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ON THE MEANING OF KATEGORIA IN ARISTOTLE'S CATEGORIES¹

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I

In 1974, I wrote a paper, subsequently published in 1975 in Diotima III (1975), 67-81, in which I argued that the Aristotelian texts, particularly that of the Categories, allow for a parallel yet distinct interpretation to the traditional and prevalent one that takes the categories to be terms, ultimate classes, types, concepts. My position there was that the primary use of kategoria refers to well formed statements made according to canons, or if one prefers, i.e. fundamental types of predication conforming to rules sustained by the ways of beings. That article received no attention I know of except in a brief comment in footnote in Guthrie's A History of Greek Philosophy.² I was pleased to note that M. Frede, in an important article published in 1981, defended the same reading of the term kategoria mainly by examining closely to textual evidence in the Topics. He also defended the thesis that the text of the Categories does not contain the elements needed to construct an explicit theory of categories.³ In revising my 1983 paper for publication I thought it useful to go beyond

¹ This paper was presented at the December 28, 1983 meeting of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy, Boston, MA.

² Vol. Six: Aristotle (Cambridge 1981), 138 n. 1: "What follows here does not do justice to Anton's 'Theory of Categories' in the periodical Diotima for 1975."

³ M. Frede 1987, 29-30. The 1981 article, reprinted in this volume; all references to this edition. Much to my regret, Professor Frede's article became available to me after I presented my paper in December 1983, and therefore had no opportunity to address this issue at that time.

the initial purpose to show why certain distinctions in the treatise Categories could have prevented Aristotle's interpreters from insisting on defending the established use of kategoria as official doctrine, and to restate my argument as it relates to the problematic of Professor Frede's denial of the presence of a theory of categories in the Categories.

In trying to decide how Aristotle uses the term $\kappa\alpha\tau\eta\gamma\omicron\rho\iota\alpha$ in the treatise that bears the same name, Categories,⁴ provision must be made for the fact that there is nothing in the text to justify the meanings that ancient commentators, including recent writers, assigned to it and found their way both in translations of Aristotle's works and in the corpus of established philosophical terminology.⁵ The present article is written with the hope that it will contribute to understanding why certain distinctions in the treatise Categories should have prevented interpreters from assigning the traditional meaning of 'genera of being' to

⁴ The title of the treatise was a subject of considerable dispute in antiquity. For a recent survey on this problem see M. Frede 1987 esp. Chapter 2, "The Title, Unity and Authenticity of the Aristotelian Categories," 11-28. According to Frede "the question of authenticity is crucially linked to the question of unity" (12). The problem of the unity covers the relation of the early part of the treatise to the part that discusses the post-predicamenta.

⁵ There are many surveys of interpretations concerning the categories. I do not plan to offer another survey, for my main interest lies in the investigation into what we can learn about the theory of categories in the Categories. Nor am I concerned with reproducing and commenting on the table of enumeration of the "categories" in Aristotle's works. The list can be readily found in O. Apelt, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Griechischen Philosophie (Leipzig 1891), conveniently reproduced in Leo Elders, Aristotle's Theory of the One: A Commentary on Book X fo the Metaphysics (Assen 1961), pp. 194-6. One can still raise the question about the intent of the list or lists. If we can defend our objections to making the list on the basis of the reading of the term 'categoria' to refer to classes of being, then we have an alternative before us, which has not been suitably explored to determine the extent to which it is present, if at all, in the writings of commentators since antiquity: namely whether what is listed is not classes of being but refers to the relevant types of statements that pertain to the attribution of genuine features of the entity named in the subject position. It is the existence of the concrete individual qua subject that sets the context for the selective lists of relevant types of attribution.

the term 'category' and hence giving it the meaning of highest predicate rather than fundamental type of predication.

The word kategoria occurs only twice in the text, although the verb kategorein is used more frequently. As for the traditional use of the term, one should not discard the possibility that the assigning of such meanings as 'term', 'type', 'class', 'predicate', was affected by an unconscious borrowing from "interpreted" readings of meanings into this term as it occurs in other Aristotelian texts where kategoria occurs and then inserted into the understanding of what the word meant in the brief treatise. But that is another issue and too complex to be discussed without introducing contexts related to factors influencing interpretations. The main topic before us is the relation and affinity between two terms, genus and category. Generally speaking our problem is this: What precisely can be said about the meaning of the term kategoria and what clues do we possess, assuming that Aristotle or whoever wrote the treatise embedded certain ciphers in the text, that if detected may help us identify the intended philosophical or technical use. Thus our question should be: How can we attribute to Aristotle a theory of categories, presumably present in the treatise titled Categories when we do not even know for certain whether a technical use was in fact intended to function within a theory.⁶ If this treatise, especially part one (chapters 1-9), has a subject, let us say

⁶ It is a debatable point whether it is correct to speak of a fully formed and theoretically developed "categorical theory," in the modern sense of such a theory, embedded somehow in Aristotle's logical works. It certainly cannot be found in the manner in which Kant, for instance, developed such a theory (Critique of Pure Reason, A81/B107). It should be obvious to the informed reader that Aristotle did not formulate such a theory. He never defines the term "category," yet he uses it in ways that he must have believed that his students and readers understood him. I am convinced that he used it in a technical sense, but not in the sense that his Neoplatonist commentators, medieval and modern, attributed to him. If he has a theory at all, it is part of his theory of language, of his philosophy of logos, of rational discourse in its capacity to articulate the structures and processes of the world, including those of the human world.

to put forth "a theory of categories," how do we establish this conclusion, as Frede (1987, 15) correctly suggests? Admittedly, Aristotle has formulated a detectable doctrine, and while it may be present in bare outline in the *Categories*, the fuller version can be reconstructed all its part and its unity established only through the collection and collation of all the pertinent passages in the extant works as a special chapter of what seems to be his general theory of language as logical discourse.

II

The present paper, while basically a criticism of evidence, also advances the thesis I discussed in my 1975 paper, in which I defended a propositional interpretation of the Aristotelian categories.⁷ The thesis originally intended to correct as well as to complement the traditional and firmly established interpretation of Aristotle's use of *kategoria*, a view that reaches back to the writings of the early commentators, probably with roots in Aristotle's contemporaries in the Academy. What generates the problem under discussion is mainly the one-sidedness of the prevailing view that takes it for granted that the expressions "genera of being" and "genera of category" (γένη τοῦ ὄντος, γένη τῆς κατηγορίας) can be conflated and hence used interchangeably without the slightest alteration of meaning.⁸

⁷ For further remarks on this issue see my "Aristotle's Theory of Categories in Post-Classical Ontologies," in *Proceedings of the World Congress on Aristotle*, (Greece, 1981), 214-220; and in "Aspects of Ancient Ontologies," in *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval*, ed. P. Morewedge (Fordham, 1982), 60-77.

⁸ The expression τὰ γένη τῶν κατηγοριῶν does not occur in the *Categories*; it is found in *Topics* I. 9, 103b20, 29, 39; also in *Soph. El.* 178a5. In *Top.* I. 15, 107a2-3 the text reads: τὰ γένη τῶν κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα κατηγοριῶν. Here the expression is used to identify *homonyma*, on the condition that the same genus is not predicable of all things having the same name.

However, the range of the problem does not end here. It should be extended to cover not only the problem of the aforementioned conflation but also the discrepancy between the inordinate amount of literature on Aristotle's so-called "doctrine of categories," claiming that such a doctrine is to be found in the brief treatise *Categories*, on the one hand, and the peculiar absence of a definition of the concept, on the other. To this curious omission we may add the conspicuous absence of a lexical passage to cover the uses of *kategoria* in the list of principles in *Metaphysics*, Bk. V.⁹

This being the case, it seems only appropriate to raise the issue of evidence. since the term *kategoria* is left undefined in these two key treatises,¹⁰ a close examination of the passages where the words *kategorēin*, *kategoroumenon*, and *kategoria* occur in the *Categories*, must be undertaken in order to assess the merits or demerits of the traditional reading of these terms. It may be difficult but not impossible to identify the functions of the concept of *kategoria* in Aristotle's logical, ontological and other doctrines. His ancient and later commentators, down to the present, have justifiably devoted lengthy studies to this aspect of his philosophy. In light of the scholarship in this area, it should be pointed out that the history of proposed interpretations exhibits variations of the same fundamental approach, one that is dominated by the quest for ultimate simples, be they genera of beings, of classes, of concepts, or of signifiers. Perhaps the sole exception is a thesis Christian Brandis

⁹ *Meta.* V, devotes separate chapters to the following fundamental concepts, traditionally called "categories"; ὄν: 7, 1017a7-b9; οὐσία: 8, 1017b10-25; ποσόν: 13, 1020a7-32; ποιόν: 14, 1020a33-b25; πρὸς τι: 16 1020b26-1021b11; πάθος: 21, 1022b15-21; ἔχειν: 23, 1023a8-25.

¹⁰ A stipulative definition is also absent in the *De Interpretatione*, a work in which this term occurs only once. This is rather strange, especially in view of the fact that Aristotle assigns technical meanings to 'name' or 'noun', and 'verb', 'affirmation', 'negation', 'proposition' or 'statement', and 'sentence' (*logos*).

proposed a century ago that the Aristotelian categories are "the most general forms or species of propositions which are removed and dissociated from sentential contexts."¹¹

Evidently it found no supporters, and the traditional interpretation continued to prevail intact. One of the curious features its defenders share is the absence of any discussion on the question why kategoria is not defined in the logical treatises or in the Metaphysics, despite the fact that each and every commentator and interpreter accept as given Aristotle's "doctrine of categories," a kategorienlehre. Perhaps we will never find a satisfactory answer to that question, but we must not therefore take the view that a problem does not exist. Briefly stated, it pertains to the range of functions of the theory, namely coverage of the genera of being, including highest classes of predicates. If so, the problem of range raises the question whether it is proper at all to extend the range to include a theory of ultimate types of propositions as a basic component of the doctrine.¹² Evidently, the question of

¹¹ Cited in F. Brentano, On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle, edited and translated by R. George (Berkeley, 1975), p. 177, n. 141. Brandis gives three passages in support of this view, Top. I.9, 103b20, Meta. VI. 2, 1926a26, and XIV. 2, 1089a26. See Brandis, Griechisch-roemische Philosophie II, 2, 1, p. 394; also Geschichte der Entwicklung der griechischen Philosophie und ihrer Nachwirkungen in Roemlichen Reiche (Berlin, 1862), I. Halfte, pp. 430-1.

¹² The prevailing view on the subject in the long history of philosophy has not changed much since the time of the early commentators. For instance, Iamblichus, summarizing the venerable tradition of the Neoplatonists, declares that the categories are "expressions signifying things by means of concepts." Simplicius, ACG. VIII, 2.30-3.17, where he lists the names of the interpreters who in his opinion came closest to Aristotle: Alexander of Aphrodisias, Alexander of Aegae, Porphyry (who borrowed from the views of Theophrastus and Boethus), Herminus, Iamblichus, and Syrianus; also at 67.26ff he gives his and Iamblichus' views on what the division into ten genera means and what it contains. Kant's views are too well known to call for comment. In more recent times Bonitz declared the categories "the highest genera of being," while W. D. Ross (1924, lxxxii-lxxxiii, and lxxxiii note 2) called them "the predicates par excellence." On the whole, the views on the subject have varied but slightly, all of them favoring the thesis that the categories stand for ultimate simple predicates or concepts, either in the sense of the highest genera of things or the highest concepts of the mind.

range did not find any serious supporters. It was ignored as impertinent.

The history of the commentaries on the doctrine of categories reveals a continuum, of the same fundamental approach, dominated by the quest for ultimate simples. In order to secure the pursuit, interpreters resorted to the conflation of Aristotle's distinction between "genera of being" and "genera of category or categories." A tradition was established whereby interpreters invariably chose to identify the categories (a) logically with the *κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγόμενα* (things not said in combination), and (b) ontologically with the *γέννη τοῦ ὄντος* (genera of being). The underlying assumption in either case is that the two lists of genera can be conflated conceptually and used interchangeably without serious alternation to the basic meaning of *kategoria*.

We must therefore re-examine the text of the *Categories* in order to ascertain the correctness of the view that restricts the meaning of the term *kategoria* to ultimate types of predicates and simple signifiers. The analysis that follows questions whether the prevalent traditional approach to the meaning of *kategoria* has the textual evidence needed to render its claims definitive. Positively stated, the proposal to extend the meaning of this celebrated term to include the propositional thesis can be supported through a different reading of the related passages. Although Aristotle explicitly refers to ultimate units of signification, the term *kategoria* as used in the text does not preclude a reading according to which it stands for propositions as the fundamental carriers of completed attributions whose function is to capture in *logos* the truth of beings.

The position is essentially the same I essayed to argue in my several publications on the subject, but now with slight modifications. The main idea in those papers was to show that instead of assuming that simple conceptual units, however identified, constitute the sole

basis for determining the meaning of the categories, we should also consider as suitable candidates the complex units of judgment (κρίσις), which as assertions are cases of "expressions said in combination" (κατὰ συμπλοκὴν λεγόμενα). As such they convey the perceived factual connections of things (ὄντα). Each confirmed attribution correctly noticed and reported, *is an assertion* (κατάφασις).

Since first ousia is the ultimate and first subject, the ontic hypokeimenon, and is naturally a composite unity, to say what ousia is, by capturing its complexity in the activity of speech, legein, requires the employment of composite logical unities: attributive statements as signifiers of articulated judgments. There is good reason why the making of attributive statements should be brought under the umbrella of the extended meaning of the kategoria, a word that originally meant "accusation." This abstract noun and the related words that Aristotle added to his terminology derive from the key verb κατηγορεῖν.

I should like to point out the dangers that attend the conflating of basic expressions. Carried out in the case of the terms predication and predicate (κατηγορία and κατηγορούμενον), this operation has the advantage of preserving the meaning of categories as simple and ultimate types of predicative units. However, by so doing it can also cause confusion and inadvertent interpretive errors. Therefore, it is of the essence that these two terms be kept apart and be discussed separately when obscurities in the text explicitly demand the preserving of distinctions. Comparably we must also exhibit the coordinate function of basic terms without using alien notions of conceptual subordination of terms as in the diverse schemes of categorial deduction. It cannot be denied that our translations from the Greek are replete with instances of conflation and/or unexplained substitutions due to the interchangeable employment of the expressions 'predicate' and 'predication' for

κατηγορούμενον and κατηγορία.¹³

A kategoria, in its functional aspect, stands for the articulated outcome of what speakers do when completing an accusation and, by extension, an attribution. To do what kategorēin calls for is to effect by means of verbal signs an attributive statement in order to exhibit a determinate connection between a subject and what belongs to it either essentially or as co-incident properties, i.e. what the subject is and has. Given this fuller context, then, "category" is by way of function and structure a complex utterance, what Aristotle calls a case of κατὰ συμπλοκὴν λεγόμενον; it employs a subject word and a predicate word, a noun and a verb or signifiers connected with the copula. One of the key passages that support this position occurs in Posterior Analytics I. 22, 82b37-84a2, and is reinforced by what is said in Prior Analytics I. 46, 52a15, where kategoria is unambiguously equated to kataphasis, affirmation. Caution must be advised at this point, because one must not conclude from uses of kategoria discernable in the Analytics that these are also present in the treatise Categories. More work needs to be done to show that such is the case. In general, nothing of real value to our understanding of Aristotle is gained by taking the term kategoria to stand for the genera of beings and hence using it to cover the case of highest predicates. What I think is needed is the restoration of the embedded distinction Aristotle introduced between predicate and predication and by so doing preserve the difference

¹³ Consider the difficulty a translator must face when asked to revert to the original language and identify equivalent terms for the ones he has selected from his own language to render texts. In English, the expressions used to translate the categorial passages in Aristotle are "to predicate," "predicable," and "predication." Now, if kategoria, in its technical sense, can only mean "predicate," the translator would be at a loss to come up with a separate term to cover the case of predication as the equivalent of "proposition." By avoiding the conflation, this puzzling problem disappears. I bring up this issue mainly because it shows how interpretations seriously affect the manner of translating complex texts as well as issues of substance.

between genera of being and categories. Thus the ontic reference of the former must be kept separate from the expressions to which Aristotle refers when he talks about "what is said in combination" (*κατὰ συμπλοκῆν λεγόμενα*), i.e. canonical assertions in accordance with the rules that govern the syntax of attributions to reflect the complex properties of unified *ousiai*, their essential and their accidental properties. By observing the distinction, we use language as (a) naming and (b) stating. Truth belongs to the logical-linguistic function of articulating the experience of reality. The categories supply the ultimate forms for announcing and communicating the content of true statements.

III

In the *Categories* we encounter two expressions, both related to the same root and differing only in the prefix: *προσηγορία* and *κατηγορία*. The former is hardly ever discussed as an ingredient of Aristotle's theory of categories, yet there is no doubt that it is part of the broader terminological apparatus to be taken into account when an attempt is made to reconstruct the theory. *Prosegoria* occurs only twice in the *Categories*, in 1a13 and 3a14, as part of the following expressions: *κατὰ τοῦνομα προσηγορία* and *σχῆμα τῆς προσηγορίας*.¹⁴ We should also note that the second occurrence is found only after the only two occurrences of *κατηγορία* in Chapter 5, 3a35 and 37. The verb *κατηγορεῖν* and the passive form *κατηγορεῖσθαι*, as well as the passive present participle *κατηγορούμενον*, occur earlier in the treatise, beginning with chapter 3, 1b10.

Yet the verb *προσηγορεῖν* is not to be found anywhere either in the *Categories* or in the *De Interpretatione*. The closest expression is *προσαγορεύεται*, as in 1a9, in

¹⁴ Liddell-Scott Greek Dictionary gives several meanings of *προσηγορία*, and lists Aristotle's use in *Cat.* 1a13 to mean "addressing" and in 3b14 to mean "appellation," "name."

connection with synonyma, to explain what the latter are: οἷον ζῶον ὅτε ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ βοῦς· τούτων γὰρ ἑκάτερον κοινῶ ὀνόματι προσαγορεύεται ζῶον.

A comparison of uses, as these passages indicate, shows that προσηγορία is limited to "naming" and "appellation"; the related verb meaning "to call by name." This connection to the word 'name', ὄνομα, helps us better to understand the technical term kategoria, and also whether the mode or scheme, σχῆμα, of naming is transferrable to the expression "mode of predication," σχῆμα τῆς κατηγορίας.

The first occurrence of the verb kategorein makes it clear that what is meant is a determinate connection between two signified things, between two instances of onta, which have presumably been given names. We are now beyond the level of prosegoria. One would expect, therefore, that since kategoria signifies the result of articulating a judgment by combining signifiers to form a complete statement, we should expect the disclosure to have articulated a determinate connection between two named things, and more precisely, not an unfinished announcement like 'the rose and the lady' or 'Jane and June', but an instance of genuine attribution. Chapter 2 makes clear what the term hypokeimenon means in two special contexts: (1) to be in a subject and (b) to be said of a subject. The fourfold combination given there yields the parameters needed for the formulation of canons.

As Aristotle proceeds with chapter 3, the ground has been carefully prepared to introduce the verb kategorein in the technical sense. The more general expression legetai is left behind.¹⁵ What is said of a subject will now be called kategoroumenon. The previous chapter has already made clear what it is to be a subject: it is an existent, a being, ὄν, and

¹⁵ W.K.C. Guthrie (1981, 142 n.4) differs on this point, as he remarks in a note meant to correct what I intimated in the 1975 article. Guthrie's insistence that kategorēisthai and legetai are used indifferently is not convincing, as we shall see.

also the recipient of a prosegoria, a name. The name of the existent is a signifier, a legomenon "not said in combination" (λεγόμενον μὴ κατὰ συμπλοκῆν), but qua ὄν it underlies all other types of inhering existents yet only if it is also a first ousia. Being a first ousia it cannot be in another subject, nor can it be said of another subject. We now know what an on must have in order to qualify as hypokeimenon par excellence.

Chapter 3 opens with a statement where the verb kategorēin occurs for the first time, and presupposes (i) the aforesaid clarification of the fundamental meaning of hypokeimenon, and (ii) the canonical ways of stating the interconnections of onta. With kategorēin we move from the names of things to the complex act of attribution, by means of which predicates are connected to subjects. Given the fundamental position of the subject, "whatever is said of a predicated thing will also be said of the subject," the pattern of controlled predication of named things, i.e. concrete subjects, and species and genera, including the differentiating properties, is next carefully delineated. We thus have become cognizant of the first and crucial type of combined expressions, κατὰ συμπλοκῆν λεγόμενα. The text offers incontrovertible evidence that the verb kategorēin is used to cover canonically controlled combined expressions in the making of attributions. The concepts involved in the performance of kategorēin are also the ones employed in the classification of individuals and the formation of essential definitions: concrete individuals as ultimate subjects, species, genera and differentiae.

The next question is straightforward enough. What are the diverse genera of beings? There are certain things, and we have names for them, which are said of a subject and exist in said subject. This being the case, to give an account of such instances is to articulate an existential connection in accordance with the canons of predication. When Aristotle proceeds

to present his celebrated inventory of types or genera of beings, he gives us a list of the most comprehensive denotative signifiers; each is a case of κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγόμενον. Each has its place as an element in the act of kategorrein. Together these elements comprise what has been traditionally and, in my opinion, mistakenly labelled "the Aristotelian categories." Yet, the term kategoria is nowhere to be found in chapter 4. Instead, all we have is a carefully drawn and rather uncomplicated set of expressions to cover the following fundamentals: (1) things exist; (2) the ultimate existents are those in which instances of the other genera of beings inhere, a fact that explains why the former function as the ultimate subjects of canonical predications; (3) shared names of things, i.e. genuine signifiers naming things that came under any one (excluding first ousia) of the ten genera of being; (4) how simple signifiers understood as uncombined expressions function denotatively; (5) why, when taken alone, none of these uncombined expressions constitutes to function as an affirmation (kataphasis); (6) that affirmations are made by canonically combined simple signifiers;¹⁶ and (7) only canonical affirmations can be said to be either true or false, whereas none of the uncombined signifiers, their denotative power notwithstanding, are either true or false.

The remaining chapters are given to (a) an analysis of the range of denotation of each type of simple signifiers and with many surprising results, not least of which is the recognition that with the exception of ousia all the other general signifiers of types of being are cases of homonymy; and (b) to the itemization of the sub-classes of signified being that

¹⁶ Subsequent to this, Aristotle states in chapter 10, 12b9-10 that τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν κατάφασιν καὶ τὴν ἀπόφασιν οὐδέν ἐστι λόγος: the component elements of affirmations and negations, being uncombined signifiers are not statements, and hence are neither true nor false.

determine the mode of predication which is appropriate to each, as the names of denoted entities are assigned their place in well-formed statements with referential claims.

Now we may turn our attention to chapter 4. There is no technical term in this brief chapter to justify the traditional view adopted by the earlier commentators and continued ever since, that identifies the ten categories with the ten most general types of signifiers or ten uncombined signifying expressions: ousia, quantity, quality, relative, where, when, being-in-a-position, having, doing, undergoing.

Neither the verb kategorēin nor the noun kategoria occurs in this chapter. The expression that provides a clue to the problem on hand, is kataphasis. However, the rule of forming affirmations, of stringing signifiers to produce referential combinations with truth claims, is not disclosed either. The four examples of uncombined expressions that Aristotle gives at the end of the chapter, i.e. (a) 'human being' (b) 'white', (c) 'runs' (d) 'wins', if randomly combined, do not necessarily produce affirmations. Certain combinations must obviously be ruled out at the outset, e.g. 'white wins', 'runs wins', 'runs white', 'wins man', etc. Acceptable candidates are 'man wins', 'man runs', and cases where a copula is supplied, 'man...white'. The point is anything but trivial, as the next chapter makes clear.

Chapter 5 deals with ousia on two levels: ontologically, it is recognized that ousia is the most fundamental signifier, and logically, it holds the key that discloses the conditions for canonical combinations of signifiers of beings. After introducing the distinction between the primary and secondary meanings of ousia, Aristotle suddenly changes his 'saying' verbs, and shifts from legein to the more technical verb kategorēin-kategorēisthai, "to predicate" i.e. to attribute what one signifier denotes to what another signifier names according to the ontological order of essence and inherence of things. The ontic settings of things determine

the correct modes for effecting proper combinations of signifiers. The verb kategorēin as used, legislates requisite restrictions for the weaving of signifiers in reporting the objective complexity of being as first ousia, and as species and differentia and as genus. Since no first ousia can be predicated of another first ousia, the remaining substantive signifiers fall into place.

The only two occurrences of the word kategoria in this chapter are related to the formulation of the two rules that govern substantive predication, one positive and one prohibitive.¹⁷ (a) Positive. In all canonical predications involving secondary ousiai and differentiae, the assertions are about either individuals or species (3a34-5). Thus the rule is that in substantive statements of attribution the subject position is occupied either by a first ousia signifier or a species signifier. (b) Prohibitive. No predication using first ousiai as attributive signifiers is legitimate or even comprehensible. The rule is that no first ousia functions as kategoroumenon in a well-formed predication.

Before proceeding with the discussion of kategorēin and kategorēisthai, and the third occurrence of kategoria, it is important to note that neither the verb nor the noun is employed in the special analysis of the range of denotation of each general type of signifiers,

¹⁷ The positive in Cat. 5, 3a33-37: Ἰπάρχει δὲ ταῖς οὐσίαις καὶ ταῖς διαφοραῖς τὰ πάντα συνωνύμως ἀπ' αὐτῶν λέγεσθαι· πᾶσαι γὰρ αἱ ἀπὸ τούτων κατηγορίαι ἦτοι κατὰ τῶν ἀτόμων κατηγοροῦνται ἢ κατὰ τῶν εἰδῶν. ἀπὸ μὲν γὰρ τῆς πρώτης οὐσίας οὐδεμία ἐστὶ κατηγορία,· κατ' οὐδενὸς γὰρ ὑποκειμένου λέγεται. The prohibitive passage is in 8, 10b12-25: Ἰπάρχει δὲ καὶ ἐναντιότης κατὰ τὸ ποιόν, οἷον δικαιοσύνη ἀδικία ἐναντίον καὶ λευκότης μελανία καὶ τᾶλλα ὡσαύτως, καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτὰς δὲ ποιά λεγόμενα...ἔτι ἐὰν τῶν ἐναντίων θάτερον ἢ ποιόν, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν ἔσται ποιόν. τοῦτο δὲ δῆλον προχειριζομένῳ τὰς ἄλλας κατηγορίας, οἷον εἰ ἔστι ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῇ ἀδικία ἐναντίον, ποιὸν δὲ ἡ δικαιοσύνη, ποιὸν ἄρα καὶ ἡ ἀδικία· οὐδεμία γὰρ τῶν ἄλλων κατηγοριῶν ἐφαρμόζει τῇ ἀδικία, ποσὸν οὔτε πρὸς τι οὔτε πού, οὐδ' ὅλως τι τῶν τοιούτων οὐδὲν ἀλλ' ἢ ποιόν· ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων κατὰ τὸ ποιὸν ἐναντίων.

a/

a/

i.e. what the traditional view calls "categories". The verb Aristotle uses almost invariably in this long portion of the treatise is legetai. Each genus comes in for an analysis, though not exhaustive, and enumeration of the subordinate sub-classes of signifiers of things that are collected together under the umbrella of an inclusive and ultimate class. Whether this is an analysis of "categories," an unpacking of inclusive types of names, is highly debatable, to say the least. Whatever it is that Aristotle is doing there leaves little room for speculation. What needs to be re-iterated is that nowhere in these "analyses" of ultimate classes of signifiers does he use the term kategoria to refer to the classifiable things these denote.

IV

All commentators who have suppressed the terminological difference between predicate and predication (κατηγορούμενον and κατηγορία) conclude that kategoria means "predicate," thus lending their authority to a misreading of the passages in which Aristotle uses the word κατηγορία *to mean* "attributive proposition." The position I have taken in this paper is presented as an argument to support a different reading and with the hope that the established interpretation can be challenged through a fresh examination of the textual testimonies to accommodate the suppressed part of Aristotle's theory of categories as ultimate types of canonical propositions. The thesis I have sought to advance is, in technical language, that the categories stand for fundamental types of attribution that conform to rules formulated in accordance with the ontology of first substance (πρώτη οὐσία).

In order to make the argument stand I thought it necessary to propose that this reading, since it draws attention to the logical syntax of predicative statements, requires in the context of the treatise Categories a shifting of emphasis from simple expressions or what Alexander of Aphrodisias called "the most general parts of logos whose purpose is to signify

simple things and simple concepts about simple things,"¹⁸ to things said in combination par excellence." The objective now becomes one of showing how the fundamental modes of predication (τὰ σχήματα τῆς κατηγορίας), and in accordance with the ten genera of being, can be determined through a careful scrutiny of canonical attributive statements. In these statements it is always the case that the signifying exemplars in each distinct genus of being are introduced and assigned to occupy the subject and predicate positions by conforming to the logic of rules.

The critical review of evidence must begin reasonably enough with the brief treatise Categories. Most authorities agree that this treatise contains a number of fundamentals to be found in Aristotle's theory on the subject. Yet the claim seems somewhat paradoxical when we stop to think that nowhere in this treatise does Aristotle elaborate on the use of this term. To this peculiarity we must add the conspicuous absence of a special chapter in Metaphysics V to explain the concept of "category" as a principle, although there are separate chapters on such genera of being as ousia, quantity, quality etc., that is the traditional "categories."

We find in the Categories two closely resembling expressions that differ only in the prefix: προσηγορία and κατηγορία. The former is never discussed as an ingredient in interpretations of Aristotle's theory of categories. The term occurs only twice in this treatise, in 1a13 and 3a14: (i) κατὰ τοῦνομα προσηγορία and (ii) σχῆμα τῆς προσηγορίας, meaning 'addressing' and 'appellation' or 'name'. Its relevant role in the theory of naming should be obvious. As for the term kategoria, much to our surprise, it occurs only in two

¹⁸ Ammonius, In Categorias proemium, CAG. IV, 13. Philoponus quotes Ammonius and concurs with Alexander of Aphrodisias, according to Simplicius, CAG. VIII, 10, 10-19; also Brandis, ed. Scholias in Aristotelem, (Berlin, 1836), 31a6.

passages, in Chapter 5 and in Chapter 8, twice in each chapter, for a total of four occurrences, and all come after the presentation of the listing of "uncombined expressions," i.e. the ones that comprise the celebrated list of traditional "categories."¹⁹

Of greater weight is the frequent occurrence of the verb *κατηγορεῖν-κατηγορεῖσθαι* and the passive present participle *κατηγορούμενον*. The first occurrence of *κατηγορεῖν* in chapter 3 1b10 makes clear that it signifies the activity of connecting two signified things in the manner of attribution. The logical and ontological grounds have already been made clear in what is said in chapter 2 with reference to what it means to be "in a subject" and to be "said of a subject." The fourfold combination they produce yields the parameters for the formulation of the canons of correct attribution which in turn determine the type of predication (*κατηγορία*) under which any well formed affirmation (*κατάφασις*) falls. The technical sense of *κατηγορεῖν* is undeniably present; by implication as well as use, the same holds for *κατηγορία*. Neither of the two, nor the term *κατηγορούμενον* is employed in the analyses of the genera that follow the discussion on *ousia*. Instead, we see a systematic use of the verb *λέγεται* for the unraveling of their uses and notations. *Kategoria* makes its last brief appearance in Chapter 8, where it can mean either "predicate" or "predication," both being suitable readings. In view of these facts, we cannot help but wonder how so many interpreters came to accept the *Categories* as the unquestioned source of a non-Aristotelian doctrine of categories.

¹⁹ M. Frede (1987, 16) claims that *κατηγορία* occurs only once in this treatise: 10b19-20, but corrects this to say (31) that it occurs twice in a passage "in two lines" (10b19; 10b21).

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