse” have predicates that say what the subject is, the *esse* of each proposition must signify substance. Likewise, “Socrates is white” and “Socrates is bald” signify quality because they have predicates that show how the subject is. To put it another way, “white” and “bald” are answers to the question “How is Socrates?” Thus, two propositions that have predicates that relate to their subjects in the same way (e.g., both propositions have predicates that signify what the subject is) signify the same category. When Wippel refers to the signification of *esse*, he means the copula ‘is’ in a proposition. In a simple subject-predicate proposition the copula functions to unify the subject and predicate together in a single signification, so that a proposition as a whole can signify a substance or accident according to the sense of the predicate. For example, the proposition “Socrates is an animal” signifies substance, and “Socrates is white” signifies an accident (viz., quality).

*The Antecedent of ‘those things’*

This understanding of what Wippel means by ‘modes of predication’ or ‘modes of predicating’ helps us to understand the second question posed above concerning how Wippel understands ‘those things’ in Aquinas’s statement that “those things are said to be *secundum se* that signify in every manner the modes of predication.”<sup>20</sup> Although Wippel does not identify the antecedent of ‘those things’, his brief treatment

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 889.

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of the issue seems to suggest that the modes of predication are the various ways in which predicates are related to subjects. Therefore, it would seem that Wippel understands 'those things' (*illa*) to mean the modes of predication that he identifies, such as "what the subject is," "how the subject is," "how much the subject is," etc. However, if this were the case, Aquinas's passage would have the following interpretation: the specific modes of predication are said to be *secundum se* that signify in every manner the modes of predication (and the categories are established from them). That is, the modes of predication that Wippel identifies 1) are the modes of predication that are said to be in a proper sense and 2) are the modes of predication from which the categories are derived.

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"Secundum se"

This interpretation in turn provides us with an answer to the question concerning what it means for modes of predication to be said '*secundum se*.' Wippel points out that *secundum se* is opposed to *per accidens* and translates the former as "in a proper sense." Thus, it would be reasonable to infer from this that *per accidens* in this context may be translated as "in an improper sense." Consequently, in the passage in question, "in a proper sense" qualifies "modes of predication" in that only propositions that have predicates that are related to their subjects according to one of the ten supreme modes of predication are '*secundum se*.' For example, a proposition that is *secundum se* is one in which the predicate says what the subject is or is one in which the predicate says how the subject is, etc. Also, those propositions that have predicates that are not related to their subjects according to one of these ways are *secundum accidens*. This indicates how, for Wippel, categories are distinguished according to modes of predication. "Socrates is a man," "Bucephalus is a horse," and "A man is rational," signify substance because they have predicates that show what their subjects are and "Socrates is white" signifies quality because the predicate says how the subject is.

Now let me turn to some problems with Wippel's understanding of Aquinas's view. First, Wippel seems to present two independent ways of "distinguishing" or "deriving" the categories.<sup>21</sup> This could be called 'the

<sup>21</sup> It may be controversial to interpret Wippel as equating the terms 'deriving' and 'distinguishing.' However, there are several reasons why I believe he does so. 1) He

problem of two derivations.’ On one hand, he says that the categories “are distinguished according to the different modes or ways of predicating,”<sup>22</sup> and then identifies the mode of predication specific to each category. For example, propositions with predicates that express what the subject is signify substance (e.g., “man is an animal”) and propositions that express how the subject is signify quality (e.g., “Socrates is bald.”). On the other hand, he presents the “derivation” of the categories from propositions that express a relationship between the subject and predicate according to three ways: “In one way, the predicate is really identical with that which serves as the subject;”<sup>23</sup> “in a second way, a predicate may be taken from something which is in the subject;”<sup>24</sup> and “in a third major way, a predicate may be derived from something which is realized outside the subject.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, it appears that he has a problem of two derivations. That is, he seems to have two accounts for how the list of categories is established. This problem arises because there is no discernable relation between the so-called ten supreme modes of predication and the three ways in which a predicate is related to its subject. This is problematic because Aquinas only presents one way of establishing the categories in the text. Wipfel does not discuss how the modes of predicating that show how the subject is or how much the subject is are related to that in which the predicate is taken from something in the subject. That is, if “Socrates is white” distinguishes the category of quality because it shows how the subject is, what is the significance of Aquinas saying that “white” as understood in the

the semicolon should be outside of the quotations?

never defines ‘derivation’ but he does use both terms in very similar contexts: “Thomas would have us appeal . . . to diversity in modes of predication in order to render explicit the distinction between substance and accident in general, and also to derive the nine supreme classes of accidents” (p. 211). It would make sense to say that just as substance is distinguished from accident, so to the nine categories are distinguished from each other as well. 2) Aquinas never uses a term that corresponds to Wipfel’s term ‘derivation.’ Rather, Aquinas uses terms such as *distinguuntur* and *dividitur* to discuss the so-called derivation of the categories. Thus, when Wipfel uses the term ‘distinguish’ in the context of the categories it is reasonable to hold that he uses it interchangeably with the term ‘derive.’ 3) He states that the categories “are distinguished according to different modes or ways of predicating” (p. 212) and immediately after identifying these modes of predicating through which the categories are distinguished he proceeds directly to discuss the derivation of the categories. It is difficult to understand how the categories are distinguished and derived from the modes of predication if ‘distinguished’ and ‘derived’ do not have the same meaning.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

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subject "Socrates" according to the form of the subject is a way of distinguishing the category of quality from other categories? Indeed, it appears that the first account presented by Wippel obviates the need for the second one.

A second problem with Wippel's interpretation specifically pertains to the way that Aquinas establishes the category of substance. Wippel suggests that substance is "derived" when a predicate is "really identified" with the subject.<sup>26</sup> But it seems that this is the same as the mode of predication in which the predicate says what the subject is. For example, in "Socrates is an animal," "Socrates" is really identified with "animal" and "animal" says what the subject "Socrates" is. Given these factors, according to Wippel, the proposition signifies substance. This is in contrast to "Socrates is white," which does not signify substance because the predicate is neither identified with the subject nor does it show what the subject is.

However, not only is the condition in which the predicate is really identified with the subject not mentioned by Aquinas, but it is also insufficient for establishing the category of substance. For it cannot be used to distinguish propositions signifying substance from propositions that do not. This is because there are propositions that have predicates that are identified with their subject and yet do not signify substance. Consider the following examples: "White is a color," "A surface is a continuous quantity," or "This patch of color is red." In these propositions the predicate is identified with the subject and shows what the subject is. "White" is really identified with "color" in the sense that white really is a color. Also, a particular patch of color that is red is such that "red" is identified with that patch of color. But none of these propositions directly signifies substance. Thus Wippel's suggestion is not sufficient for establishing the category of substance. This is a problem because Aquinas's procedure aims to distinguish propositions from each other that signify different categories from a consideration of the way in which predicates are related to subjects.<sup>27</sup> The fact that Wippel's interpretation does not take this into account leads one to infer that he has misinterpreted Aquinas's position.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 213. All Aquinas says is that in one way a "predicate states what the subject is, as when I say Socrates is an animal." *In Met.* 5.9, n. 891.

<sup>27</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 890: "Et propter hoc ea in quae dividitur ens primo, dicuntur esse praedicamenta, quia distinguuntur secundum diversum modum praedicandi."

Third, Wippel does not offer an interpretation of how Aquinas establishes the categories that is consistent with the overall meaning of the text. As a consequence, Wippel's interpretation fails to show how all ten categories are said to be *entia secundum se*, which is a fundamental claim of Aquinas in the text. In lect. 9, Aquinas is commenting on Aristotle's text in which he discusses the various ways that being is said.<sup>28</sup> The text is divided into the following distinct sections. 1) In n. 885, Aquinas provides an overarching division in which being is said (*ens dicitur*) either *secundum se* or *secundum accidens*.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, it is important to note that in this section Aquinas says that these two ways that being is said are not the same as the division of being into substance and accident.<sup>30</sup> Rather, he says that the division of being *secundum se* and *secundum accidens* "is understood according to whether something is predicated of something else either essentially [*per se*] or accidentally [*per accidens*]."<sup>31</sup> 2) Next, in nn. 886–88, Aquinas subdivides the latter division and discusses the nature of being that is said accidentally (*secundum accidens*); namely, that which is predicated accidentally. "A man is musical" and "Socrates is white" are beings that are said *secundum accidens* because they predicate accidents of substances and their predicates are not essentially predicated of their subjects.<sup>32</sup> 3) Finally, in nn. 889–94, Thomas turns to the former division and discusses that which is said to be *secundum se*. It is in this context that he states that "those things that are said to be *secundum se* in every manner signify the modes of predication"<sup>33</sup> and it is in this context that he establishes the list of categories (n. 892).

An understanding of how the text is divided and how the so-called derivation text fits into it reveals some significant problems with Wippel's interpretation. On the one hand, Wippel states that the mode of predication that reveals the category of quality is that in which the predicate shows how the subject is. Therefore, since "Socrates is white" and "Socrates is musical" are propositions that have predicates that show how the subject is, they must signify the category of quality. On

<sup>28</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885: "Hic Philosophus distinguit quot modis dicitur ens."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*: "ens dicitur quoddam secundum se, et quoddam secundum accidens."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: "Sciendum tamen est quod illa divisio entis non est eadem cum illa divisione qua dividitur ens in substantiam et accidens."

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*: "Unde patet quod divisio entis secundum se et secundum accidens, attenditur secundum quod aliquid praedicatur de aliquo per se vel per accidens."

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 886: "Ostendit quot modis dicitur ens per accidens... cum accidens praedicatur de subiecto, ut cum dicitur, homo est musicus."

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 889.

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the other hand, Aquinas states that being "*secundum se* is divided into the ten categories, of which nine are accidental kinds"<sup>34</sup> and being *secundum se* refers to essential predication. However, both "Socrates is white" and "Socrates is musical" are said *secundum accidens*. Therefore, since propositions that have predicates that say how the subject is have predicates that are predicated accidentally (*secundum accidens*), this cannot be the mode of predication from which quality is established. Rather, the mode of predication from which all the categories are derived must be related to essential predication.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, I question Wippel's overall understanding of Aquinas's approach to establishing the categories. I disagree with Wippel's suggestion that Aquinas's text provides a way to discover the categories, if by 'discover' Wippel means that the technique for distinguishing the categories is in itself a way of determining the meaning of each of the categories. That is, since the term 'discover' has the connotation of "being made known," the suggestion that through the technique presented by Aquinas one discovers definitions or characteristics of specific categories is misguided. Rather than discovering the categories, Aquinas's technique merely distinguishes or divides propositions that signify different categories according to the logical properties of propositions. Wippel seems to hold that for Aquinas "Socrates is human" is a way of understanding the meaning of substance signified by the proposition because the predicate says what the subject is. In contrast, I

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., n. 885: "Quod ex hoc patet, quia ipse postmodum, ens secundum se dividit in decem praedicamenta, quorum novem sunt de genere accidentis."

<sup>35</sup> Pini follows Wippel in his interpretation in "Scotus on Deducing Aristotle's Categories," p. 26: in "the predication 'man is white', 'is' signifies a quality, and so on. Since there are ten kinds of predicate—something Aquinas demonstrated too... there are ten different meanings of the verb 'to be'.... Hence, since predicates are classified into ten genera according to what they signify, he could conclude that there are ten genera of being." Earlier in the text Pini states that "Since a predicate can be attributed to its subject in ten different ways, he could conclude that there were ten different modes of being" (pp. 25, 26). The same criticism applies to Pini's interpretation: although Aquinas holds that the 'is' in the proposition "Socrates is white" expresses a metaphysical accident, such a proposition cannot be used to deduce the category of quality. This is similar to the interpretation given by Bos and van der Helm in "The Division of Being over the Categories," pp. 187–89. Two other treatments of Aquinas's on the *sufficientia praedicamentorum* are of note. They follow a similar line of interpretation as Wippel: M. Marina Scheu in *The Categories of Being in Aristotle and St. Thomas* (Washington D.C., 1944), pp. 60–6; and Stanislas Breton, "La déduction thomiste des catégories," *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 60 (1962), 5–32. Scheu stresses Aquinas's logical approach in deriving the modes of being (p. 63). However, Scheu treatment is brief and does not expand on the various modes of predication.

hold that Aquinas identifies “Socrates is human” as signifying substance in the following way: 1) every proposition that has a given logical form signifies substance (what this logical form specifically is will be discussed in the third section); 2) “Socrates is human” has that given logical form; 3) therefore, “Socrates is human” signifies substance. Aquinas does not provide a way of discovering what propositions signifying categories mean (e.g., that “Socrates is human” signifies substance, which means “what the subject is”) but rather a way of distinguishing propositions from each other in a way that parallels the categorial division of being. In support of this, Aquinas states that “that into which being is first divided (*dividitur*) are called categories because they are distinguished (*distinguuntur*) according to different modes of predicating.”<sup>36</sup> In addition to this, I contend that Aquinas emphatically does not establish the division of being into the categories by identifying the ten supreme modes of predicating (“what the subject is,” “how the subject is,” etc.) but rather establishes the categories through the three ways that predicates may be related to their subjects.

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II. Per se Predication and the Identity of the Categories

The starting point for my interpretation of the way that Aquinas establishes the categories is based on the passage in which he says that being said *secundum se* and *secundum accidens* “is understood according to whether something is predicated of something else either essentially [*per se*] or accidentally [*per accidens*].”<sup>37</sup> I claim that the categories are established through the modes of *per se* (i.e., essential) predication.<sup>38</sup> In this section I develop some points crucial to understanding Aquinas’s procedure for establishing the categories from *per se* modes of predication; namely, that a successful way to establish the categories is by identifying differences in the predicational structure of *per se* propositions.<sup>39</sup> Next, I

<sup>36</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 890. My emphasis.

<sup>37</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885. Later in his commentary (n. 1054), Aquinas specifically identifies the various meanings of ‘*secundum se*’ with the various meanings of ‘*per se*’ predication as it is found in the *Posterior Analytics*.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the various senses of *modus* in Aquinas, especially as it plays a role in his metaphysics, see John Tomarchio, “Aquinas’s Division of Being According to Modes of Existing,” *Review of Metaphysics* 54, 3 (2001), 585–613.

<sup>39</sup> For the difference between *per se* propositions and *per se* predication, see fn. 18 above.

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introduce the various *per se* modes of predication—namely, *primo modo*, *secundo modo* and *quarto modo per se*—and distinguish them from the *per accidens* modes. Each mode of predication indicates how a predicate is related to its subject. Furthermore, I show that each *per se* mode of predication satisfies the two criteria of *per se* predication; viz.: 1) the predicate is predicated universally of the subject and 2) the subject, or something possessed by the subject, is the cause of the predicate. This provides a foundation for the third section of this chapter (III) in which I discuss how Aquinas establishes the various categories from *per se* modes of predication.<sup>40</sup>

As previously mentioned, Aquinas's derivation of the categories that I am focusing on is found in the fifth chapter of his commentary on the *Metaphysics*. In order to understand Aquinas properly, however, one must consider the larger context of the passage. The general issue that Aquinas addresses in this section of his commentary concerns the various significations of 'being'; that is, the basic senses of the term.<sup>41</sup> He begins by noting that for Aristotle the term *ens* signifies either *ens per se* or *ens per accidens*.<sup>42</sup> This is the division of being into substance (*per se*) and accidents (*per accidens*). However, Aquinas makes another distinction of *ens* into being that is said *secundum se* and *secundum accidens*.<sup>43</sup> This latter division of being refers to the various senses of the copula ('is') in a proposition. Because the copula of a proposition is a kind of being ('is' is a cognate of 'being'), being that is said *secundum se* refers to propositions in which the predicate is essentially or *per se* predicated of its subject.

There are two important features of the copula. First, it signifies what the predicate and subject taken together signify.<sup>43</sup> For example, the copula of "Socrates is an animal" signifies Socrates-the-animal (the specific unified extramental being). Second, the copula is classified or characterized according to the way in which the predicate of a proposition

<sup>40</sup> The textual basis for my interpretation is mainly the *Commentary on the Metaphysics* V, 9. Due to its similarity with the passage in *Physics* III, 5, I use the latter parallel text only for purposes of amplification.

<sup>41</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885.

<sup>42</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.7 (1017a8).

<sup>43</sup> See: Gyula Klima, "Aquinas' Theory of the Copula," *Logical Analysis and History of Philosophy* 5 (2002) and "The Semantic Principles Underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas's of Being," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996), 87–141; Pini, "Scotus on Assertion and the Copula: A Comparison with Aquinas," in *Medieval Theories on Assertive and Non-Assertive Language. Acts of the 14th European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics, Rome, June 11–15, 2002*, eds. A. Maierù and L. Valente (Firenze, 2004), 307–31.

is related to its subject. For example, the copula in “Socrates is an animal” is an *ens secundum se* because the proposition has a predicate that is essentially related to its subject. The reason why the copula can be characterized in this way is because it has the specific function of relating the predicate to the subject in a proposition. The ways in which the copula relates the predicate to the subject can be characterized in different ways. An understanding of the two features of the copula helps us to interpret Aquinas’s statement that Aristotle “divides being *secundum se* into the ten categories, of which nine are accidents.”<sup>44</sup> By this, Aquinas means that even though the nine accidents of being are *per accidens*, they are *entia secundum se* in the sense that they can be signified by propositions that have *secundum se* copulas; ~~copulas are *secundum se* when they express an essential relation between subject and predicate.~~

That is, all ten categories can be signified by being that is said *secundum se* because any proposition in which an essential predication occurs has a copula that signifies any one of the ten categories, including any of the nine accidental categories. For example, “White is a color” has a copula that is both *secundum se* and signifies the category of quality (which is an *ens per accidens*), whereas “Socrates is white” is a proposition that has a copula that signifies a *per accidens* being and is itself *secundum accidens*. Similarly, “Socrates is an animal” has a copula that is *secundum se* and signifies a *per se* being (substance). Although a substance is an *ens per se* and accidents are *ens per accidens*, both substance and accidents can be signified by propositions with copulas that are *entia secundum se*. To simplify matters, instead of referring to a proposition’s copula, I will use the phrase ‘a *per se* predication’ or ‘a *per se* proposition’ to refer to a proposition in which the predicate is essentially related to its subject.<sup>45</sup>

When Aquinas states that those things that are said *secundum se* signify the figures of predication [i.e., modes of predication], he means that *per se* propositions or predications provide an understanding from which the categories are established. When this interpretation of *secundum se* (meaning “*per se* predication”) is coupled with Aquinas’s statement that “being must be narrowed down (*contrahitur*) to diverse kinds (viz., categories) according to a different mode of predication [from that of genus and species] because being is said in as many ways as the ways

<sup>44</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885.

<sup>45</sup> Following Wippel, I will use these two terms interchangeably.

- no italics

in which something is predicated,"<sup>46</sup> the result is that the categories are distinguished from each other in the following way: propositions that signify different categories are divided from each other by identifying differences among the modes of *per se* predication. This procedure shows how being is divided into categories by dividing propositions that signify different categories by distinguishing *per se* propositions from each other according to different ways that a predicate can be *per se* predicated of subjects.

Although it may be counter-intuitive to interpret *secundum se* as referring exclusively to propositions in which the predicate is essentially or *per se* related to its subject, there are several reasons to do so. The first is that it heeds Aquinas's explicit admonition that "being is said in a certain way according to itself and in a certain way according to accidents, nevertheless, it must be noted that that part of being is not the same with that division in which being is divided into substance and accidents."<sup>47</sup> That is, it avoids conflating the meaning of *ens per se* with *ens secundum se*; *per se* being refers to substance and being *secundum se* refers to a proposition in which there is an essential relation between subject and predicate.

Second, it resolves the issue of the sense in which the nine accidents can be understood as being *secundum se*. This interpretation allows us to understand how the nine accidents are on the one hand not *entia per se*, because this applies to substance alone (and accidental being is dependent on the being of substance), and on the other hand, because the nine categories are still fundamental extramental entities, not reducible to anything else (e.g., not reducible to *entia per se*); they are fundamental entities that can be identified through, and correspond to, fundamental differences among *per se* propositions.

Third, it allows Aquinas's argument for the categories to avoid the charge of a *non sequitur* fallacy. Aquinas would indeed be guilty of such a charge if he held that "The categories are established from the modes of predication," follows from "The categories are established by seeing which propositions happen to signify which categories;" for example, that "Socrates is an animal," establishes the category of substance because it signifies substance. Merely stating that a given proposition

→ semi-colon should be outside of quotation

<sup>46</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 890: "Unde oportet, quod ens contrahatur ad diversa genera secundum diversum modum praedicandi, qui consequitur diversum modum essendi; quia 'quoties ens dicitur', idest quot modis aliquid praedicatur."

<sup>47</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885.

signifies substance is not the same as establishing the category of substance from a mode of predication. For in this case, no appeal is made to the way in which the predicate is related to its subject; rather, appeal is made only to the metaphysical category a particular proposition happens to signify. ~~However,~~ <sup>rather,</sup> in order for the categories to be established, it must be shown how propositions having copulas which signify a specific mode of *per se* predication can be used to distinguish different categories.

In contrast to Wippel's interpretation, ~~it is my contention that~~ Aquinas establishes the ten categories by reflecting on the three *per se* modes of predication as they are established in the *Posterior Analytics* I.<sup>48</sup> There he gives two criteria of *per se* predication. According to one, a predicate must be universally predicated of its subject—meaning that the predicate is found in each of the things that are included in its subject.<sup>49</sup> According to the second criteria, “the subject or something possessed by the subject [must be] the cause of the predicate.”<sup>50</sup> This second criterion is based on the fact that since the term ‘per’ (‘by’) signifies a causal relation it is necessary that there be a causal feature for all *per se* predications.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, accidental predication obtains when at least one of these two criteria are not met.

Aquinas goes on to say that there are three general modes of predication that meet these two criteria: *primo modo*, *secundo modo* and *quarto modo*.<sup>52</sup> *Primo modo per se* predication obtains “when the definition or something posited in the definition is predicated of something.”<sup>53</sup> Examples of this mode occur in “Socrates is a man,” “White is a color” and “Humans are animals.” This mode meets the two criteria because every

<sup>48</sup> As previously mentioned, Aquinas will subsequently identify *secundum se* predication with *per se* predication in his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, nn. 1054–1567.

<sup>49</sup> *Post. An.* 1.9, lines 47, 48.

<sup>50</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 19–24: “Sicut autem hec prepositio ‘per’ designat habitudinem cause quando aliquid extraneum est causa eius quod attribuitur subiecto, ita quando subiectum uel aliquid eius est causa eius quod attribuitur ei, et hoc significat ‘per se’.”

<sup>51</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 8, 9: “Circa primum sciendum est quod hec prepositio ‘per’ designat habitudinem cause.”

<sup>52</sup> Aquinas does mention another sense in which something is *per se* (viz., *tertio modo*). However, this “mode is not a mode of predicating, but rather a mode of existing.” For in this sense, the *per se* signifies something that is alone, as something singular in the genus of substance. *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 117–21.

<sup>53</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 25–30: “Primus ergo modus dicendi per se est quando id quod attribuitur alicui pertinet ad formam eius, et quia diffinitio significat formam et essentiam rei, primus modus eius quod est ‘per se’ est quando predicatur de aliquo diffinitio uel aliquid in diffinitione positum.”

- no italics

proposition of this form has a predicate that is predicated universally of its subject insofar as the predicate is contained in the definition of the subject. Also, the predicate is linked to its subject causally insofar as the predicate signifies the essence of the subject.

*Secundo modo per se* predication obtains “when the subject is posited in the definition of a predicate, which is a proper accident of the subject.”<sup>54</sup> This mode occurs in “A surface is colored” and “Humans have the capacity to laugh.” A characteristic of this *per se* mode of predication is that it involves predicates that are property terms (*propria*). This mode of predication meets the two criteria as well. First, the predicate is universally predicated of its subject; for example, every surface has the predicate “colored”<sup>truly</sup> predicated of it. Second, the predicate is causally linked to the subject in that even though the predicate is not in the definition of the subject, the subject is signified in the definition of the predicate; in “A surface is colored,” the definition of ‘colored’ includes the notion of “surface.” Because of this, this mode of predication is determined by a relationship between the predicate and the subject in which the predicate is understood to be in the subject.

*Quarto modo per se*, the most obscure of the modes, obtains when “the preposition *per* designates a condition of efficient cause or other ... [but] the predicate is in fact in the subject on account of itself.”<sup>55</sup> Aquinas says that this mode of predication occurs in “Having been slaughtered, it died.” This mode of predication can also be understood to meet the two criteria of having a predicate that is universally predicated of its subject and having a predicate that is understood to be causally linked to <sup>its</sup> the subject. First, in the example given, the predicate “it died” is universally predicated of that which has been slaughtered. Second, the predicate is linked to the subject according to an efficient cause: the slaughtering is understood as the efficient cause of the death of the animal. This *per se* mode of predication is said to signify an extrinsic

<sup>54</sup> *Post An.* 1.10, lines 64–67: “Unde secundus modus dicendi ‘per se’ est quando subiectum ponitur in diffinitione predicati quod est proprium accidens eius.”

<sup>55</sup> *Post An.* 1.10, lines 122–35: “Deinde cum dicit: item alio modo etc., ponit quartum modum, secundum quod hec prepositio ‘per’ designat habitudinem cause efficientis uel cuiuscunque alterius <extrinsece>. Et ideo dicit quod quicquid inest unicuique propter se ipsum, per se dicitur de eo, quod uero non propter ipsum inest alicui, per accidens dicitur, sicut cum dico: ‘Hoc ambulante coruscat’: non enim propter id quod ambulat, coruscauit, set hoc dicitur secundum accidens. Si uero quod praedicatur inest subiecto propter ipsum, per se inest, ut si dicamus quod interfectum interiit: manifestum est quod propter id quod interfectum est, interiit, et non est accidens quod interfectum intereat.”

cause between subject and predicate even though it is stated in such a way that it is *per se*.

Although Aquinas is clear that the categories are established through *per se* predication (this is evident when one considers the statements “being *secundum se* is divided into ten categories, of which nine are accidental kinds” and “the division of being *secundum se* and *secundum accidens* follows according to which something is predicated of another either *per se* or *per accidens*.”)<sup>56</sup> he does not explicitly mention the three specific modes of *per se* predication in either of his commentaries on *Metaphysics* V, 9 or *Physics* III, 5. However each mode can be identified in the text. For example, *secundo modo* predication is understood as having predicates that are in the subject because the predicates signify the subject itself, and Aquinas describes such a relationship between subject and predicate as that mode of predication from which quality and quantity are derived.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, he refers to a way in which a predicate is related externally to its subject, and this is how he characterizes *quarto modo per se* predication.

Furthermore, the modes of *per se* predication are contrasted by Aquinas with the modes of *per accidens* predication.<sup>58</sup> He identifies three modes of *per accidens* predication. The first obtains when a term signifying an accident is predicated of another term that also signifies an accident; for example, “The just is musical.” The second type of *per accidens* predication obtains when a term signifying substance has a term signifying an accident predicated of it; for example, “The man is musical.” The third type of *per accidens* predication obtains when a term signifying substance is predicated of a term that signifies an accident; for example, “The musical is a man.” These modes of predication do not meet the criteria of *per se* predication.

These differences between *per se* and *per accidens* predication clarify the procedure Aquinas follows to establish the number and identity of the categories. How he does this is the subject of the next section (III). However, here I offer an overview of Aquinas’s procedure. First, he focuses on *per se* modes of predication; that is, he focuses on propositions that are characterized by one of the three *per se* modes of predication.

<sup>56</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 885.

<sup>57</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 892: “Secundo modo ut praedicatum sumatur secundum quod inest subiecto: quod quidem praedicatum, vel inest ei per se et absolute, ut consequens materiam, et sic est quantitas: vel ut consequens formam, et sic est qualitas.”

<sup>58</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, nn. 886-88.

-no italics

For example, he would group “Socrates is a man,” “Bucephelus is a horse” and “A human is a rational animal” together because they have the *primo modo per se* predicational form. He would group “A surface is colored” and “A human has the capacity to laugh,” together because they each have the *secundo modo per se* predicational form. Finally, he would identify “Having been slaughtered, it died,” as having the *quarto modo per se* predication. Separating propositions such as these from each other according to the kind of *per se* modes of predication that they have is Aquinas’s procedure for distinguishing the categories from each other. Any two given *per se* propositions that have different predicational structures signify different categories. No two *per se* propositions that have different *per se* modes of predication signify the same category. In short, Aquinas establishes substance through *primo modo* predication; quantity, quality and relation through *secundo modo* predication; and the remaining six categories through *quarto modo* predication.

Second, after he groups propositions according to the different *per se* modes of predication that they have, he further subdivides propositions in the same group according to differences in the way that predicates are related to their subjects in the group. For example, a given proposition that has *secundo modo* predication can signify quantity, quality or relation. Thus, Aquinas identifies the distinctive way in which predicates are related to subjects in propositions that signify quantity from the way in which predicates are related to subjects in propositions that signify quality. It is by way of division and subdivision of propositions according to their predicational features that Aquinas establishes the identity of the categories.

### III. *The Derivation of the Categories from per se predication*

In nn. 889–894 of the text, Aquinas presents a justification of the list of categories and refers enigmatically to the modes of predication. Since Aquinas presupposes so much about how the modes of predication are used to establish the list of categories, in this section I present in detail how Aquinas establishes specific categories from *per se* modes of predication. Specifically, I show how substance, quantity and quality are derived and then indicate how the remaining categories could be established.

Although Joseph Owens suggests that because of its ontological priority substance “is too striking to need defense in a metaphysical

context,” Aquinas seeks to establish it based on the *per se* modes of predication.<sup>59</sup> A predicate can be *per se* related to its subject in a first way “when the predicate expresses what the subject is, just as when I say, ‘Socrates is an animal,’ for Socrates is that which is an animal. And this predicate is said to signify first substance since it is a particular substance, about which all things are predicated.”<sup>60</sup> Aquinas is referring to those propositions that are *primo modo per se*, in which “the definition [of the subject] or something posited in the definition [of the subject] is predicated of the subject.”<sup>61</sup> By reflecting on propositions that have this mode of predication one can see a further relationship between the terms of the subjects and predicates of such propositions. One can identify those propositions that have subjects that “are not predicated of another subject but other things are predicated of them.”<sup>62</sup> This yields *per se* propositions that signify primary substance. For example, “Socrates is an animal” signifies substance because it is a *primo modo* proposition in which the subject cannot be *primo modo* predicated of anything else.

However, it could be asked whether this mode of *primo modo* predication distinguishes those propositions that signify primary substance from those that signify primary accidents.<sup>63</sup> For example, are “Socrates is an animal,” and “This patch of color is white” (if this patch of color really is white) both *primo modo per se* propositions in which the subject cannot be *primo modo per se* predicated of anything else? The answer is that although both propositions are *primo modo per se* propositions, there is a further difference between them that distinguishes substances from other categories. Indeed, both propositions have subjects that cannot be *per se* predicated of another, for neither ‘Socrates’ nor ‘this patch of color’ can be predicated of anything else. However, whereas “Socrates is an animal” is such that the predicate ‘animal’ cannot be *secundo modo* predicated of any other subject, “This patch of color is white” does have a predicate (‘white’) that can be *secundo modo per se* predicated of another subject; namely, ‘a surface’. That is, in *secundo modo* predication

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee, 1963), p. 145.

<sup>60</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 891: “Uno modo cum est id quod est subiectum, ut cum dico, Socrates est animal. Nam Socrates est id quod est animal. Et hoc praedicatum dicitur significare substantiam primam, quae est substantia particularis, de qua omnia praedicantur.”

<sup>61</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 25–30.

<sup>62</sup> *In Met.* 5.10, n. 898.

<sup>63</sup> This is discussed by Aristotle in *Categories* 3 (1a16–1b9) where he makes the four-fold distinction between being ‘predicated of’ and being ‘in’ another.

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the predicate is related to a subject in two ways. In one way, it is related to the subject of the proposition as a determination of the subject. This is in virtue of the fact that it is a predicate in a proposition; Aquinas held that “the predicate is compared to the subject as form is to matter.”<sup>64</sup> In the second way, the subject is itself signified by the predicate independently of the subject. For example, in “This patch of color is white” (if this patch of color really is white) “surface” is signified by the predicate “white.” Consequently, this proposition is distinguished from *per se* propositions that signify substance because no proposition with a predicate that can be *secundo modo* predicated of another signifies substance. Therefore, primary substance is sufficiently identified through *primo modo* predication insofar as *per se* propositions that signify substance have predicates that are exclusive to *primo modo* predication.

From the derivation of primary substance, Aquinas moves to the derivation of quantity, quality and relation. He indicates that a predicate is related to its subject in a second way, “when a predicate is understood according to what is in [inest] a subject. For instance, a predicate is in the subject *per se* and absolutely as following from its matter, and in this way it is quantity. Or, a predicate is in the subject *per se* and absolutely as something following from its form; in this way it is quality, or it is not in it absolutely but in respect to another, and then it is relation.”<sup>65</sup> Quantity, quality and relation are established through propositions that signify *secundo modo per se* predication. Aquinas states in the Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* I, that the ‘*per*’ of *per se* predication, because it is a causal notion, “designates a condition of material cause, just as when it is said that a body is colored by way of its surface because a surface is the proper subject of color.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, the subject signified

<sup>64</sup> Aquinas, *Expositio Libri Perihermenias*, 1.8, n. 11.

<sup>65</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 892: “Secundo modo ut praedicatum sumatur secundum quod inest subiecto: quod quidem praedicatum, vel inest ei per se et absolute, ut consequens materiam, et sic est quantitas: vel ut consequens formam, et sic est qualitas: vel inest ei non absolute, sed in respectu ad aliud, et sic est ad aliquid.” To borrow a phrase from Walton (supra, fn. 10, pg. 306) quantity and quality are related to substance as matter and form respectively in an *ontological* sense, whereas both quantity and quality are formal determinations of a substance, where substance is the matter, in a *logical* sense. Although it seems that Aquinas believes that relation is established through *secundo modo* predication, he does not show how it is established through this mode in either *In Met.* 5.9 or 5.17 where he discusses the sense of relation.

<sup>66</sup> *Past. An.* 1.10, lines 14–17: “quandoque autem habitudinem causae materialis, sicut cum dicitur quod corpus est coloratum per superficiem, quia scilicet proprium subiectum coloris superficies est.” See also lines 51–67: “Secundus modus dicendi per se est quando haec prepositio ‘per’ designat habitudinem cause materialis, prout scilicet

by the subject of a *secundo modo per se* proposition is the material cause (logically speaking) of the predicate.

Quantity and quality are derived from an examination of the relationships between subjects and predications of *secundo modo per se* propositions insofar as they exist absolutely in their subject. However, since both of these categories are established from *secundo modo per se* propositions, what further predicational understanding can be used to determine how propositions that signify quantity can be distinguished from those that signify quality? Aquinas offers a clue for dividing quantity from quality in V, lect. 15 (where he specifically discusses the sense of 'quantity'). **He says** that "only in the genus quantity are some things signified as subjects [of properties] and others as properties [themselves]."<sup>67</sup> The category quantity is signified by *secundo modo per se* propositions that have predicates that not only are *secundo modo* predicated of its subject but also the term of the predicate can itself be the subject of a different property. For example, in "A body is surfaced" (i.e., "A body has a surface") the term 'surface' of the predicate itself can be the subject of the *secundo modo per se* predicate 'colored' (i.e., "The surface is colored."). Thus, "The body has a surface" signifies quantity. Another example of this could be "The body has mass." The term 'mass' of the predicate is *secundo modo* predicated of 'body' and it also can be the subject in the *secundo modo* proposition "The mass is heavy." Therefore, according to this mode of *secundo modo* predication "The body has mass" signifies quantity. In this way quantity is established through *secundo modo per se* predication.

On the contrary, this criterion does not apply to terms that signify quality. For example, in "The surface is white," 'white' signifies a property because it signifies its proper subject 'surface' in its definition. However, 'white' itself cannot be the subject of a property. For

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id cui aliquid attribuitur est propria materia et proprium subiectum ipsius. Oportet autem quod proprium subiectum ponatur in diffinitione accidentis, quandoque quidem in obliquo, sicut cum accidens in abstracto diffinitur, ut cum dicimus quod simitas est curvitas nasi; quandoque uero in recto, ut cum accidens diffinitur in concreto, ut cum dicimus quod simus est nasus curuus. Cuius quidem ratio est quia cum esse accidentis dependeat a subiecto, oportet etiam quod diffinitio eius significans esse ipsius contineat in se subiectum. Vnde secundus modus dicendi per se est quando subiectum ponitur in diffinitione predicati quod est proprium accidens eius."

<sup>67</sup> *In Met.* 5.15, n. 983: "Nam sola quantitas habet divisionem in partes proprias post substantiam. Albedo enim non potest dividi, et per consequens nec intelligitur individuare nisi per subiectum. Et inde est, quod in solo quantitatis genere aliqua significantur ut subiecta, alia ut passiones."

- no italics

example, in the *secundo modo per se* proposition "The white is colored," the proper subject in the definition of colored is not "white" but rather, "surface." *Secundo modo per se* propositions that signify quantity can be distinguished from those that do not according to this predicational criterion. For example, "A human being is capable of laughter" does not signify quantity even though a human being is divisible into parts and capable of laughter is a property of human beings. In this proposition, "capable of laughter" cannot be the subject of a property and "a human being" cannot be predicated *secundo modo per se* of anything else. Therefore, propositions such as "A human is capable of laughter," and "A surface is colored" both signify the category quality because both "capable of laughter" and "colored" are properties that cannot be the subject of properties. In this way, quality is derived from the mode of *secundo modo per se* predication insofar as it is made distinct from substance and quantity.

Aquinas says that quantity is derived from *per se* propositions in which the predicate is in the subject according to a material cause (This is the second criteria of *per se* predication). This relates to the characteristic of *per se* propositions that signify quantity in which the term of the predicate can both be the subject of another property and itself is a property in the following way: a quantity can be the material cause of another property. Insofar as quantities flow from the matter of a substance, it can be the material cause or subject of qualities whereas qualities cannot be. For this reason, Aquinas states in his *Commentary on the Physics* that "qualities are founded upon quantity."<sup>68</sup> Aquinas holds that quantity is similar to substance in that it shares the characteristic of being able to be the subject of properties.<sup>69</sup> Qualities are said to follow from the form of a substance because they are similar to substantial forms insofar as they cannot be the subject of properties.

Aquinas says that "a predicate is referred to a subject in a third way when the predicate is taken from something extrinsic to the subject."<sup>70</sup> This is directly related to *quarto modo per se* predication in the *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics I*, in which the 'per' of *per se* "may even designate a condition of extrinsic cause."<sup>71</sup> The remaining six categories are derived through this mode of predication.

no italics for 'the'

which

is a

no italics

<sup>68</sup> *In Phys.* 3.5, n. 322.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 892.

<sup>71</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 17-24: "designat etiam habitudinem causae extrinsecae."

*Quarto modo per se* may involve a relation of efficient causation between subject and predicate. The example that Aquinas gives of such a *per se* proposition is “Having been slaughtered, it died.” He says that “it is clear that on account of that which has been slaughtered, it [the animal] died, and it is not accidental that that which has been slaughtered should die.”<sup>72</sup> Although the proposition that Aquinas cites as an example is rather awkward, he says that a relation of external cause is signified in the relationship between the predicate and subject. There are three major components in this proposition: “the animal,” “having been slaughtered” and “died.” The animal is implicit in this proposition. A relationship of efficient cause is understood between the predicate and the subject: the slaughter was the efficient cause of the animal’s death. At the same time, the predicate is universally predicated of the subject: everything that has been slaughtered has died. From *per se* propositions such as these, Aquinas supposedly understands that the remaining categories can be derived. Unfortunately, Aquinas leaves us in the dark about how specific modes of *quarto modo per se* predication signify and differentiate propositions that signify one or another of the remaining ~~seven~~ <sup>six</sup> categories. However, it would seem that the additional categories are derived from *quarto modo per se* propositions in which the external causes signified in the *per se* relationship between the subject and predicate are understood to be in common to other *quarto modo per se* propositions. For example, there may be *quarto modo* propositions in which the external relationship between the subject and predicate is understood in such a way that the predicate measures the subject in some way, and then one could derive the categories of time, place and position.<sup>73</sup>

Now that I have presented Aquinas’s view, an interesting observation can be made regarding the relationship among the categories. An interesting result of Aquinas’s view concerns the question of how accidents

<sup>72</sup> *Post. An.* 1.10, lines 122–35: “Deinde cum dicit: item alio modo etc., ponit quantum modum, secundum quod hec prepositio ‘per’ designat habitudinem cause efficientis uel cuiuscunque alterius <extrinsece>. Et ideo dicit quod quicquid inest unicuique propter se ipsum, per se dicitur de eo, quod uero non propter ipsum inest alicui, per accidens dicitur, sicut cum dico: ‘Hoc ambulante coruscat’: non enim propter id quod ambulat, coruscavit, set hoc dicitur secundum accidens. Si uero quod predicatur inest subiecto propter ipsum, per se inest, ut si dicamus quod interfectum interiit: manifestum est quod propter id quod interfectum est, interiit, et non est accidens quod interfectum intereat.”

<sup>73</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 892.

no italics

can be understood to be both *per accidens* according to its metaphysical sense and, at the same time, are independent from each other as the most basic kinds of being. Accidents, although they are not *per se* beings (this is the status of substance only) they are *secundum se* in the sense that each category corresponds to a unique *per se* mode of predication. However, a discernable dependent relationship can be observed between *per se* propositions that signify accidents and those that signify substance. On one hand, 'color' is not formally reducible to the form or essence of "rational animal" because 'color' is not predicated *primo modo per se* of 'Socrates'. On the other hand, 'colored' is *secundo modo per se* predicated of 'surface.' 'Surface' is *secundo modo per se* predicated of 'body.' 'Body' is *primo modo per se* predicated of 'Socrates'. Therefore, in one way, 'color' is dependent on substance because it is the ultimate subject of predication. In another sense, 'color' is a *secundum se* being. It has 'quality' *primo modo per se* predicated of it and in this sense quality is not in any way reducible or dependent on any substance or subject insofar as it is not *primo modo per se* predicated of any substance.<sup>74</sup> This interesting characteristic of accidents is mentioned by Aquinas at the end of his discussion. He says that on one hand, "the word 'white' signifies a subject in as much as it signifies whiteness as an accident. Thus, it is necessary that as a consequence it includes in it the notion of a subject. For the being of an accident is 'to be in'.... [On the other hand] although whiteness signifies an accident, it does not do so only as an accident but according to the mode of a substance."<sup>75</sup> That which signifies according to the mode of substance is signified according to *primo modo per se* predication, which is true of "White is a color."

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IV. Conclusion

In order to understand Aquinas's justification for the list of categories, I have provided an interpretation of the text that tries to make most sense of it according to its textual context rather than focusing on only

<sup>74</sup> In "Language and Logic," E. J. Ashworth points out that a characteristic of concrete accident terms (e.g., 'white') is that they "have a double relation, on one hand to substantial things, for only substances can be literate or white, and on the other hand to the qualities of literacy or whiteness." *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (New York, 2003), pp. 73-96, p. 86.

<sup>75</sup> *In Met.* 5.9, n. 894.

an aspect of the text. For example, I present an account that tries to understand Aquinas's words at the beginning of the text that states both that all ten categories are *secundum se* and that *secundum se* is not understood to mean "substance" (being *per se*) but rather *per se* predication. This interpretation has been illuminated by an examination of the varieties of *per se* predication in Commentary on the *Posterior Analytics* I, 9 & 10. However, given the elliptical treatment of the topic by Aquinas, my task of trying to establish a more unified understanding of it within its textual context has come at the cost of engaging in a certain amount of reconstruction of Aquinas's thought on the matter.<sup>76</sup>

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