Why Are Accidents Included under Being *per se*?

"In his commentaries on Aristotle does Saint Thomas[1] always express his deepest personal thought on a given question?"[2] With this rhetorical question, Étienne Gilson sought to excuse himself from the burden of agreeing with Aquinas's statements about "being" (*esse*) in one of his Aristotelian commentaries. While such doubts reflect the very opposite of the traditional scholastic approach to Aquinas as exemplified, say, at Laval,[3] they are not, in principle, implausible. Albert wrote the following in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*: "In this work, I have said nothing according to my own view, but all the views stated are according to the statements of the Peripatetics; and if anyone wishes to prove this, let him read their books, and let them praise or reprimand them, not me."[4] Still, it must be acknowledged that we don't find any similarly general disclaimer in Aquinas's commentaries. James Doig and Joseph Owens both see Aquinas's commentary on the *Metaphysics* as primarily expressing his own philosophy

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[1] Abbreviation and citation conventions for primary sources below are as follows: Thomas Aquinas, *Opera omnia* [=Leon.] (Rome: Leonine Commission, 1882–) (cited by volume, page, and line number); Thomas Aquinas, *In duodecim libros* Metaphysicorum *Aristotelis expositio* [=*In Metaph*.], ed. M.-R. Cathala and Raymundo Spiazzi, 3rd ed. (Turin: Marietti, 1977); Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, ed. Paul Pession (Turin: Marietti, 1949); Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis* [=*In Sent*.], ed. Pierre Mandonnet and Maria Fabianus Moos, 4 vols. (Paris: Sumptibus P. Lethielleux, 1929); Albert the Great, *Opera omnia*, ed. Institutum Alberti Magni Coloniense [=Col.], 34 vols. (Monasterii Westfalorum: Aschendorff, 1951); Aristotle, *Aristoteles Latinus* [=AL], Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevii (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961) (cited by Bekker, volume, page, and line numbers); Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. W.D. Ross, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Averroës, *Averrois in librum V (Δ)* Metaphysicorum *Aristotelis commentarius* [=*In Metaph*.], ed. Ruggero Ponzalli, Scritti publ. sotto gli auspici della Società Svizzera di Scienze Morali 13 (Bern: Francke, 1971); Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima, sive, scientia divina* [=*Pp*], ed. Simone van Riet, 3 vols. (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1977).

[2] Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), 224.

[3] Cf. Ralph McInerny, *I Alone Have Escaped to Tell You: My Life and Pastimes*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 94: "The method at Laval was almost exclusively to read the texts of Thomas, and this meant chiefly the commentaries on Aristotle. This was exactly what I wanted. The approach was ahistorical … Despite what might seem the limitations of the method, I have become more and more convinced over the years that the Laval approach was the best, certainly the best for me."

[4] Albert, *Metaph*. XIII, tr.2, c.4 (Col. ed., 16/2); translated and quoted in James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Work* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 42, 416n133.

of being, not that of Aristotle—although perhaps less clearly than in his personal writings.[5] John Wippel and Leo Elders argue that the commentary on the *Metaphysics* primarily reflects how he read Aristotle and does not paint an adequate picture of his own philosophy of being.[6] With that said, Elders provides an important caveat:

> I am convinced that in composing these [Aristotelian] commentaries it was also Thomas' intention … to elaborate a philosophy of nature, metaphysics, and ethics conformed to the truth. This does not mean that Thomas substantially completes the text of Aristotle where it shows lacunae. He respects the text … But, he consistently interprets passages in the light of Aristotle's philosophy and principles, as he himself understands their implications. … [T]he medieval commentator accepts the doctrine of the author he is explaining, unless he states his differences.[7]

Aquinas's commentary on *Metaphysics* V, c. 7 (lec. 9) (the portion of Aristotle's philosophical lexicon concerned with the meaning of "being")[8] is one place where—due to the care Aquinas takes to expound the text in dynamic engagement with more recent philosophers and in light of the principles Aristotle expresses elsewhere (especially *Metaphysics* VII)—we can be confident that Aquinas is expressing both his own view and his interpretation of Aristotle. If it is not "his deepest personal thought" on the matter, it is at least the lengthiest and most detailed thing he said about it and provides crucial insights for understanding outside parallel texts.

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[5] James Doig, *Aquinas on Metaphysics: A Historico-Doctrinal Study of the Commentary on the Metaphysics* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), esp. X, 331; Joseph Owens, "Aquinas as Aristotelian Commentator," in *Saint Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies*, ed. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediæval Studies, 1974), 213–38.

[6] John Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), xix–xx; John Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas's Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*," in *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas II*, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 47 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 240–71, esp. 268–70; Leo Elders, *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors: The Philosophers and the Church Fathers in His Works* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 40, 58–59.

[7] Leo Elders, "The Aristotelian Commentaries of St. Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 63, no. 1 (2009): 29–53, at 32.

[8] On the place of *Metaph.* V within the larger work, see Ralph McInerny, "Thomas on Book Delta of the Metaphysics," in *Being and Predication: Thomistic Interpretations*, by Ralph McInerny, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 16 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 67–78.

In this paper, I will focus on just one aspect of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9—namely, Aquinas's division of "being" into being *per accidens* (itself divided into three further members) and being *per se* (which is subdivided into the ten categories). This division has inspired a fair amount of speculation in recent literature since it is both intrinsically interesting and difficult to understand. In part because past attempts to explain this passage have been focused on Aquinas's derivation of the categories, they have overlooked key evidence both from the lecture itself and from Thomas's outside works. In this paper, I will first address the deficiencies in extant accounts of his distinction between being *per se* and *per accidens* (Section 1). I will then provide an alternative reading of the text (Sections 2–3). In the conclusion, I make some—probably provocative and certainly cursory—remarks about the possible relevance of the foregoing sections to Aquinas's doctrines about the analogy of being and the distinction between essence and *esse* (Section 4).

At the outset, I should highlight something about my translations. The topic of this paper requires extensive discussion of concrete accidental terms, which can also be called "denominatives" or "paronymous terms."[9] Aquinas's standard examples of concrete and abstract accidental terms, "*album*" and "*albedo*" (literally "white" and "whiteness"), do not translate well into English since, unlike in Latin, we do not use the concrete singular term "white" (*album*) as a subject. Even with a supplied definite article (e.g., "The white is a man" [*album est homo*]), the

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[9] For further reading on the distinction between concrete and abstract accidents, see E. J. Ashworth, "Signification and Modes of Signifying in Thirteenth-Century Logic: A Preface to Aquinas on Analogy," *Medieval Philosophy & Theology* 1 (1991): 39–67, esp. 46–50; Sten Ebbesen, "Concrete Accidental Terms: Late Thirteenth-Century Debates About Problems Relating to Such Terms as '*Album*,'" in *Meaning and Inference in Medieval Philosophy: Studies in Memory of Jan Pinborg*, ed. Norman Kretzmann (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 107–74; Reinhard Huelsen, "Concrete Accidental Terms and the Fallacy of Figure of Speech," in Kretzmann, *Meaning and Inference*, 175–86; Gyula Klima, "The Semantic Principles Underlying Saint Thomas Aquinas's Metaphysics of Being," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996): 87–141, at 110–13; McInerny, *Being and Predication*, 194–216, esp. 202; Henry Desmond, ed., *The* De Grammatico *of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 79–164 (whose decision to translate "*grammaticus*" as "literate" has been an ongoing stimulus for my own reflection on how best to translate "*album*").

concrete use of "white" is grammatically awkward and could be confused for being about a race rather than a color. Moreover, we sometimes use "white" as an abstract term (e.g., "White is a color") whereas Aquinas wants to indicate that *albedo*, not *album* is a color. Nevertheless, English is equipped with a host of accidental terms—for instance, "redhead," "artist," "scholar"—that more or less approximate the way Aquinas used "*album*." Throughout this paper, I have altered Aquinas's examples with ones that better reflect his grammatical point in English. I have been strategic about periodically supplying the original Latin in parentheses or square brackets.

1. The Problem of Accidental Being

As Aquinas reads *Metaphysics* V, c. 7 (lec. 9), the text distinguishes four "ways" (*modi*) something "is called" (*dicitur*) "a being" (*ens*) or in which "being" (*ens*) "is said" (*dicitur*).[10] For convenience, we can refer to these four ways of saying "being" (*ens*) according to the order they appear in that chapter as (1) accidental being (*ens per accidens*); (2) predicamental being—that is, the being divided by the ten categories; (3) being as true (*ens sicut verum*);[11] and (4) being as divided by act and potency. In *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, Aquinas treats (2), (3), and (4) as all falling under a common title, "being by itself" (*ens per se*), such that they are collectively contrasted with (1) accidental being (*ens per accidens*). So, the primary division of the lecture is not directly into four members just listed, but into two: *ens per accidens* and *ens per se*, the latter of which somehow includes (2), (3), and (4).[12] This conclusion is supported by *De ente*, c. 1, where, paraphrasing Aristotle's text, Aquinas includes under "being *per se*" both the "being"

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[10] Cf. Aquinas, *In* VI *Metaph.*, l.2, 1171.
[11] For Aquinas using this phrase, see *In* VI *Metaph.*, l.4, 1241.
[12] Cf. Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 889; Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph.*, l.1, 1245.

divided by the categories and the "being" that signifies the truth of a proposition.[13] All of this is rather confusing since is not substance being *per se*, whereas accidents are, by definition, beings in another,[14] and is not *ens sicut verum* only an "accidental predicate"?[15] In this paper, I restrict myself to the question of why accidents are included under being *per se*, but it is hoped that it will be sufficiently clear how what I say about accidents could be extended to *ens sicut verum*.

A few authors have already broached the problem of the inclusion of accidents under *ens per se*, but they have not done so, to my mind, in a fully satisfactory way. Most focus, reasonably enough, on Aquinas's comments at the start of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9:

> He says therefore that "being" [*ens*] is said sometimes by itself [*secundum se*] and sometimes by accident [*secundum accidens*]. Note that this division of being [*ens*] is not the same as that division in which being [*ens*] is divided into substance and accident. This is plain from the fact that in latter way, being *secundum se* divides into ten predicaments, of which nine are genera of accidents. Being, therefore, is divided into substance and accident according to an absolute consideration of being, as artistry [*albedo*] considered in itself [*in se*] is called an accident, and man a substance. But being *secundum accidens*, as understood here, is taken from a comparison of accident to substance, which comparison indeed is signified by the word "is" since it is said, "The man is an artist" [*homo est albus*]. Whence this whole, "The man is an artist" [*homo est albus*], is a being *per accidens*. Whence it is clear that the division of being *secundum se* and *secundum accidens*, is based on whether something is predicated of something *per se* or *per accidens*. The division of being into substance and accident, however, is based on the fact that something in its nature is either a substance or an accident.[16]

Ralph McInerny recognizes that this explanation is *prima facie* far from helpful;[17] trying to elaborate it into something of a satisfying solution he seems to distinguish three ways accidents must be considered: (1) They are included under *ens secundum accidens* insofar as they are compared to a subject through predication (e.g., "*Homo est albus*"); (2) they are included under

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[13] Aquinas, *De ente*, c.1 (Leon. ed., 43.369:1–5).

[14] Cf. Aquinas, *In* IV *Metaph*., l.1, 542–43; l.2, 555; Aquinas, *In* I *Sent*., d.8, q.4, a.3.

[15] Cf. Aquinas, *In* I *Sent*., d.37, q.1, a.2, ad3; Aquinas, *In* II *Sent*., d.34, q.1, a.1; Aquinas, *In* III *Sent*., d.6, q.2, a.2; Aquinas, *Quodlibet* II, q.2, a.1[3], co. (Leon. ed., 25.214–15:10–91); Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 894; Aquinas, *In* X *Metaph*., l.3, 1981–1982.

[16] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 885.

[17] See McInerny, *Being and Predication*, 190–92. For the heart of McInerny's solution, see 218–23, 227–28 (which gives the heart of McInerny's solution).

ens secundum se insofar as they are each "a being" or "what is"—interpreted as a subject of existence ("what exists");[18] finally, (3) considered absolutely, accidents are in themselves an accidental being (*esse accidentale*). This solution, however, goes far beyond the evidence of Aquinas's text and imports an ill-defined notion of "existence" unnecessary to explaining it.

John Wippel addresses the problem in a footnote, where he simply gives a close paraphrase of the passage from *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 just quoted. The division between *ens secundum accidens* and *secundum se*, Wippel says, "is concerned with whether something is predicated *per se* or *per accidens*"; but the division into ten categories of substance and accident "is based on the fact that something is in its nature either a substance or accident. This is why the first member (*ens secundum se*) … is itself divided into substance and the nine accidents."[19] Wippel's close paraphrase is unobjectionable inasmuch as it doesn't depart from Aquinas's own words, but it is hardly clarifying. Is the point (1) that the distinction between *ens secundum accidens* and *ens secundum se* is based on a comparison of substance and accident or (2) that *ens secundum accidens* consists in a comparison of substance and accident, but *ens secundum se* consists in the absolute consideration in virtue of which some things are, in themselves, accidents or substances? Subsequent interpreters, as we'll see, have more or less championed one or these two options.

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[18] Bäck seems to interpret Aristotle in a similar way such that the categories are beings *per se* because they are the subjects of the "existence" signified by "being." See Allan Bäck, *Aristotle's Theory of Predication* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 59–61. Cf. Gregory Doolan, "Aquinas's Methodology for Deriving the Categories: Convergences with Albert's *Sufficientia praedicamentorum*," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 30 (2019): 655–89, at 679: "We see then that Aquinas derives the categories of accidents by analyzing how we predicate actually existing accidents that we experience of an actually existing substance that we also experience … Ironically, whereas Symington sees Aquinas as looking to instances of *per se* predication for deriving the categories, Aquinas is in fact looking to instances of *per accidens* predication! To be precise, these are accidental predications made denominatively of a real existing subject." Though this is only implicit in Doolan's text, he seems to be connecting the reason both substances and accidents are *ens per se* with the fact that they are both existing. While it is true that Aquinas characterizes all ten categories as "outside the mind" (*extra animam*) (*In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 889), this cannot be why they are all called "*ens per se*" since *ens sicut verum*, which is in the mind, is also included under *ens per se*.

[19] Wippel, *Metaphysical Thought*, 200n9.

Paul Symington takes essentially the first option, (1). A substance or accident is attributed to another *secundum accidens* or *secundum se* based on how the being attributed compares to the being to which it is attributed. Thus, he argues that the ten categories are included under *ens secundum se* because they are derived from the three modes of *per se* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10—namely, (a) that in which the predicate is in the notion of the subject (hereafter *primo modo per se*); (b) that in which the subject is in the definition of the predicate, which is its property (*secundo modo per se*); and (c) that in which the subject is an extrinsic cause of the predicate (*quarto modo per se*).[20] The primary difficulty with this solution is that Aquinas's examples to illustrate *ens secundum se* include clear instances of *per accidens* predication, such as "The man is a redhead" (*homo est albus*) and "The man is healing."[21] Moreover, Symington overlooks crucial evidence from both *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9—from Aquinas's criticism of how Avicenna understood concrete accidental terms—and *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 33, which uses the phrase "*per se*" differently than the text on which he models his interpretation (*In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10). As we'll see, the evidence from these

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[20] Paul Symington, "Establishing the Identity of Aristotle's Categories," in *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, ed. Lloyd Newton (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 119–45; Paul Symington, *On Determining What There Is: The Identity of Ontological Categories in Aquinas, Scotus and Lowe* (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2013), 15–46. When I use the phrase "*primo modo per se*" in this paper, I am referring to the order of senses of "*per se*" in *In* I *APo.*, l.10—the first, second, and fourth of which are ways of predicating. Doolan has also criticized Symington, but from another perspective, arguing that when Aquinas speaks of "those things [that] are said 'to be *secundum se*'" (*illa dicuntur esse secundum se*), "*secundum se*" modifies "*esse*" not "*dicitur*," and so, the categories should not be derived from the ways of predicating *per se*. Doolan, "Aquinas's Methodology for Deriving the Categories," 670–71. While I agree with Doolan in rejecting Symington's derivation of the categories, I do not think this argument against him works. It does not make a difference whether "*secundum se*" modifies "*dicitur*" or "*esse*" since the very point of Aquinas's lecture, as we'll see, is that every time we predicate anything (*dicitur*), by that very fact, we are doing the equivalent of saying "being" (i.e., "is").

[21] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 890, 893. Symington seems compelled to alter Aquinas's example from, "*homo est albus*," to "The surface is colored," which would belong to the second mode of perseity in *In* I *APo.*, l.10. See Symington, "Establishing the Identity of Aristotle's Categories," 140–41 (where the proposition "The surface is colored" is used to derive the category quality); 129n35 (where in the course of criticizing Wippel and Pini, he says, "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"); cf. 135, 137; Symington, *Determining What There Is*, 40–42. The problem is that the proposition, "*homo est albus*," *is* the proposition from which Aquinas derives the category quality.

complementary texts rules out Symington's interpretation of the text and clearly delineates in what way accidents both do and do not fall under *ens secundum se*.

Greg Doolan seems to take the second option—namely, (2) that *ens secundum accidens* consists in a comparison of substance and accident, but *ens secundum se* consists in the absolute consideration of substance and accident.[22] This interpretation of the text presents its own problems, however. It is arguable that, absolutely considered, whiteness, walking, and everything else in the last nine categories is not an *ens secundum se*, but an *ens secundum accidens*—that is, a being *in* or *on account of* some subject. Only the first category, absolutely considered, is a being by itself (*per se* / *secundum se*).[23] To get around this problem, Doolan seems to imply that there is a difference between the phrase "*ens per se*" as used to distinguish substance from accident (*ens in alio*) and as used commonly for both substances and accidents, considered absolutely or by themselves (*per se* / *secundum se*).[24] Doolan's implicit distinction between two senses of "*ens per se*," one distinctive of substance and one common to substances and accidents, is not right. Rather, as I will argue, accidents are included among *ens per se* not because there is a broad sense of the word "*ens per se*" common to the categories as extramentally existing things, but because the sense of "*ens per se*" proper to substance also befits accidents insofar as they are signified in the manner of substance (*per modum substantiae*), and it is so signified and

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[22] See also Doolan, "Aquinas's Methodology for Deriving the Categories," 659.

[23] Paul Symington seems to see an overlap, but distinction between the phrases "*secundum se*" and "*per se*" in "Establishing the Identity of Aristotle's Categories," 121, 131. If so, this distinction should be denied. Aquinas uses the phrases interchangeably in l.9 (cf. 886: "Deinde cum dicit 'secundum accidens[.]' Ostendit *quot modis dicitur ens per accidens*. . ."), and he identifies the phrases "*secundum se*" and "*per se*" before dividing them (*In* V *Metaph*, l.19, 1054: ". . . *quatuor modos per se*, vel secundum se"; cf. Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.10 [Leon ed., 1*/2.39–40:25–135]). As Doolan notes, Aquinas's fluctuation between "*secundum se*" / "*per se*" and "*secundum accidens*" / "*per accidens*" is an accident of the different translations he uses throughout the lecture; see Doolan, "Aquinas's Methodology," 658–59.

[24] Doolan, "Aquinas's Methodology," 659: "Here, I take Aquinas to be acknowledging the commonplace way of speaking about *substance* as *ens per se*, in contrast to accidens which are *entia in alio*. Thus taken, the qualifier *per se* indicates that a substance is the sort of thing that exists through itself, whereas an accident exists in another. In this context, however, the term *ens per se* (and its synonym *ens secundum se*) is meant to indicate something different: namely, a being considered by itself (or on its own), rather than in comparison to something else."

not as signified in the manner of accidents (*per modum accidentis* / *ut ens in alio*), that the accidents are classified among the ten categories. Put paradoxically, but correctly, it is only insofar as they are substances and not accidents that accidents are included under *ens per se*.

Although I dispute parts of both Symington's and Doolan's competing interpretations of the text—such as Symington's derivation of the categories from the three modes of *per se* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10 and Doolan's distinction between the "*ens per se*" opposed to accident (*ens in alio*) and the "*ens per se*" common to all ten categories—I will ultimately (at the end of Section 3) present two complementary alternative interpretations of the text, which, respectively, share commonalities with the theories of both authors. One interpretation, closer to that of Doolan, recognizes an absolute sense of *ens per se*, opposed to *ens per accidens*, and common to the ten categories. The other interpretation, closer to that of Symington, treats the *ens secundum se* / *per se* opposed to *ens secundum accidens* / *per accidens* as, like *ens secundum accidens* / *per accidens*, based on a comparison of subject and predicate. While both interpretations I propose cannot equally be correct *qua* interpretations—and I favor the latter one—they both express complementary aspects of a single semantic-metaphysical theory that I believe underlies the whole of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 and its parallel texts.

2. *Per se* and *Per accidens* Predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 31–33

Before offering a different interpretation of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, we must consider an overlooked parallel text. Whereas *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 distinguishes *ens per accidens* and *ens per se*, *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 31–33 distinguishes *per accidens* and *per se* predication. Nevertheless, in the former lecture, he indicates an equivalence between the ways of saying "*ens*" and of predicating: "'in as many ways as *being* [*ens*] is said'—that is, in as many ways as

something is predicated—'in so many ways is *to be* [*esse*] signified'—that is, in so many ways is something signified *to be* [*significatur aliquid esse*]."[25] In the parallel passage in the *Physics* commentary, he expresses the same point as follows: "But the modes of being [*modi essendi*] are proportional to the modes of predicating [*modis praedicandi*]. For when predicating something of another, we say that *this* is *that* [*dicimus hoc esse illud*]. Whence also the ten genera of being [*entis*] are called ten categories [*predicamenta*; literally: predicatings; predicates]."[26] Accordingly, in *In* I *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, we find three modes of *ens per accidens* that exactly match the three modes of *per accidens* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 31–33,[27] and we find all ten categories included under *ens per se* just as they are included under *per se* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 31–33.[28] Thus, the *Posterior Analytics* commentary promises to clarify the problems found in the *Metaphysics* commentary. With that said, as I will show below, there are important differences between the two parallel texts.

In the *Posterior Analytics* commentary, Aquinas initially distinguishes two modes of *per accidens* predication from each other and from *per se* predication.

> Something is predicated by accident in two ways: In one way, when the subject is predicated of an accident, as when we say, "The redhead is a man"; in another, dissimilar way, when an accident is predicated of a subject, as when we say, "The man is a redhead." And this differs from the first way since, here, when an accident is predicated of a subject, one says, "The man is a redhead," not because something else is a redhead, but because some man is himself a redhead. Yet, the proposition is still accidental [*per accidens*] because "redhead" does not belong to man according to his own definition [*rationem*] (for it is neither put in his definition nor vice versa); but when it is said, "The redhead is a man," here, this is not said because being a man [*esse hominem*] is in "redhead," but because being a man [*esse hominem*] is in the subject of "redhead," to

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[25] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 890.

[26] Aquinas, *In* III *Phys.*, l.5, 15: "Modi autem essendi proportionales sunt modis praedicandi. Praedicando enim aliquid de aliquo altero, dicimus hoc esse illud: unde et decem genera entis dicuntur decem praedicamenta" (Leon. ed., 2.114).

[27] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 885–88; Aquinas, *In* I *APo.*, l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:113–20).

[28] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 889–93; Aquinas, *In* I *APo.*, l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:121–61).

which being a redhead [*esse album*] occurs accidentally [*accidit*]. Whence this mode [of *per accidens* predication] is more remote from *per se* predication than the first.[29]

Three points should be noted here. First, although Aquinas is professedly dividing various ways of "predicating," he is at the same time dividing different ways of saying "*esse*." This becomes clear from his use of the phrases "being a man" (*esse hominem*) and "being a redhead" (*esse album*) for what is predicated in the propositions, "The redhead is a man" and "The man is a redhead," respectively. Second, by saying that the second mode of *per accidens* predication is closer to *per se* predication than the first, he implies that the word "predication" in these texts is being used not univocally, but according to an ordered equivocation (*per prius et posterius*). Third, the principle for distinction among the various kinds of predication is the causal relation of the subject with regard to the predicate. As Aquinas explains in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10, predications are called *per se* because the predicate is caused to be in the subject by (*per*) the subject itself, not by some external middle term.[30] Here, we see that, even in *per accidens* predications, the subject has a causal or explanatory role with regard to the predicate. The different ways in which the subject plays a causal role in *per accidens* predication are the source of the distinction between the various modes of *per accidens* predication. In the proposition, "The man is a redhead," where an accident is predicated of its true subject, the subject term itself signifies what is in potency to receiving the predicate. In the proposition, "The redhead is a man," however, where a substance is predicated of an accident, the predicate belongs to the

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[29] Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.31: "dupliciter autem aliquid secundum accidens predicatur: uno modo, quando subiectum predicatur de accidente, puta cum dicimus: 'Album est homo'; alio modo dissimiliter, quando accidens predicatur de subiecto, sicut cum dicitur: 'Homo est albus'; et differt hic modus a primo, quoniam *hic*, quando accidens predicatur de subiecto, dicitur: 'Homo est albus', non quia *aliquid alterum sit album*, set quia ipse homo est albus, et tamen est propositio per accidens, quia album non conuenit homini secundum propriam rationem (neque enim ponitur in diffinitione eius neque e conuerso); set quando dicitur: 'Album est homo', *hoc* non dicitur quia esse hominem insit albo, set quia esse hominem inest subiecto albi, cui scilicet *accidit esse album*; unde hic modus est magis remotus a predicatione per se quam primus" (Leon. ed., 1*/2.112–13:86–102).
[30] Cf. Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.10 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.38–39:8–24).

subject term not in virtue of a potency in the thing that the subject term signifies, but in virtue of

a potency in what happens to fall under the subject term—the man that happens to be a redhead.

These three points are confirmed a few lectures later, where Aquinas expands the modes

of *per accidens* predication to three. After laying down three modes of *per accidens* predication

and, again, using "*esse*" phrases (e.g., "being white" [*esse album*], "being wood" [*esse lignum*])

to speak about the predicate in each of these modes,[31] he concludes by saying:

> There is a difference among the three aforementioned modes [of *per accidens* predication] because, when an accident is predicated of a subject, it is not predicated by [*per*] something else than the subject; when, however, a subject is predicated of an accident or an accident of an accident, predication occurs by reason [*ratione*] of that which is subject to the term posited in the subject, of which another accident is predicated accidentally [*accidentaliter*], but the species of the subject [is predicated] essentially [*essencialiter*].[32]

Again, the principle for distinguishing the modes of *per accidens* predication is the causal role

that the subject plays in relation to the predicate. This causal role is capture by the preposition

"by" (*per*) and the ablative "by reason" (*ratione*). Both when an accident is predicated of a

substance (e.g., "The wood is white") and an accident is predicated of another accident (e.g.,

"The redhead is literate"), the predicate is predicated accidentally (*accidentaliter*), but with the

difference that, in the first case, it is predicated by reason of the subject itself, but in the second

case, by reason of what happens to fall under the subject term. When a substance is predicated of

an accident (e.g., "The redhead is a man"), however, the predicate, which signifies the species of

the substance falling under the subject term, is predicated "essentially" (*essentialiter*). Yet, the

predication is still accidental (*per accidens*) since, as we saw earlier, it is not by reason of what

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[31] Aquinas, *In* I *APo.*, l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.120–21:59–112).

[32] Aquinas, *In* I *APo.*, l.33: "Est ergo differencia in tribus modis predictis quia, cum predicatur accidens de subiecto, non predicatur per aliquod aliud subiectum; cum autem predicatur subiectum de accidente uel accidens de accidente, fit predicatio ratione eius quod subicitur termino posito in subiecto, de quo quidem predicatur aliud accidens accidentaliter, ipsa uero species subiecti essencialiter" (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:113–20).

the subject term itself signifies, but by reason of what happens to fall under that term. So, both when an accident is predicated of another accident or a substance of an accident—but not when an accident is predicated of a substance—the predication is not by reason of the subject term itself, but by reason of some substance falling under it.

Immediately after the quotation above, Aquinas makes it clear that these three modes of *per accidens* predication share the name "predication" by an ordered equivocity, and, for the sake of the argument he is advancing (which does not concern us here), he restricts the sense of the word "predication" to only those predications in which the predication is by reason of the subject itself—that is, either *per se* predications or *per accidens* predications in which an accident is predicated of a substance.

> And because in any of the aforementioned modes the name "predication" is used, and because we can *lay down names*—that is, we can restrict those [names] we have imposed—in the proof that follows, we say "to be predicated" only those that are said in such a way that [the predication] is not by reason [*ratione*] of another subject, so that, when a subject is predicated of an accident or an accident of an accident, it is not said "to be predicated," or if it is said to be predicated, it is *not* said *to be predicated simply [simpliciter], but by accident [secundum accidens]*. … He then … shows the mutual difference among those predicated *per se*. And concerning this, he does two things. First, he distinguishes the respective predicates according to diverse genera. Second, he shows the difference among the categories [*predicatorum*] … He says therefore, first that, because we only say those are predicated according to which something is predicated not by reason of another subject, but this is diversified according to the ten categories [*predicamenta*], it follows that all those that are so predicated, are predicated either [1] with regard to what it is [*in quod quid est*]—that is, in the manner of a substantial predicate [*substancialis predicati*]; or [2] in the manner of "what sort" [*qualis*] or "how much" [*quanti*] or any of the other categories … And he adds, "when one thing is predicated of another…," because, if what is predicated is not one, but many, it cannot be called a "predicate" of "what" [*quid*] or "what sort" [*quale*] simply [*simpliciter*]—but perhaps it can be called a hybrid "what sort of what" [*quale quid*], as were I to say: "A man is a redheaded animal."[33]

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[33] Aquinas, *In* I *APo.*, l.33: "Et quia in quolibet predicatorum modorum utimur nomine predicationis et sicut possumus *nomina ponere*, ita possumus ea restringere, inponamus sic nomina <in> probatione sequenti ut 'predicari' dicamus solum illud quod dicitur hoc modo, scilicet non ratione alterius subiecti, illud uero quod dicitur *illo modo*, scilicet ratione alterius subiecti, uelud cum subiectum predicatur de accidente uel accidens de accidente, non dicitur predicari, uel, si dicitur predicari, *non* dicitur *predicari simpliciter*, *set secundum accidens*. … Deinde … ostendit differenciam predicatorum per se ad inuicem. Et circa hoc duo facit: primo distinguit predicate ad inuicem secundum diuersa genera; secundo ostendit differenciam predicatorum … Dicit ergo primo quod, quia nos predicari

Having restricted the notion of "predication" to what is predicated of a substance (thereby excluding what is predicated of an accident in virtue of some underlying substance), Aquinas can say that the ten categories constitute all the ways of predicating—that is, all the ways of predicating something of a substance. The first category, substance, predicates what (*quid*) the subject is; this is what he calls the "substantial predicate." The other categories predicate "what sort" (*quale*), "how much" (*quantum*), and so on. But he adds one further restriction. The categories are not the only ways of predicating at all or even the only ways of predicating about substance, but the only ways of predicating one thing (*unum*) of one substance. After all, if we consider the ways of predicating many things (*multa*) of substances, the ways of predicating will be far greater than ten; indeed, they'll be infinite.

What it means for Aquinas to artificially restrict the word "predication" used simply (*simpliciter*) to predications in which one thing is attributed to substance, and the notion of "predication *per accidens*" to only two of the three modes of *per accidens* predication—those in which something (either a substance or accident) is predicated of an accident—is clarified by what follows in the text.

> Then … he shows the difference among the aforementioned categories [*predicatorum*]. And concerning this, he does three things: First, he proposes the difference; second, he manifests it by an example. … He says, therefore, first, that *those which signify substance* must signify, in respect of that *of which they are predicated, that truly which it is or that truly [it is] something*. This can be understood in two ways: In one way, in order to show the distinction on the part of the predicate, which either signifies the whole essence of the subject, as the definition (and this is "*that truly which it is*"), or signifies part of the essence, as a genus or difference (and this he signifies when he says "*or that truly [it is] something*"). In another, better way, [the text can be understood] as showing the distinction on the part of the subject, which sometimes is convertible with the essential

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dicimus solum illud quod predicatur non secundum aliud subiectum, hoc autem diuersificatur secundum decem predicamenta, sequitur quod omne quod sic predicatur, predicetur *aut in quod quid est*, id est per modum substancialis predicati, *aut* per modum quails uel quanti uel alicuius alterius predicamentorum … Et addit: 'cum unum de uno predicetur', quia, si predicatum non sit unum, set multa, non poterit predicatum simpliciter dici quid uel quale, set forte dicetur simul quale quid, puta si dicam: 'Homo est animal album'" (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:121–61).

predicate [*predicato essenciali*], as a defined thing with a definition (and this he signifies by "*that truly which it is*"); but sometimes it is a subjective part of the predicate, as man of animal (and this he signifies when he says "*or that truly [it is] something [aliquid]*"); for man is a certain [*aliquod*] animal.

But those that *do not signify substance, but are said of* some *subject—which* subject, indeed, is *neither truly* (i.e., essentially [*essentialiter*]) that predicate, *nor some* [subjective part] [*aliquid*] of it—all such predicates *are accidents*.

Then … he manifests the aforesaid difference by an example. And he says that, when we say: "The man is a redhead," the predicate is accidental [*accidentale*] because … to be a redhead [*esse album*] is not the essence of man … But, when it is said, "Man is an animal," perhaps, man is what truly is animal; for "animal" signifies the essence of man because this itself which is a man is essentially [*essentialiter*] an animal. And although those which do not signify substance are accidents, they are nevertheless not predicated by accident [*per accidens*]; for they are predicated of some subject, not on account of some other subject. This is plain when I say, "The man is a redhead." "Redhead" is predicated of man not by reason of the fact that some other subject is a redhead, by reason of which man is called "redhead," as was said above concerning those that are predicated by accident [*per accidens*].[34]

Here, Aquinas distinguishes what is predicated in the mode of the first category, which consists in "substantial" or "essential predicates" (*predicatum essenciale*; *substanciale predicatum*), from what is predicated according to the other categories, which are accidents (*accidencia*). Substantial predicates are predicated essentially (*essentialiter*) of the subject since they signify what Aquinas interchangeably calls its "essence" (*essencia*) or "substance" (*substancia*). If the

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[34] Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.33: "Deinde … ostendit differenciam predictorum predicatorum. Et circa hoc tria facit: primo proponit differenciam; secundo manifestat per exempla … Dicit ergo primo quod illa *que substanciam significant* oportet quod significent respect eius *de quo predicantur*, *quod uere illud est aut quod uere illud aliquid*. Quod potest dupliciter intelligi. Vno modo, ut ostendatur distinctio ex parte predicati, quod uel significat totam essenciam subiecti, sicut diffinitio; et hoc significat partem essencie, sicut genus uel differencia; et hoc significat cum dicit: 'aut quod uere illud aliquid'. Alio modo, et Melius, ut ostendatur distinctio ex parte subiecti, quod quandoque est conuertibile cum predicato essenciali, sicut diffinitum cum diffinitione; et hoc significat cum dicit: 'quod uere illud est'; quandoque uero est pars subiectiua predicati, sicut homo animalis; et hoc significat cum dicit: 'aut quod uere illud aliquid': homo enim aliquod animal est. Set illa que *non significant substanciam*, *set dicuntur de* aliquo *subiecto*, *quod* quidem subiectum *nec uere*, id est essencialiter, est *illud* predicatum, *nec aliquid* eius, omnia huiusmodi predicate *sunt accidencia*. Deinde … manifestat premissam differenciam per exempla. Et dicit quod, cum dicimus: 'Homo est albus', predicatum illud est accidentale, quia … esse album non est essencia hominis … *Set*, cum dicitur: 'Homo est animal', *forsan homo est quod uere est animal*: animal enim significat essenciam hominis, quia id ipsum quod est homo, est essencialiter animal. Et quamuis illa que *non significant substanciam* sint accidencia, non tamen per accidens predicantur: predicantur enim *de quodam subiecto* non propter aliquod aliud subiectum, puta cum dico: 'Homo est albus', predicatur 'album' de homine non ea ratione quod aliquod aliud subiectum sit album, ratione cuius homo dicatur albus, sicut supra dictum est in hiis que predicantur per accidens" (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121–22:169–217).

substantial predicate is convertible with the subject, then it is the definition of the subject, but if the subject is only a subjective part of the predicate (as man with regard to "animal"), the predicate signifies the genus of the subject. Although the other nine categories are not predicated of substance "essentially," but are each an "accidental" (*accidentale*) predicate with regard to substance, nevertheless, because of how Aquinas has artificially restricted the notion of "predication" and "predication *per accidens*," he says that the accidental categories are not predicated of substance *per accidens*, but *per se*. He is explicit that the reason is because he has restricted the notion of predication *per accidens* to two of the three modes of predication *per accidens* listed above—namely, those in which something (either an accident or a substance) is predicated of an accident in virtue of some other subject underlying the accident in the subject position. Those which are predicated *per se* or *simpliciter*, then, are all those—including accidental predicates—that are predicated of a substance.

In summary, Aquinas gives three modes of *per accidens* predication: One in which an accident is predicated of a substance, and a second and third in which a substance or accident is predicated of an accident. In the last two kinds, the reason for predication is not the significate of the subject term, but that which happens to be denominated by that subject term. After making this threefold division of *per accidens* predication, he artificially restricts the notion of "predication *per accidens*" to predication in which the predication is made by something subject to the subject term, and designates all predication—whether essentially or accidentally—of one thing of substance as "predication" *simpliciter* or *per se*. With his terminology artificially modified, he says that the ten categories constitute the ten ways of predicating *per se*—that is, of predicating one thing of a substance. The modes of predicating excluded from the categories, in other words, are the modes of predicating of an accident or of complex predication (multiple

things of one thing, multiple things of multiple things, or one thing of multiple things). The first

category is called a "substantial" or "essential predicate." To predicate of a subject in the mode

of the first category—that is, to predicate a substantial or essential predicate—is to predicate in

the first mode of perseity from *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10 (i.e., *primo modo per se*).

Aquinas variously describes the predication according to the mode of the first category as

signifying "what" (*quid*), as signifying the essence or part of the essence of the subject, and as

being predicated "essentially" (*essentialiter*). The other categories, which each constitute a

distinct way of predicating *per se* (in the technical sense relevant to lec. 33), are called

"accidental predicates" because they do not signify the essence or part of the essence of the

subject. This material is summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Per accidens Predication			*Per se* Predication = predication that is (a) of one thing; and (b) not by reason of some other subject underlying the subject term	
Accident predicated of substance* → predicate belongs to subject accidentally (*accidentaliter*) by reason of subject itself. *Sometimes artificially excluded from *per accidens* predication	Substance predicated of accident → predicate belongs to subject essentially (*essentialiter*) by reason of what happens to fall under subject.	Accident predicated of accident → predicate belongs to subject accidentally (*accidentaliter*) by reason of what happens to fall under subject.	"Substantial" / "Essential predicate" = signifies what (*quid*) the subject is (i.e., the essence of the subject or part of the essence).	"Accidental predicate" = does not signify what the subject is, but either "what kind" (*quale*), "how much" (*quantum*), etc.** **Overlaps with first mode of *per accidens* predication

3. *Ens per se* and *Ens per accidens* in *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9

The similarities between *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 33 and *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 are

extensive. As we've now seen, in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 33, Aquinas distinguished *per

accidens* predication, which included three modes, from *per se* predication, which includes the

ten categories, the last nine of which overlap with one of the modes of *per accidens* predication. In his slightly earlier commentary on *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, Aquinas makes a similar distinction between "being by accident" (*ens secundum accidens* / *per accidens*) and "being by itself" (*ens secundum se* / *per se*). *Ens per accidens* is divided into three modes that overlap with the three modes of *per accidens* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 33:

> He shows in how many ways "being" [*ens*] is said *per accidens*. And he says that they are three: Of which one is when an accident is predicated of an accident, as when it is said, "The redhead is literate." Second, when an accident is predicated of a subject, as when it is said, "The man is a redhead." Third, when a subject is predicated of an accident, as when it is said, "The redhead is a man."[35]

Likewise, just as the *Posterior Analytics* commentary divided *per se* predication according to the ten categories, nine of which, as predicated of substance, exemplify one of the three modes of *per accidens* predication, so too, in *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, *ens per se* includes all ten categories, the last nine of which are predicated of a substance accidentally.[36] As in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 33, the nine accidental categories are not all the ways of predicating period (they don't include two of the three ways of predicating *per accidens* or complex predications), but all the ways of predicating one thing of a substance.[37] While in *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, Aquinas does not explicitly state that the ten categories exclude complex predication, he is explicit they all fall within three ways in which "what is predicated can be related to a subject" (i.e., a substance), and a survey of the ten categories shows that none of them involve complex predication.[38] In the parallel derivation of the categories in the *Physics*, he comes closer to stating explicitly that the categories exclude the complex modes of predicating

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[35] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 886: "Ostendit *quot modis dicitur ens per accidens*; et dicit, quod *tribus:* quorum *unus* est, quando accidens praedicatur de accidente, ut cum dicitur, iustus est musicus. *Secundus*, cum accidens praedicatur de subiecto, ut cum dicitur, homo est musicus. *Tertius*, cum subiectum praedicatur de accidente, ut cum dicitur musicus est homo." Cf. Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:113–20).

[36] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 889; Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:121–61).

[37] Cf. Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 891–93; Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:121–61).

[38] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 891–93.

since he says they are the ways of "predicating something of another" (*Praedicando aliquid de aliquo altero*) or, put differently, of "saying that this is that" (*dicimus hoc esse illud*).[39] The ten categories are, therefore, not all the ways of predicating at all, but only all the ways of predicating one thing of one substance. One of the three modes of *per accidens* predication—the one where an accident is predicated of a substance—covers nine of the ten categories (e.g., "The man is a redhead"),[40] but the remaining two modes of *per accidens* predication are excluded from the ten categories (e.g., "The redhead is literate"; "The redhead is a man"). Of course, predication according to the mode of the first category, which signifies what the subject is (*quid*)—that is, substance (*substantia*)—is not at all included among the three modes of *per accidens* predication.[41]

Despite these similarities, Aquinas's explanation of why and to what extent the last nine categories are included under *ens per se* is different from his explanation of their inclusion among predication *per se* in the *Posterior Analytics* commentary. In that text, as we saw, the reason for including accidents—which are predicated of substance accidentally—among those that are predicated *per se* was that humans can restrict the names of words as they please, and Aristotle was, for the sake of advancing an argument, defining "predication" *simpliciter* or *per se* as predication that is not by reason of something subject to the subject term. In the *Metaphysics* commentary, in contrast, Aquinas's reason for including the nine last categories under *ens per se* is that accidents are included among the categories as highest genera not insofar as they are signified concretely (in the mode of accidents), but insofar as they are signified abstractly (in the

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[39] Aquinas, *In* III *Phys*., l.5, 15 (Leon. ed., 2.114–15).

[40] Cf. Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 890–93 ("homo est albus … Socrates est calceatus vel vestitus … homo convalescens est").

[41] Cf. Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 886 ("*dicitur ens per accidens* … cum accidens praedicatur de subiecto, ut cum dicitur, homo est musicus"); 890 ("… diversum modum praedicandi. Quia igitur eorum quae praedicantur, quaedam significant quid, idest substantiam … ut cum dicitur homo est animal, esse significat substantiam").

mode of substance)—that is, as beings in their own right (*ens per se*), subject to their own substantial predicate. This reasoning, which emerges clearly in the text of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 itself, is based firmly in how he understands the definitions of accidents throughout his career.

The key passage from *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 comes in the course of his criticizing how Avicenna understood the signification of concrete accidental terms, like "redhead," "artist," or "*album*."

> Nor is it true what Avicenna says: that the aforementioned [categories], which are in the genera of accidents, principally signify substance, and secondarily [*per posterius*] accident, as when I say "redhead" and "artist." "Artist" [*album*], as it is said in the predicaments, signifies quality only. Now, the name "artist" signifies a subject by implication [*ex consequenti*] inasmuch as it signifies artistry [*albedo*] in the mode of an accident [*per modum accidentis*]. Whence, it is right that it includes a subject by implication in its definition [*ratio*]; for the being of an accident is to be in [*inesse*]. "Artistry," however, also signifies an accident, but not in the mode of an accident, but in the mode of a substance [*per modum substantiae*]. Whence in no way does it consignify a subject. If it principally signified a subject, then the aforesaid accidents would not be put by the Philosopher under being *secundum se*, but under being *secundum accidens*. For this whole, which is a human artist, is a being *secundum accidens*, as was said.[42]

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[42] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph.*, l.9, 894: "Nec est verum quod *Avicenna* dicit, quod praedicata, quae sunt in generibus accidentis, principaliter significant substantiam, et per posterius accidens, sicut hoc quod idco album et musicum. Nam album ut in praedicamentis dicitur, solam qualitatem significat. Hoc autem nomen album significat subiectum ex consequenti, inquantum significat albedinem per modum accidentis. Unde oportet, quod ex consequenti includat in sui ratione subiectum. Nam accidentis esse est inesse. Albedo enim etsi significet accidens, non tamen per modum accidentis, sed per modum substantiae. Unde nullo modo consignificat subiectum. Si enim principaliter significaret subiectum, tunc praedicata accidentalia non ponerentur a Philosopho sub ente secundum se, sed sub ente secundum accidens. Nam hoc totum, quod est homo albus, est ens secundum accidens, ut dictum est." Here, Aquinas is drawing on a criticism of Avicenna already found in Averroës's text, though Averroës's argument draws on textual evidence peculiar to the Arabic translation. Averroës, *In* V *Metaph.*, com.14 (Ponzalli ed., 130–31:81–94). Averroës's equates "is healthy" (*homo est sanus*) and "is in health" (*homo est in sanitate*). This is based on the Arabic translation of Aristotle's text 1017a28–29. In the *Media* and *Moerbecana* translations, the point is not about the equivalence of denominative (concrete) predicates and abstract ones linked to the subject by a preposition "in." Rather, the point is about the equivalence of indicative verbs (*homo conualescit*) to the word "is" plus their participial form (*homo conualescens est*). The *Media* and *Moerbecana* translations, here, accurately reflect Aristotle's text (ἄνθρωπος ὑγιαίνων ἐστὶν … ἄνθρωπος ὑγιαίνει) (Ross ed.). Nevertheless, it suffices for both Averroës and Aquinas to base their case against Avicenna, as they implicitly do, on *Metaph.* VII, c.5, 1030b29–1031a1, where Aristotle notes that there would be an infinite regression in the essence of a "snub" if its essence included its subject (AL 25/3.139:207–15). Like Aquinas and Averroës, Albert rejects Avicenna's view that concrete accidental terms principally signify substance, saying instead that they principally signify an accident. He uses the same proof text as Averroës—one ignored by Aquinas—but does not use the *Arabica* translation and, therefore, interprets it differently than Averroës. In the context of his commentary, this argument is used to show that "is" (*esse*), when it is used to predicate an accidental denominative, signifies that accident (e.g., *quale*), not the being of substance (*esse substantiae*). Thus, as in Aquinas's reading of the passage, "*esse*" signifies as many things as there are predicates (i.e., categories). See Albert, *In* V *Metaph.*, tr.1, c.11 (Col. ed. 16/1.234:33–43). The text all three commentators seem to be criticizing in Avicenna is *Pp*, tr.3, c.3: "Unde unum est substantia, unitas vero est

So, both the concrete word "artist" (*album*) and the abstract one "artistry" (*albedo*) signify the same accident, artistry, but they do so in different ways. The first signifies it in the mode proper to an accident, as in a subject (*inesse*)—signifying the subject itself *ex consequenti.* But the second signifies an accident in the mode of substance—that is, as if it were not in a subject. It is not as signified concretely as an accident, but as signified abstractly as if it were a substance that accidents are called being *per se*—either as being subject in their own right to substantial predicates (e.g., "*Artistry* is a habit") or as being predicated substantially (e.g., "Artistry *is a habit*").

To understand this more fully, we need to consider the way in which accidents are defined. In *De ente*, c. 6, which is dedicated to the topic of how accidents are defined, Aquinas explains that "accidental names are not put into a category as species or genera when said concretely (as 'redhead' or 'artist') except by reduction, but only insofar as they are signified in the abstract (as 'redheadedness' and 'artistry')."[43] So, it is abstractly signified accidents which constitute the various categories, not concretely signified ones. The reason becomes clear a few lines later, when Aquinas explains the different ways in which the subject of an accident is included in its definition when abstractly and concretely signified.

> And because proper passions are caused out of the proper principles of a subject, for this reason the subject is put in the definition of them in place of a difference if defined in the abstract—according to which they are in a genus properly—as it is said that snubness is the curvature of the nose. But on the contrary, if their definition is taken according as they are said concretely, it follows that the subject will be put in their definition as a genus, because then they are defined in the manner of composite substances in which the notion of the genus is taken from matter, as when we say the snub is a curved nose.[44]

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intentio quae est accidens; accidens autem quod est unum de quinque, quamvis sit accidens secundum hanc intentionem, potest tamen concedi esse substantia; sed hoc non potest concedi nisi cum accipitur compositum, sicut album" (van Riet ed., 1.117–18:86–90).

[43] Aquinas, *De ente*, c.6: "nomina accidentalia concretiue dicta non ponuntur in predicamenta sicut species uel genera, ut album uel musicum, nisi per reductionem, sed solum secundum quod in abstracto significantur, ut albedo et musica" (Leon. ed., 43.381:120–23).

[44] Aquinas, *De ente*, c.6 (Leon. ed., 43.381:140–52).

The ten categories are, of course, the ten highest genera. It is no wonder, then, that only abstract accidents are properly in a category whereas concrete ones are so only reductively. The genus of concretely signified accidents is taken from their subject so that they are reductively in the category substance. In contrast, the substance underlying abstractly signified accidents is put in the place of a difference while their genus can be taken from something proper to themselves, such as "measure" or "disposition."[45] "Redhead" is reductively in the category substance, but "redheadedness" is properly in the category quality. A similar point is made elsewhere, where Aquinas notes that, in the concretely signified accident, the subject is included directly as a genus (*in recto quasi genus*), but the accident itself is treated as a difference (*quasi differencia*); in contrast, in abstractly signified ones, the subject is included obliquely as a difference (*in obliquo quasi differencia*) whereas the accident itself is included directly as a genus (*in recto quasi genus*).[46] Now, we already saw in *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, that it is concretely signified accidents that are signified *per modum accidentis*—that is, in the way accidents actually are outside the mind—whereas abstract ones are signified *per modum substantiae*. This point is further clarified in *In* VII *Metaphysics*, lec. 1, where Aquinas argues that accidents are not beings *secundum se*. "Although," he says, "the mode of being [*modus essendi*] of accidents is not that they be *per se*, but only that they be in something [*insint*], the intellect can understand them *per se* since it is its nature to divide those which are by nature conjoined."[47] But by understanding accidents abstractly—that is, as beings in themselves (*secundum se*), separate from substance— they seem to be non-beings rather than beings since it belongs to their nature not to be in

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[45] Cf. Aquinas, *De ente*, c.6 (Leon. ed., 43.381:132–38).
[46] Aquinas, *In* I *PH*, l.4 (Leon. ed., 1*/1.20–21:61–78); cf. Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.10 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.39:55–64).
[47] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.1, 1254, 1253.

themselves, but in a subject.[48] Clearly it is only as signified abstractly as if they were substances, which they are not, that accidents are included among the categories and, therefore, *ens per se*. Signified concretely, as they really are outside the mind, they imply a subject and, thus, are included among *ens per accidens*.

As Aquinas notes, the extension of the name "being" (*ens*) to accidents is connected to the extension of the notion of essence to them. As he says in *De ente*, c. 1, "Because 'being' is said first and absolutely of substances and later as in a certain respect of accidents, it follows that essence also is properly and truly in substances, but in accidents in a way and in a certain respect."[49] The same point is made even more clearly in *In* VII *Metaphysics*. He begins his commentary on the book by noting that he is leaving aside being *per accidens* and *ens sicut verum* and treating of being *per se* as divided by the ten categories, not as divided by act and potency—the latter topic being left until book nine.[50] For treating of being divided by the categories, however, he seems to think a discussion of substance suffices: "That which is first among beings as being simply and not in a certain respect sufficiently demonstrates the nature of being [*naturam entis*]; but substance is such. Therefore, it suffices for knowing the nature of being to determine of substance."[51] After initially arguing that accidents do not have a that-which-they-are (*quod quid est*) or definition, he then qualifies this claim:

> Definition, like that-which-it-is, is said in many ways. For that-which-it-is in one way signifies substance and *this* something. In another way, it signifies any of the other categories, as quality and quantity and the others. But as being is predicated of all the categories, not indeed in the same way, but first of substance and later of the rest of the categories, so also that-which-it-is befits substance simply [*simpliciter*], "but the others in another way"—that is, in a certain respect [*secundum quid*]. … For we ask of what-kind

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[48] Cf. Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.1, 1253, 1256.
[49] Aquinas, *De ente*, c.1 (Leon. ed., 43.370:53–57).
[50] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.1, 1245.
[51] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.1, 1246: "Illud quod est primum inter entia quasi ens simpliciter et non secundum quid, sufficienter demonstrat naturam entis: sed substantia est huiusmodi; ergo sufficit ad cognoscendum naturam entis determinare de substantia."

or quality, "What is it?" as "What is whiteness [*albedo*]?" and we respond that it is a color. Whence it is plain that quality is among the number of those in which there is a that-which-it-is.[52]

So, because we can signify accidents abstractly (e.g., "artistry," "*albedo*") in the mode of substance, we can ask not only of substance, but also of accidents, "What is it?" and respond with a definition or by saying what it is (*quod quid est*). Nevertheless, Aquinas distinguishes the *quod quid est* of accidents from that of substance as a *quid* in a certain respect (*quid secundum quid*) from an absolute or simple *quid* (*quid absolute*; *quid simpliciter*).

> There is not in quality a what-it-is simply [*simpliciter*], but a what-it-is-of-quality. For when it is asked of a man what he is, and it is answered that he is an animal. The "animal," because it is in the genus of substance, not only indicates what man is, but even signifies what absolutely [*quid absolute*]—that is, substance. But when it is asked what whiteness is, and it is answered, a color, although this signifies the what-it-is of whiteness, it nevertheless does not signify what absolutely, but what kind [*quale*]. And for this reason, quality does not have a what simply [*quid simpliciter*], but in a certain respect. For a "what" is found in quality this way as when we say that color is the "what" of whiteness. And this "what" is more "substantial" than "substance."[53]

Now, insofar as there is a definition or what-it-is of accidents, it could make sense to speak of a "substance" of accidents since "substance" means, according to one acceptation, what a thing is.[54] Indeed, in *In* III *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 3, a. 2, Aquinas says essentially the same thing as we saw in the passage just quoted, but uses the word "substance" (*substantia*) in place of the word "*quid*": "that which is an accident in itself can be in some way [*aliquo modo*] the substance of a thing [*substantia alicui*], as color [is the substance] of whiteness."[55] Yet, because the "what" (*quid*) or "substance" (*substantia*) of an accident is not a *quid* of anything absolutely or simply, but only

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[52] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph.*, l.4, 1331.

[53] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph.*, l.4, 1333.

[54] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph.*, l.2, 1270: "substantia ad minus dicitur *quatuor* modis … Quorum quidem modorum *primus* est secundum quod 'quod quid erat esse', idest quidditas, vel essentia, sive natura rei dicitur eius substantia"; cf. Aquinas, *Quodlibet* IX, q.3, a.1, ad1: "…de substancia accidentis" (Leon. ed., 25/1.99:77) (reading Γ variant instead of "*essencia*").

[55] Aquinas, *In* III *Sent.*, d.6, q.3, a.2, co.: "quod est accidens in se, possit esse aliquo modo substantia alicui, ut color albedini."

the *quid* or *substantia* of some additional determination to some underlying thing, Aquinas

prefers to call the *quid* or *substantia* of an accident not a "substance," but only "substantial."[56]

Since accidents, taken in abstraction from their proper subject as if they were themselves

substances subsisting *per se*, can have something predicated of them substantially, they are, so

considered, included among beings *per se* subject to their own substantial predicate—that is,

primo modo per se predicate.

Having now looked at Thomas's criticism of Avicenna's understanding of accidental

being in *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 and at *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 31–33's parallel division of

predication into *per accidens* and *per se* varieties, we are now prepared to understand St.

Thomas's obscure remarks at the start of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, which, as we saw above, have

provided the basis for most attempts to explain his inclusion of accidents under *ens per se*.

In those remarks, as we saw above, he distinguishes the division of "*ens*" into *ens*

secundum se and *ens secundum accidens* from the division of "*ens*" into the ten categories of

substance and accident. "Being [*ens*] … is divided into substance and accident according to an

absolute consideration of being," and this division "is based on the fact that something in its

nature is either a substance or an accident," but the division of "being" (*ens*) into *ens secundum*

accidens and *secundum se* in lec. 9, he says, is "taken from a comparison of accident to

substance" and "is based on whether something is predicated of something *per se* or *per*

accidens."[57]

It should now be clear that *ens secundum accidens* consists in the three ways in which

one thing can be predicated of another *per accidens*—either accidentally (*accidentaliter*) by

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[56] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.4, 1333: "dicimus quod color est quid albedinis. Et hoc quid, magis est substantiale quam substantia."

[57] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 885.

reason of the substance underlying the accidental subject term (e.g., "The redhead is an artist"), essentially (*essentialiter*) by reason of the substance underlying the accidental subject term (e.g., "The redhead is a man"), or accidentally by reason of the substance signified directly by the subject term (e.g., "The man is a redhead").

Given the analysis of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9, above, I see two distinct, but complementary ways of understanding *ens secundum se* / *per se* depending on whether we take "*ens*" in this phrase as a predicated participle, which functions as a circumlocution for the indicative verb "is" (*est* / *est ens*) or as a noun, taken in the subject position ("a being"). Either (1) *ens sicut verum* just consists in an absolute consideration of what is not predicated at all, but is signified in the manner of a substance (i.e., an *ens per se*), or else (2) it consists in a substantial predication (=*est per se*) of something considered in the manner of a substance, as when we say, "Man is an animal" or "Color is a quality." Aquinas is not clear which of these two ways of interpreting *ens secundum se* he intends, but the second is closer to how Aristotle himself seems to be using the word "*ens*," and, in any case, they are fundamentally compatible and mutually illuminating.

(1) In the first case, "*ens*" in "*ens secundum se*" is taken as a noun for something signified in the mode of a substance or ultimate subject and, therefore, susceptible of substantial predicates. This includes all ten categories insofar as the last nine are considered abstractly, not concretely, and are, therefore, able to constitute a subject of substantial predication in their own right—a subject of *primo modo per se* predicates. So, for instance, in this way, "Man" in "Man is an animal" and "Color" in "Color is a quality" are both beings *per se* because they are signified in the mode of substance—that is, as an ultimate subject of predication.

(2) In the second case, "*ens*" in "*ens secundum se*" is taken participially for those *primo modo per se* (i.e., substantial) predicates themselves, such as "is an animal," "is a quality," "is a certain amount," and so on, which are attributed to whatever is considered in the mode of an ultimate subject—whether it is really a substance or it is an accident signified like one. So, for instance, in this way, "is an animal" and "is a quality" are beings *per se* in the propositions, "Man is an animal" and "Color is a quality," since they both are predicated in the mode of substance. Put differently, they signify what (*quid*) the subject is, are predicated *primo modo per se*, and are substantial predicates. Put differently again, they are the subject's being *per se* such-and-such, not its being *per accidens* such-and-such.

Both ways of taking "*ens secundum se*"—whether as a subject or as a substantial predicate—could well be intended by Aquinas since they are both contradistinguished from *ens secundum accidens* and include all ten categories. The first way shares more in common with Doolan's reading of the text, the second with Symington's. Nevertheless, neither solution draws on Doolan's distinction between two senses of "*ens per se*"—one proper to the first category and one common to all[58]—or on Symington's attempt to derive the categories from the three modes of *per se* predication in *In* I *Posterior Analytics*, lec. 10.

Regardless of how one takes "*ens secundum se*," the important point is that the division of "*ens*" into substance and accident involves the definition of various predicates as either substantial (signifying "what" [*quid*]) or accidental (signifying how much [*quantum*], what sort [*quale*], and so on). But to define what is in fact an accidental predicate, we must not consider it

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[58] Of course, I do draw my own, quite different distinction between two senses of "*ens per se*"—namely, that in which this phrase is taken nominally for a subsisting subject and that in which it is taken participially for a *primo modo per se* predicate. Yet, both ways of taking this phrase are proper to the first category, while also being extended to accidents insofar as they are signified or predicated in the mode of substance (*per modum substantiae*).

as actually predicated (e.g., "*Homo* est albus"; "Man *is a redhead*"), but rather as a certain subsisting thing susceptible of substantial predicates. Absolutely considered in this way, accidents are considered in the manner of subjects (*ens* [noun] *per se*), and what is predicated of them (*ens* [participle]*, esse = est*) is not accidental (*accidentale*)—not predicated accidentally (*per accidens*); rather, what is predicated of them is substantial (*substantiale*, *essentiale*)—that is, belonging to them *primo modo per se* and as signifying their substance (*substantia*) in the sense of what they are (*quid*). When we define "five-foot" as an accidental predicate signifying how much (*quantum*) a substance happens to be, we do not predicate of five-footedness how much (*quantum*) it happens to be. Rather, we state what (*quid*) it is—that is, its substance. The principle for division between *ens per accidens* and *per se* along with both possible options for interpreting "*ens per se*" are represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

	(A) Ens per accidens			(B) Ens per se	
Being outside the mind	(i) Accidental denominative predicated of accidental denominative. E.g., "The redhead is an artist."	(ii) Accidental denominative predicated of substance. E.g., "The man is a redhead."	(iii) Substance predicated of accidental denominative. E.g., "The redhead is a man."	Option (1): Ens per se = ultimate subject of predication (i.e., something signified in the manner of a substance / ultimate subject)	Option (2): Ens per se = what is predicated *primo modo per se* (i.e., as a substantial predicate / according to the mode of predicating of the first category / as the substance, essence, or *quid* of the subject).
				E.g., "*Socrates* is"; "*Man* is"; "*Color* is";[59] "*Man* is an animal"; "*Artistry* is a habit."	E.g., "Socrates *is*"; "Man *is*"; "Color *is*"; "Man *is an animal*"; "Artistry *is a habit*."

4. Conclusions

Let us conclude by considering the relevance of what was said above to Aquinas's understanding of "*esse substantiale*" and to his broader philosophical thought. I'll first relate

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[59] On these first three examples, see Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 896; Aquinas, *In* II *Sent*., d.34, q.1, a.1.

what was said above to a textual difficulty in some of Aquinas's personal writings and, then, relate it to two central doctrines in his metaphysics.

Prima facie, there is a curious discrepancy between the outside texts where Aquinas cites *Metaphysics* V, c. 7's distinction between the being that is divided by the categories and *ens sicut verum*. In one place, he says that the "being" (*ens*), which is divided by the ten categories and is found in the sentences, "Man is" and "Color is," is a "substantial predicate," which answers the question "What is it?" (*quid est*).[60] In other places, he says that the "being" divided by the categories includes both "substantial being" (*esse substantiale*) and "accidental being" (*esse accidentale*), corresponding, respectively, to the first and last nine categories.[61] *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9 helps us to see that there is no contradiction between these texts. In the first case, an accident is explicitly being considered abstractly ("color"), and Aquinas is describing "is" (*ens*) as predicated of this abstractly considered accident in order to signify its quiddity (*quid est*), which, relative to the accident, is no accident, but rather its substance. In the second case, however, Aquinas is considering accidents as they are predicated of a substance. In this case, they are, for that substance, its being accidentally a certain way (*esse accidentale*), not its being substantially what it is (*esse substantiale*). In short, if we consider accidents abstractly, then the being attributed to them is, relative to them, a substantial predicate (*esse substantiale*), and the ten categories consist exclusively in *esse substantiale*, but if we consider accidents as the being of some underlying subject, then the ten categories include both *esse substantiale* and *esse accidentale*.

Aquinas takes the former perspective in a much-cited—though, I think, not well understood—portion of *In* V *Metaphysics*, lec. 9. In the course of distinguishing the "being" that

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[60] Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d.34, q.1, a.1. Cf. Aquinas, *In III Sent.*, d.6, q.2, a.2.
[61] Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d.37, q.1, a.2, ad3; *Quodlibet* IX, q.2, a.2[3], co. (Leon. ed., 25/1.94–95:31–66).

is divided by the categories and which is "outside the mind" (*extra animam*) from the "being,"

which is "only in the mind" (*tantum in mente*) and consists in the truth of a proposition,[62] he

describes the former in the following way: "But the being [*esse*] that anything has in its nature is

substantial. And, for this reason, when it is said 'Socrates is,' if that 'is' is taken in the first way,

it is about a substantial predicate. For 'being' [*ens*] is superior to beings [*entium*], as 'animal' to

'man.'"[63] Let us be clear what Aquinas means when he calls the "is" (*ens*, *esse = est*) divided by

the categories—that is, *esse substantiale*—a "substantial predicate." As we've already seen, in

the context of the lecture, the nine categories of accident are included under *ens per se* because

accidents are classified within a category only insofar as they are considered abstractly such that

the category (i.e., genus) itself can be predicated of them as what they are definitionally—that is,

their *quid* or, put differently, their *ens* (read as "is") *per se*. In the parallel text, *In* I *Posterior*

Analytics, lec. 33, as we saw, Aquinas explicitly defined a "substantial predicate" as what is

predicated in the manner of the first category as signifying the what-it-is (*quod quid est*) of the

subject.[64] This understanding of the phase "substantial predicate" is also reiterated in Aquinas,

De spiritualibus, a. 11, where he classifies Porphyry's genus, species, and difference as

substantial predicates and defines a substantial predicate as what, like a property, "is caused by

[*ex*] the essential principles of the species," but, unlike a property or accident, signifies "the

essence of a thing" or "part of the essence."[65]

Let us now briefly consider the relevance of Aquinas's characterization of *esse*

substantiale as a "substantial predicate" to two central theses in his metaphysics: the analogy of

being and the essence-*esse* distinction.

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[62] Cf. Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 889.
[63] Aquinas, *In* V *Metaph*., l.9, 896.
[64] Aquinas, *In* I *APo*., l.33 (Leon. ed., 1*/2.121:121–61).
[65] Aquinas, *De spiritualibus*, a.11 (Leon. ed., 24/2.119–20:243–86).

The analogy of being. In a passage we already quoted, Aquinas remarks: "That which is first among beings as being simply and not in a certain respect sufficiently demonstrates the nature of being [*naturam entis*]; but substance is such. Therefore, it suffices for knowing the nature of being to determine of substance."[66] We can now see the full force of this remark. The analogy of "is" (*ens*) across the ten categories is precisely an analogy of substance—that is, of *quid* or *esse substantiale*.[67] What is in the first category has a *quid* simply, but what falls in the other categories does so precisely by being considered *per modum substantiae* and, thus, as subject to its own substantial predicate or *quid*.[68] This explains why the book of the *Metaphysics* devoted to the ten categories (VII [Δ]), apart from its discussion of whether accidents have an essence, exclusively concerns the first category.

*The essence-*esse *distinction*. In a well-known passage in *In* IV *Metaphysics*, lec. 2, Aquinas disputes Avicenna's claim that *esse* is an accident of substance by saying: "although the being [*esse*] of a thing is other than its essence, it is nevertheless not something superadded in the manner of an accident, but as constituted through the principles of essence."[69] What he calls "*esse*," here, he had called "the act of being" (*actus essendi*) earlier in the lecture.[70] He makes a similar point in his commentary on Boethius's *De trinitate*, where he says that the *esse* of a thing "results from a congregation of the principles of a thing in composites or is concomitant on the

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[66] Aquinas, *In* VII *Metaph*., l.1, 1246.

[67] For similar views, cf. Domenic D'Ettore, *Analogy after Aquinas: Logical Problems, Thomistic Answers*, Thomistic Ressourcement 11 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019), esp. 99–100, 108.

[68] Thus, there is a four-term analogy between a substance and its *esse substantiale*, on the one hand, and the nine accidental categories signified in the mode of substance and their respective *esse substantiale*, on the other. There is simultaneously, however, an analogy of reference to one subject (*ad unum subiectum*) across the ten categories both inasmuch as accidents signified abstractly only have their own *esse substantiale secundum quid* by reference to the substances of which they are principles and inasmuch as a substance's being accidentally in this or that way (*esse accidentale*) is only called its "being" by addition to that substance's first being what it is (*esse substantiale*).

[69] Aquinas, *In* IV *Metaph*., l.2, 558.

[70] Aquinas, *In* IV *Metaph*., l.2, 553.

simple nature itself as in simple substances."[71] This language also appears in *In* III *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 2, a. 2, where he describes "the act of being" (*actus entis*) as "resulting from the principles of a thing" (*resultans ex principiis rei*), which seem in turn to be identified with the essence itself, which is viewed as a sort of "potency or habit" for the act of being.[72] Later in the article, the act of being is identified with substantial being (*esse substantiale*). In *Quodlibet* IX, q. 2, a. 2 [3], he identifies "the proper substantial being of the supposit" (*proprium esse suppositi substanciale*) with "the being [*esse*] that results from [*ex*] those out of which its unity is integrated."[73]

Siger of Brabant wondered if Aquinas, in criticizing Avicenna, was affirming and denying the same thing,[74] but what he has said about *esse substantiale* or the act of being in these texts is no different from what we have seen him say about "substantial predicates" generally in *De spiritualibus*, a. 11. Although in *primo modo per se* predications, the subject and predicate terms both signify the same thing, in virtue of Aquinas's causal understanding of the subject-predicate relation, there is a distinction between the substance as signified by a subject term and as signified by a predicate term since the substance as predicated "is caused by [*ex*] the essential principles of the species"—that is, is caused to be predicated by the essence or essential principles as signified by the subject term. Although the substantial predicate is, by way of our mode of signifying it, an effect of and, therefore, distinct from the subject as its act, the substantial predicate is obviously not an accident of the subject since, apart from our mode of signifying it, it is the same thing. Similarly, *esse* (i.e., *esse substantiale*, *actus essendi*) may result from (*ex*) the principles of essence, but it is no accident. If we are talking about the *esse* with

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[71] Aquinas, *SBdT*, q.5, a.3, co. (Leon. ed., 50.147:101–5).
[72] Aquinas, *In* III *Sent.*, d.6, q.2, a.2.
[73] Aquinas, *Quodlibet* IX, q.2, a.2[3], co. (Leon. ed., 25/1.95:61–63; cf. 94:41–46, where *esse substantiale* is associated with "the act of being" [*actus entis*]).
[74] Siger*, Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, ed. Armand Maurer, Philosophes Médiévaux 25 (Louvain-La-Neuve: Editions de l'institut superieur de philosophie, 1983), intr., q.2 (398:15–17).

which created substances are composed (*esse substantiae*), this is *esse substantiale*—that is, the *primo modo per se* or substantial predicates proper to those substances—and such substantial predicates are obviously not accidents, except metaphorically (*per quamdam similitudinem*).[75]

Of course, in dipping into Aquinas's doctrine of the analogy of being and of the composition of creatures with *esse*, I go well beyond the scope of this paper and leave many obvious objections unraised and unanswered. But I hope I have suggested a way in which reading Aquinas's Aristotelian commentaries and his outside texts as mutually illuminating may clarify otherwise confusing aspects of his outside works and even yield significant—if surprising—conclusions.

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[75] Cf. Aquinas, *De potentia*, q.5, a.4, ad3.