

## THE THIRD AND FIFTH CHAPTER OF ARISTOTLE'S *CATEGORIAE* FROM A PREJUDICATIVE POINT OF VIEW

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**Abstract:** *The present paper states a new point of view concerning Aristotle's *Categoriae*, i.e. the prejudicative point of view. Starting from some distinctions Aristotle himself made among different types of relations among words, thoughts, and things, the author proves that prejudicative forms were largely used by Aristotle, even if he never gave them such a name. The main achievement following from the discovery of prejudicative relations is represented by a deeper clarification of the meaning of Aristotle's logic, but also a proof that his works are still to be researched upon.*

**Keywords:** *statement, predicate, category, prejudicative, antepredicament.*

“When something is expressed (*kategoretai*) about something else as about a subsistent (*hos kath'hypokeimenou*), all that is uttered (*legetai*) about what is expressed (*kategoroumenon*) will be uttered (*rethestai*) about the subsistent, too”<sup>1</sup>.

The quoted text raises translation problems. Here one sees three verbs with close meanings: *kategoreo*, *lego*, and *eiro*. At first, all of them mean *to be uttered*, to say, to speak, and to tell. Only *kategoreo* has particular significations, as: to speak against (*kata*), to accuse, to ascribe, and to express something face to something else or somebody else. In a logical context, one cannot adopt the juridical significations of the word, but here, in a prejudicative context, one must nevertheless avoid the judicative-propositional significations of *kategoreo*, respectively: to state or to affirm, from which the statement (*apophansis*) results, and affirmation (*kataphasis*). Adopting any of these ones automatically turns the context from prejudicative to propositional. If one adds the translation of *hypokeimenon* with *subject* and that of *kategoroumenon* with *predicate*, we find ourselves in the middle of propositional analysis.

However, in the very beginning of the quoted text there is a particle (*hos* = as) whose importance is fundamental. It specifies the domain of the discussion, even independently from the general framework stated in the first two chapters. “When something is expressed about something else *as* about a subsistent”, clearly has this meaning: that about which one expresses something is *not* subsistent, and also *that which is expressed* is similar with (or *as*) *that which is uttered*. Nevertheless, this is unboundedly uttered, without making any statement, thus without making an affirmation or a negation, and, respectively, something true or false.

To avoid the term *predicate*, which has a clear propositional and judicative significance, one could use the term *attribute*.

The text continues with an example: “therefore, *man* is expressed about a *certain man*, and *living being* about *man*, thus about a *certain man* one will state *living being* as well; because a *certain man* is both *man* and *living being*”<sup>2</sup>.

We are already acquainted with this example, at least partly. Therefore, we know that both *man* and *living being* are uttered about a *certain man*, through the formulae *dicitur de* and *non inest*. In these cases, *the certain man* is a subsistent which is not

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<sup>1</sup> *Categ.*, 3, 1 b, 10-12.

<sup>2</sup> *Categ.*, 3, 1 b, 12-15.

uttered, while *man* and *living being* are. In the new context, the subsistent is the same, but we find out that instead of *legetai* one can also say *kategoretai* and that *living being*, at its turn, is uttered about *man* as about a subsistent. In other words, between *living being* and *man* also exists the *dicitur de* relation, and that of *non inest*, too.

So far, we knew, from the first chapter, that *living being* is the notion of the substance corresponding to the name *man*, this implying that only *man* would be uttered about, since it is a name. Now it is proved that also the notion or definition, the proximate genus of the name *man*, respectively, is uttered about *man*. Moreover, if it is uttered about *man*, then it is uttered about a *certain man*, since *man* is uttered about a *certain man*, too.

The importance of this text resides in the fact that it introduces a new situation, corresponding to the *dicitur de, et non est in* case, characterised by: (a) *dicitur de* can take place between two entities of the same antepredicamental type; (b) in this situation the subsistent is missing; (c) the relation happens such as one of the entities is uttered about the other one *as* about a subsistent; (d) the entity which is uttered about a subsistent is named *legomenon* or *kategoroumenon*; (e) thus, in the new situation, a *legomenon* is uttered about another *legomenon*, an *expression* is uttered about another *expression*, respectively, but such as they remain unbounded, without making neither an affirmation or negation, nor something true or false; (f) finally, the expression that is uttered about another expression as about a subsistent will also be uttered about the subsistent, which suggests a *transitivity* of the *dicitur de* relation, from *expression – expression* to *expression – individual thing*.

The most important is remark (e), whose right interpretation is rendered more difficult by the continuation of Aristotle's example. About a *certain man* both *man* and *living being* are uttered, because *the certain man* IS both *man* and *living being*. But IS represents the very logical link, the *copula* between *the certain man* and *man*, which determines the succession of words "the certain man is a man" or "the certain man is a living being" to form an authentic judgement or sentence, that meaning to abandon the prejudicative domain. Nevertheless, one can consider that here, as in first chapter, Aristotle does not intend to illustrate anything through judicative forms, but through their significations. Aristotle means "*Man being* is said about a *certain man*, because the certain man is man" and not that "*Man* is uttered about *the certain man*" because "The certain man is man". In other words, because "the essence of a certain man is that of being man" and not because the sentence "the certain man is man" takes place.

But then, how could one illustrate the *dicitur de* relation between two expressions, such as they do not form a statement? To do this, we must come back to the *Wort-Sache* relation. It presupposes an individual thing and the pronunciation of its denomination, i.e. a human being and the pronunciation of its name. The former is perceived (seen, heard) – *individuale sentitur*, the latter is uttered (*nominale dicitur*). In the third chapter appears the *Wort-Wort* relation, which assumes that both components are pronounced. But one does not refer to pronunciation, to mere utterance, but to utterance *as if* it is about a subject. Not mere *dicitur*, but *dicitur de*. *Man* and *horse* are both uttered, but *none* of them is uttered about (*non dicitur de*) about the other. But we are acquainted with the relation *non dicitur de subiecto*. The present one (*non dicitur de altero*) does not bring anything new.

We can nevertheless imagine the situation in which a group of students learns a foreign language, let us say a group of Romanian students are learning German language. The teacher wants to illustrate the *Wort-Sache* relation. He then establishes together with the students to show them an object that they should utter the proper German word *about*. The teacher *shows* a book, about which the students utter *Buch*;

then he *shows* a chair, about which they utter *Stuhl*. But the students learn some other German words, too, words that are uttered about objects which cannot be shown or seen in the classroom. Then the teacher decides to *utter* the Romanian word, and they should *utter about* this one the German word. This way, the *Wort-Wort* relation appears: the teacher *utters* “road”, the students *utter about* it “*Weg*”. Thus one hears two words: *Road-Weg; House-Haus* a. s. o. The *Wort-Wort* relation is essential for learning the words of a foreign language, for drawing up dictionaries, for translating from one language to another.

One can imagine some other situations in which proper names are involved: *John-Johan, George-Georg*, etc. It is easy to figure that such conventions can be made inside one language. For example, the teacher of zoology can bring in class drawings with all kinds of living beings. He then shows one of them and the students must say which is its natural habitat (water, air, and land). In this case, the living being is *seen* and water, air, and land *are heard*. The relation is a *Wort-Sache* one. If the teacher gives up drawings and decides, together with the students, that he should *utter* the denomination of one living being, and they should *utter about* that living being the class or order it takes part into, then *Wort-Wort* relations occur, for instance: *crow-bird, trout-fish*, etc. But this leads us closer to Aristotle’s example, which presupposes the following convention: the genus is uttered about the species. (The teacher *utters* the species, the students *utter about* it the genus: *man-living being*, thus *Wort-Wort*). If the genus is uttered about the species as if the last one were a subsistent, then it will be also uttered about the subsistent (about *a certain man* one would utter *living being*, thus *Wort-Sache*). Aristotle mentions this, too, since *a certain man* is indeed man and *living being*, which means that his *essence* is to be man and living being.

“For those that have a different genus and no hierarchy, the differences also differ as species, for example those of the living being and those of science, since the living being’s differences are the pedestrian, the biped, the winged, while those of science are none of these ones. Because a science does not differ from the other by being biped. But for the genera that have a hierarchy, nothing is against they have the same differences, because the superior genera are uttered about those under them, such as all the differences of that which is uttered will also belong to the subsistent”<sup>3</sup>. The text does not raise difficult problems. It merely refers to extending the sphere of the expression that can generate prejudicative relations of transitivity from *word-word* to *word-thing*. Thus not only the genus that is uttered about the species is also uttered about the individual thing, but also the differences of the genus or specific differences. *The biped* is a specific difference of the living being due to the fact that some of the living beings have two legs. Thus, if about *man* one utters *living being*, nothing can be against a part of the differences, like biped, to be also uttered about *man*, and also about the subsistent or *the certain man*. Other differences, like winged, will not be uttered. The last part of Aristotle’s text is a little obscure, but does not raise any difficult problem.

The already mentioned fourth chapter contains the enumeration of categories and the strengthening of the prejudicative character of *dicitur de* and *inesse* relations among unbounded antepredicaments. One must underline the use of the term “signifies” (*semainei*), ascribed to those that are generally<sup>4</sup> uttered, word which will have a special career in the scholastic theory of signification. In other words, the simple expressions are not only uttered about a subsistent, but they also *signify* it.

In the fifth chapter we deal with a more extended chapter that contains many things unrelated to the problem of prejudicative forms. Due to this we will further refer only to the relevant aspects for our problem.

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<sup>3</sup> *Categ.*, 3, 1 b, 16-24.

<sup>4</sup> *Categ.*, 4, 1 b, 25.

The chapter deals with substance (*ousia*), characterised through the relation that correspond to the antepredicament (4) – particular substance (*non dicitur de, non inest*) and some examples: *a certain man* and *a certain horse*, which makes the denomination of *individual thing* (object, being) undisputed for the entity thus characterised. We refer here to the so-called “prime substance”.

Surprisingly, Aristotle refers here to substances, too, but to the second ones, genera and species; this justifies, from his point of view, but also mixes up for a long time the status of the first antepredicament (universal substance).

To sustain his new terminology, Aristotle apparently disputes all the ontological support of the previous chapters. “On the other hand, second substances are named the species in which subsist those that are primary called substances, both them and the genera of these species, as, for example, *a certain man* subsists in the species *man*, the genus of the species being *living being*”. But in the second chapter Aristotle said that *in a subsistent* is something that *subsists in something*. Or, ere the individual thing proves itself as subsisting in the species, i. e. *the certain man* subsists in the species *man* (*en eidei hyparchei*). In other words, *the individual thing* (or *prime substance*) is in the species (or *second substance*) although, at the beginning of the chapter one says that prime substance is that which is uttered about no subsistent and is *not* in a subsistent at all. To be honest, the expression *hyparchein en eidei* appears only here<sup>5</sup>, but the term *hyparchein* has no longer the meaning of *to subsist*. Aristotle uses it to designate the subordination report among genera and species. To tell the truth, a Platonic reminiscence is indeed manifested in the manner of expressing the subordination of individual things to the species and genera, and the term *hyparchein*, through which the *being in relation* is defined, is not at all suitable.

Thus the fact that individual things are subordinated to species does not grant them the attribute of substance. Aristotle’s further words are decisive: it is common for any substance *not to be* in a subsistent<sup>6</sup>. If the substance is not uttered about, then it is *prime*; if it is uttered about, it is *second*. The term “second substance” does no longer appear in Aristotle’s work and thus it can be avoided.

Aristotle continues (*Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 19 – 2 b, 6) by resuming the entire chapter two. One remarks the frequent use of *lego* and *katagoreo*, with the same meaning. It is further specified that in the case of those that are uttered about a subsistent, it is compulsory that both name and notion be uttered about the subsistent. This thing could have not been presupposed so far because uttering a proper name, to which no notion corresponds any more, about a subsistent was not forbidden. This implies that what is uttered about a subsistent is *always a corresponding word*. The prejudicative relation *Wort-Sache* should not be conceived as a game in which everything can be uttered about everything, and, admitting the convention between teacher and student in learning a foreign language, i. e. seeing the object and telling its name, one must add the condition of the lack of validity of a relation in which a student tells an *inappropriate* word. This is a characteristic of prejudicative relations, which clearly distinguishes them from the judicative ones. The last ones can be either *true* or *false*, i. e. they can correspond or not to the things they refer to, while the prejudicative relations can *only* be corresponding.

Next, it is worth paying attention to the way in which Aristotle presents the above-mentioned example. “For instance, *the man* (*ho anthropos*) is uttered about a subsistent, about *the certain man*, and the name is indeed expressed: for one will express *man* (*anthropos*) about *the certain man*”<sup>7</sup>. This seems a useless repetition of the same thing: “*the man* is uttered about the certain man” and “man is expressed about the certain

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, p. 789 a, 56-57.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Categ.*, 5, 3 a, 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 21-24.

*man*". The difference consists in the fact that, in the first case, the word is used with the article while in the second is not, and also the occurring in the first case of *legetai*, and in the second of *kategoreitai*. Thus *the man* is not identical with *man*, since for the second difference the same example is given in chapter two<sup>8</sup>, with *legetai*. This suggests that in the first case one deals with the notion, which is regularly expressed using the article (*the man*), while the name is expressed without the article (*man*) but, since *the man is uttered* (*legetai*) about something, then it is a name too. Indeed, one of the variants of the Greek text skips the article<sup>9</sup>. But then the situation is even stranger: "Man is uttered about the certain man" and "man is expressed about the certain man" seem to be a mere repetition. It is undoubted that in the first case Aristotle does not refer to name, like in the second one.

What follows does not clear the situation, but brings along a new difficulty. "Because – continues Aristotle – the notion of man is expressed about *the certain man*, too; because *the certain man* is both *man* and *living being*". Here, by "notion of the man" one means, like in the former examples, the genus of *the man*, i. e. *the living being*. It is sure that the notion is uttered about, too. But this means that there is no distinction between word and notion, between mental and verbal. Or, in the former cases, Aristotle relied on the relation (*in mente*).

The next fragment refers to the *in esse* relation. "Among those that exist in a subsistent, for the most of them neither the notion, nor the name are expressed about a subsistent". "Most of them" are the individual properties, which are of the particular accident (2) kind, but, being ineffable, have neither name, nor corresponding notion that is uttered. This means that Aristotle's way of speaking is not entirely correct. For the others (universal accidents) he restates the example in which *white*, since it is in a subsistent, in a body, is expressed about this one (because a body is called white). The example brings nothing new. What he adds, "the notion of the white will never be expressed about a body"<sup>10</sup>, complicates even more the situation of universal accident (which *is in* and *is uttered about*), because its *notion* (the genus) *is not uttered about* the subsistent about which its *name* is uttered. Indeed, about a certain body one utters *white* (name), but not *colour* (the notion of white, i.e. its proximate genus). With a predicative expression "the body is white", but one never says "the body is colour".

Based on the data we have so far in the first chapter, the situation is not entirely like that. Indeed, one cannot say "the body is colour", but one can say "the body is coloured". Thus, from *colour*, about a certain body one can paronymically utter *coloured*. But as paronymic as that, one also utters *white*, from *whiteness*. If this is not taken into account, then there are only two correct alternatives: either, in a non-paronymic manner, neither the name of the universal accident, nor the corresponding notion is uttered, or, in a paronymic manner, both are uttered. Aristotle chose a middle variant: the name is uttered [paronymic], but the notion is not [non-paronymic]. It was also possible: the name is not uttered [non-paronymic] the notion is [paronymic].

In spite of all these, the problem Aristotle raised is a real one, because in the case of universal substance both the name (*man*) and the corresponding notion (*living being*) are *non-paronymically* uttered about the same subsistent.

Further on, Aristotle, skipping these cases, restates the question regarding the third chapter's issue, extending the remarks that refer to the *dicitur de* and *in esse* relations. Thus, just like *the living being* which being uttered about *man*, is also uttered about *the*

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Categ.*, 2, 1 a, 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. ed. Bekker, (1831), *Aristoteles graece*, Berlin, p. 2, note 1 a, line 2 a, 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 32-33.

*certain man*, the same way *the colour*, which is in *the body*, will also be in *a certain body*<sup>11</sup>.

This text raises serious problems. The *dicitur de* relation could have been conceived as transitive (see remark (f) from chapter two) but *inesse* cannot unless it is considered a whole-part relation, but this was excluded from *inesse*'s definition<sup>12</sup>. Thus one does not refer to a transitive relation as: Brasov is in Transylvania, Transylvania is in Romania, and therefore Braşov is in Romania. In Aristotle's example one deals with *colour*, *body* and *a certain body*. *Colour*, states Aristotle, is in a *body*, therefore it will be in *a certain body*, just like *living being* is uttered about *man* and also about *a certain man*<sup>13</sup>. Even without going deeper, between the two examples there is a large difference. According to chapter three, *living being* is indeed uttered about *man*, too, and about *a certain man*, but this relation's transitivity is granted by the fact that *man* is uttered about *a certain man*. Nevertheless, in the case of *inesse* even if we admit that *colour* is in a *body* and also in *a certain body*, *body* is not in *a certain body*. Thus, here one can no longer speak about a transitivity of the *inesse* relation.

We must add that Aristotle changes here the perspective over the transitivity of *dicitur de* relation, without further considering the intermediary relation "*man* is uttered about *a certain man*" that proved essential in the third chapter. In the present case, he focuses on the priority of prime substance over both of the relations. For *dicitur de* he states: if *living being* would be uttered about none of the *certain men*, then it would not be uttered about *man in general*<sup>14</sup>, and for *inesse*: if *colour* would not be in one of the singulars, then it would not be in *the body in general*<sup>15</sup>. It is obvious that the justification by means of transitivity would be better for both cases. Especially for *inesse*: *the colour* is in *a certain body*, because in *the certain body* is *a certain colour*, but of course, unlike the case of *dicitur de*, (in which *living being* is uttered about *man*), *the colour* cannot be in *a certain colour*. Therefore, the example must be analysed both from the perspective of antepredicaments and from that of prejudicative relations.

*A certain body* is a particular substance, individual thing par excellence, and does not raise any problems. However, *colour* is or can be universal substance (genus of different colours: red, green, etc. that are species of it and about which it is uttered), or universal accident which, from an Aristotelian viewpoint, is uttered about a subsistent and is in a subsistent. In Aristotle's example it is not universal substance, because it is in a body. But one cannot state that it is a universal accident, because Aristotle says *only* that it is in a body, and not that it is uttered about it. This suggests that Aristotle himself made further specifications for the universal accident. Finally, *body*, especially with the determination in general, seems to be a universal substance, because *body* is uttered about *all certain bodies*. But the fact that the *colour* is in *the body* assumes that there is a relation different from "*the colour* is in *a certain body*". If it is in a certain body, then the *colour* is of an objective-material nature. Not being *only* in a certain body, the *colour* is a *common property* of *all these*, but not of *body in general*. Because *body in general* is nothing more than *the notion of body* and *its linguistic expression*, respectively. Therefore, if one admits that *colour* is a *common objective-material property* of individual things (bodies), and that it is in these bodies, then it can no longer be either in the notion of body or in its name, because neither the notion of body, nor the word "body" are coloured. In other words, if it is in *re*, it can no longer be in *mente* or in *voce*.

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<sup>11</sup> *Categ.*, 2 b, 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 1 a, 24-25.

<sup>13</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 36-38.

<sup>14</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 37-38.

<sup>15</sup> *Categ.*, 2, 2 b, 3-4.

This does not mean that between the two situations (that referring the relation between *colour* and *a certain body* and that referring to the relation between *colour* and *body in general*) there is no relation. It becomes obvious if in the first case one deals with the prejudicative relation *inesse*, and in the second one *dicitur de*. But then the Aristotelian statement would have the following form: if *colour* (as a common property) is in a certain body, then *colour* (as a name of the common property) is uttered about body in general (as a name of the notion of body), which suggest a relation of implication between *inesse* and *dicitur de* and stresses the priority of prime substance or individual thing over the other antepredicaments, as Aristotle concludes: “if there were no prime substances, then it would be impossible for any other [antepredicaments] to exist”<sup>16</sup>.

Referring further to second substances, Aristotle considers that the species is at a larger extent substance than the genus, which is of no interest for our discussion. The following part is important: “but, as prime substances relate to all other [antepredicaments], the same manner species is related to genus, because the species is at the basis of the genus; indeed, the genera are expressed about the species, while the species are not converted faced to genera”<sup>17</sup>. In other words, Aristotle clearly states here the *prejudicative* character of the relation between genus and species. The same thing will be further repeated<sup>18</sup>.

It is also repeated that second substances are not in the subject and that from those that are in the subject nothing forbids for some of their names to be sometimes expressed about a subject, but the notion is impossible to be expressed about it<sup>19</sup>. Including among second substances the *difference (diaphora)* represents a new aspect. He refers here to *pedestrian* and *biped* as differences of *the man*. They are stated about *the certain man* without being in this one, and also are their notions<sup>20</sup>. About *proper (idion)*, which is in the same situation, Aristotle says nothing here.

In the next paragraph<sup>21</sup> the problem of transitivity of *dicitur de* relation is restated, with further applications to species, genus and difference. Instead of *subsistent (hypokeimenon)* Aristotle consequently uses here the term *individual (atomon)* close to that which is *numerically one (hen arithmo)* and considered *something precise (tode ti)*<sup>22</sup>. All these, to which the above-mentioned *singular (kath'hekaston)* is added, mean one and the same thing, prime substance.

In the next paragraph<sup>23</sup>, Aristotle uses, instead of prejudicative relations (*dicitur de* and *inesse*), the term *to signify (semainein)*, which he formerly used in chapter four<sup>24</sup>. About second substances he says that they seem to signify something precise (*tode ti*), just the prime ones. In his examples he uses *man* and *living being*. But they rather signify a quality because, continues Aristotle, *man* and *living being* are not uttered about a single subsistent, but about many<sup>25</sup>. In exchange, *white* absolutely signifies a quality. But we know that *white* is among those that are in a subsistent<sup>26</sup>.

Therefore, “to signify” means both “to be in” and “to be uttered about”. Skipping the last two, the entire Aristotelian context could be framed in what we call today the theory of signification.

<sup>16</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 b, 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 b, 17-21.

<sup>18</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 a, 1-3.

<sup>19</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 a, 15-17; see also 5, 2 a, 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 a, 21-28.

<sup>21</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 a, 33 – 3 b, 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 b, 10-13.

<sup>23</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 b, 10-23.

<sup>24</sup> *Categ.*, 4, 1 b, 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 3 b, 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Categ.*, 5, 2 a, 31.

The rest of the chapter is no longer related to prejudicative relations, and none of the other chapters from *Categoriae* are.