

## 8. THE CATEGORIES

The first issue I want to address today is the importance of using your intellect rather than your imagination. The intellect is the principal power of your soul ; it is immaterial. Your imagination is one of your four internal senses. (You have five external senses and four internal ones. We will deal with the internal senses later in the year.) For the moment, though, let us note that any sense, whether external or internal, exists to serve the intellect, your principal power.

It is because he is caught up with the material that the modern thinker makes the mistake of 'thinking with his imagination'. He sees some similarity between the flippers of a seal, for example, with the hind legs of a land mammal, *imagines* that the one is a development of the other, and concludes that the one must have developed from the other. In the absence of objective evidence the conclusion does not follow. And THERE IS NO objective evidence of such a development.

Next, let us revisit shortly the important issue that the substance of any natural material thing is *immaterial*. Think of the exploded table, think of the shot rabbit. The matter remains in both, but the form (*artificial* in the case of the table ; *substantial* in the case of the rabbit) has gone. You cannot detect the substance of anything save through its bodily, that is, material manifestations.

I want to show you how, implicit in the way we deal with anything, we accept this distinction between the immaterial substance and its bodily (i.e., material) attributes. Take Matthias, for instance, sitting there at the back. Which part of Matthias is Matthias ? Is it his head ? his arms ? his legs ? his body ? Is it his voice ? his gait (the way he walks) ? Or is it the way he speaks ? Is it his face ? None of these is Matthias ; yet in a sense he is all of them. We can't recognise him apart from his bodily features. Of all of them, his face comes closest to Matthias, the person. But *the thing* which is Matthias is not material. It's what underlies them. It is his soul, his immaterial substance.

Before we go on, let us consider the possibility of the existence of substances which do not require a body. What are these ? Well, a good instance is Simon Peter's Guardian Angel who is ever whispering in his ear to do the right thing and abhor the wrong. Angels are substances which are incorporeal.

	[ <i>Incorporeal</i>	such as angels
Substances	[ or	
can be	[	
	[ <i>Corporeal</i>	such as men, dogs, cattle etc.
	[ i.e., with a body	

Now, next let me illustrate a distinction with a story about my sister, Margaret. For six years she was a nurse in Papua New Guinea. She spoke Pidgin English fluently. I remember her talking on the telephone in the 1970s with a fellow nurse, Fleur, and you could hardly understand a word she was saying. Now she tells me that if you want to say in Pidgin *We live here*, you would put it this way : *Yumi b'long dis pela ples*. The particular word I want to draw to your attention is 'b'long', or as we would say, *belong*, for it reveals a great truth about reality. Some things *be* ; some things *belong*. Matthias *be's* ; his arms, his legs, his head, *belong to* Matthias.



In the analysis of any material thing, we find this distinction between *be* and *belong*. You never see the colour *blue* by itself ; you only ever see something blue. You never see *up-side-down-ness* by itself. But you will see an up-side-down child, one hanging from a cross bar. You never see *dressed* by itself, only something, or someone, dressed. Blue and up-side-down-ness and dressed, *belong to* some corporeal substance.

Aristotle teaches that every material thing can be adequately divided in ten ways, substance and nine accidents. Let us illustrate by our memory of Lucy, Julian's dog that unfortunately died the other day. Her substance is what made Lucy be a dog. We can divide the various aspects of Lucy's being in any moment while she was still with us as follows —

<i>Substance</i>	Lucy, the dog
<i>Quantity</i>	A body
<i>Quality</i>	Black, furry, a barker
<i>Relation</i>	Belonging to Julian ; Julian's dog
<i>When</i>	28 <sup>th</sup> February ...
<i>Where</i>	At this farm ...
<i>Action</i>	Chewing a bone
<i>Passion</i>	Being bitten by fleas
<i>Habitus</i>	Wearing a collar
<i>Situs</i>	Crouching

The word *substance* is derived from Latin words meaning 'stand' and 'under'. A *substance* is something which stands by itself. In contrast are the remaining nine categories which cannot exist save in connection with some substance. The nine are called *accidents* from the Latin verb *accidere*, to

befall, or to happen. Accidents *befall* a substance. A dog may be black. But it may just as well be brown, yellow or white. The sea may be blue or it might be grey, or even red (at sunset).

To one or other of these ten classes, the categories, all things whatsoever can be referred. Now normally when we use the word 'thing' we mean a substance, or something comprised of natural substances such as a boat or a bridge. But 'thing' is an analogical term and extends also to accidents for accidents are real entities though none of them can exist apart from substances.

We are going to deal with each one. For the moment, I will give an instance to illustrate 'relation'. This is a strange sort of accident for its whole entity consists in nothing more than *be-towards*.

Back in the 1970s there was a famous expedition led by the Englishman, Chris Bonington, in which a number of men climbed Mt Everest up the precipitous south-west face, the most difficult route. Two climbers, Dougal Haston and Doug Scott, climbed it first and a day or so later a second party of three which included the Sherpa Pertemba climbed it. In 1976 I attended a day seminar at a property run by Warwick Deacock who, like Sir Edmund Hillary, has had much to do with the people of Nepal. (He use to run tours of Nepal.) I was sitting at the back of the small hall and there was a young man of asiatic features beside me. Warwick introduced him : it was Sherpa Pertemba. So there I was in the relation 'sitting alongside' a man who had climbed Mt Everest ! *Relation*, St Thomas says, is the least of all reality. It was, of course, nothing at all of advantage to me that I should sit beside a man who had achieved so great a physical feat. It was something evanescent, but it was real !

Anyway, enough of asides. Let us look at the most important, ontologically speaking, of the nine accidents, namely the first, *quantity*.

*Quantity* comes from the Latin noun *quantitas*. A related word is the adverb *quantum* = how much ? which is inevitably found in any Latin sentence coupled with the response, the adverb *tantum* = so much. We will come shortly to the next accident in importance after quantity, quality, which derives from the adverb *qualis* = of what sort ? To which query the response is the adverb *talis* = of such sort.

*quantum* = how much ?

*tantum* = so much

*qualis* = of what sort ?

*talis* = of such sort

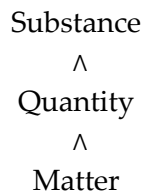
*Quantity* is that accident which provides a corporeal substance with material extension and parts. It gives it a body. *Quantity* is quite as difficult to comprehend as substance. One can imagine Aristotle, having reached the rational conclusion (as we have in the lessons that have passed) that the substantial form, the *substance*, of any material thing must be immaterial, then applying his mind to the issue : how then does it get a body ? A substance's *quantity* is a property, a proper accident, of the substance. It is determined by the substance, *dictated by the substance* if you like, for the substance cannot exist without a body. So substance is the root of actual extension and parts of the physical being. More than this, it is apt for these attributes (for it is a *corporeal* substance).

*Quantity* is the first accident in the ontological order. Before Lucy could be furry or black, she first had to have a body. Now *quantity* is mysterious. But mysteries, as Frank Sheed says in his *Theology for*

*Beginners*, are things we can know something about, but not everything. So we should endeavour to understand as much about *quantity* as we can.

When I draw a line on the blackboard I do two things. 1. I draw a line ; and 2. I generate a quantity, a continuous quantity. I could draw a number of lines and then I generate 4 or 5 discrete quantities, each comprised of matter (chalk). So there is a third thing to appreciate ; quantity is intimately connected to matter. You can't have quantity without matter ; you can't have matter (or better, a material thing) without quantity. There is one other thing to notice : quantity individuates, makes *this* lump of matter to be divided off from *that*. Matter is by nature indeterminate ; it can be anything, it can be of any extent. It has to be limited, circumscribed, sealed. It has to be *this* matter in order to be arrogated to *this* substance.

One might say, *matter* does what it is told by *quantity* and *quantity* does what it is told by *substance*. So the order of reality (ontological order) is—



Some weeks ago you may recall Joseph asking why, if *substantial form* is what makes a thing be one, is there not just one of them. Why, for instance, is there not just one tree ; why are there many trees ? You may recall my reply, namely, that it is *matter that individuates*. Well, there is a bit more to it than that. It is not just matter, but matter sealed by quantity that individuates. Take this example. I have here two buckets each containing water. The two quantities of matter (water, secondary matter) are artificially divided by the use of buckets. I can pour the matter from the one into the other. Now here (in Naomi and Julian) are two other quantities of matter. Why can't I pour one into the other ? The reason is that the substance in each case (that of Julian and that of Naomi) dictates that the matter of which they are constituted is incommunicable through their first accident, *quantity*. The water in each bucket was *artificially* sealed off from that in the other. But here the *quantities* are naturally sealed.

Now we must understand that the substance of any material thing is *per se* (that is, according to itself) not material. So it cannot be represented even by a dot or a point, for this would be to conceive of it as if it was a material thing, if an infinitesimally small one. Yet, because we are material creatures and inclined to view things materially when using our intellects, we might try and use a dot as a notional starting point in an endeavour to understand just how *quantity* operates. But to do so is misleading for the substance of a living thing, its soul, is in every part of it. An immaterial being, like the soul of a man, or an angel, is where it operates. The Archangel Gabriel whom Divine Revelation tells us attended on Our Blessed Lady, was there in Nazareth in the moment when he announced to Mary that she would conceive Our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ. So is your soul wherever it operates. The whole soul is in one's hand as it is in the head, as it is in every part of the body.

This is why we feel such anguish when we jamb our finger or suffer a blow. Our whole soul feels it !

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