Notes on CATEGORIES 5-9

From Chapter 5 through Chapter 9 Aristotle is giving in some sense fundamental descriptions of the categories.

Apparently, these cannot be definitions by genus and species because in other texts he says that there is no synonymous (univocal) universal over the categories. (Being is not a genus.) This is implied in the CATEGORIES itself in Chapter Three where Aristotle seems to mention genera which are neither sub-ordinate nor co-ordinate with each other. If there were a single synonymous universal over all the categories, there would be no such genera.

So how are we to characterize the distinguishing marks Aristotle develops for substance, quantity, relative, quantity, and to some extent action and passion (before the break in the text)?

Perhaps as an account (1) of what we might call the difference-structure within each category—i.e., an account of how the distinct items within each category are related to each other and (2) of how the categories are related to each other. In short, the internal and external relation-structure of each category.

SUBSTANCE. (Latter part of Chapter 5.)

Like difference, substance is never in a subject. (I don't fully understand the sense in which difference is not in a subject.)

All things called from substance are called from them univocally. (Also true of differentiae.)

REJECTS characterization that all substances are individual.

There is nothing contrary to substance.

Substance does not admit of more and less.

Most characteristic: while remaining numerically one and the same, admits contraries through change in itself.

My own modern formal logical-mathematical interpretation of this:
1. (NOTHING CONTRARY.) Example: Man, as such, has no contrary. Relational meaning: Distinct substances are not arranged vis-a-vis each other in such a way that there is a spectrum with two determinate endpoints.

(In the METAPHYSICS it is stated that the DIFFERENTIAE of substance have contraries. It seems to me that this implies a linear order of all substances in which prime matter and God are contraries and all other substances are intermediate.)

2. (NOT ADMITTING OF MORE AND LESS.) Example: no man is more or less man than any other, whereas, for example, one blue thing can be more less blue than another. Relational meaning: Substances have a discrete identity vis-a-vis other substances--there is not a continuous spectrum.

3. (NUMERICALLY ONE AND THE SAME ADMITTING CONTRARIES THROUGH CHANGE IN ITSELF) Example: Man becomes pale. Relational meaning: This has to do both with the relations of substance within itself and also to other categories. Individual substance can remain self-identical while changing in respect to its attributes. You don't become a different person when you grow up, forget, remember, get sick, get well, become sad, become happy, etc.

CHAPTER SIX. QUANTITY.

Quantity is initially divided according to two differentia-pairs:

- continuous / discrete
- parts having / not having relative position

A third related idea is brought in, however, when Aristotle says that the parts of time and speech have order even though they do not have relative position.

Discrete: number, speech.

Continuous: line, plane (surface), solid (body); time, place.

Having parts with relative position: line, plane, solid.

Not having parts with relative position: number, speech, time. But the parts of these do have ORDER.
Quantities have no contrary. Example: two has no contrary number. Relational interpretation: The spectra of quantity have only one extreme--zero. In the opposite direction the spectra are infinite.

[Large is a relative, not a quantity; even so, small is not the contrary of large, but the correlative.]

Quantity does not admit of more and less. Example: nothing is more two-cubits long than another. (This is confusing. One thing is closer to being two-cubits long than another.)

Most distinctive: called equal and unequal.

CHAPTER SEVEN--RELATIVE

Relatives are things which are said in relation to something else. [I. e., of, for, etc. something else.]

Examples: state, condition, perception, knowledge, position.

(Things which are-in-a-position are paronymous to positions.)

Some relatives have contaries.

Some relatives admit of more and less.

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Relatives have correlatives which reciprocate. This is true of all relatives if the names are given correctly.

Some relatives are simultaneous by nature; some aren't.

Our definition does not exclude all substances--a head is a head of the headed.

Revised definition: a relative is what it is in virtue of being in relation to something. [I. e., of, for, etc. something else.]

CHAPTER EIGHT--QUALITY

A quality is something in virtue of which something is qualified in a certain way.

(This seems circular--in my article I said that this means that
quality is what is predicated of other things as an adjective—e.g., the hair is brown.)

Quality is said in a number of ways. (This means it has several meanings.)

1. State or condition. Examples: knowledge and virtue. State differs from condition in being more lasting. (In PHYSICS he explains state as arising from contingent relations to other things—we will explore this more thoroughly in PHYSICS.)

2. Capacities.

3. Affective qualities.
   (a) Sense qualities.
   (b) Attributes of personality that are relatively permanent.
   (c) Affections (attributes of personality that are transient.)

4. Shapes.

Rare and dense are not really qualities. (Is he saying they are quantities?)

Some qualities admit of degrees.

Some qualities have contraries.

It is most characteristic of qualities that it is in virtue of them that things are similar and dissimilar.

CHAPTER NINE--DOING AND BEING AFFECTED

They both admit of more and less and have contraries.