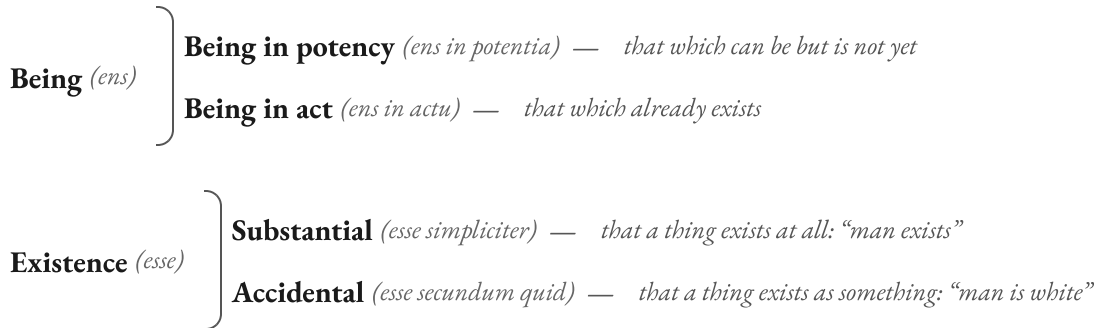


ON THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE

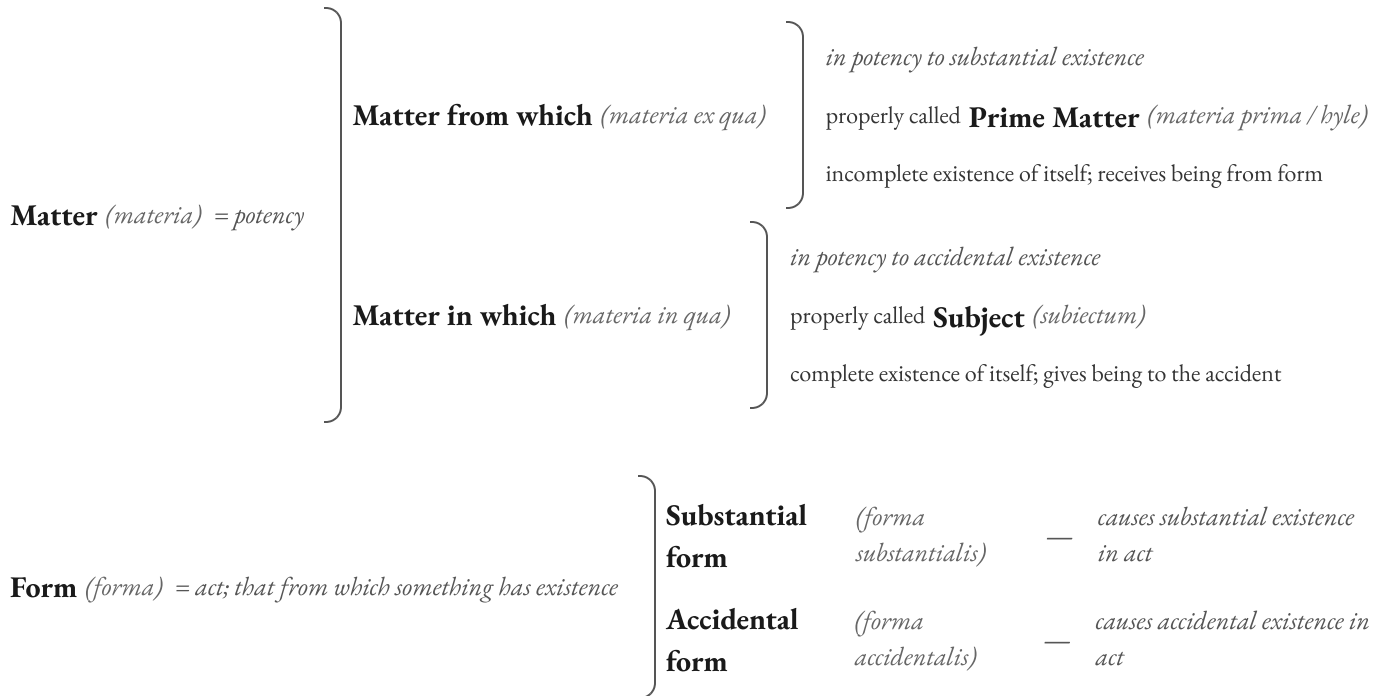
De Principiis Naturae

St. Thomas Aquinas · Schematic Overview · Magisterium Monday

I. BEING: POTENCY AND ACT



II. MATTER AND FORM



N.B. *All artificial forms are accidental. Art operates only on that which is already constituted in existence by nature.*

III. THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE



Principles of Nature } **Form** — *that by reason of which generation takes place*
 } **Per accidens** (*accidental; does not remain*) } **Privation** (*privatio*) — *principle of becoming, not of existing*

Privation } *absence of form in a determined subject apt to receive it*
 } *coincident with matter (same in subject, different in definition)*
 } *necessary accident: matter is never without privation of some form*

Absence of Form } **Privation** (*privatio*) — *in a subject apt to receive the form (blindness in man)*
 } **Negation** (*negatio*) — *does not determine a subject (non-seeing in a stone)*

IV. GENERATION AND CORRUPTION

Generation (*generatio*) = *from privation to form* } **Simply speaking** (*simpliciter*) — *substantial form introduced; a thing comes to be*
 } **In a certain respect** (*secundum quid*) — *accidental form introduced; a thing comes to be as this*

Corruption (*corruptio*) = *from form to privation* } **Simply speaking** — *substantial form lost; a thing ceases to be*
 } **In a certain respect** — *accidental form lost; a thing ceases to be as this*

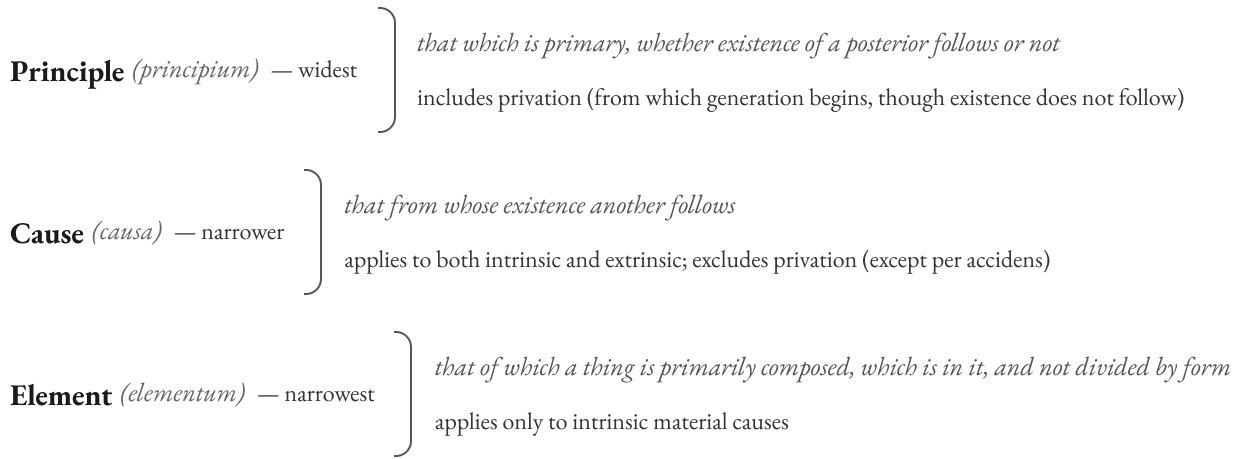
N.B. *Prime matter and form are neither generated nor corrupted. Only the composite is generated. If matter were generated, there would be a matter of matter ad infinitum.*

v. THE FOUR CAUSES

Causes (*causae*) } **Intrinsic** (*parts constituting the thing*) } **Material** — *that from which a thing is made and which remains in it*
 } } **Formal** — *the form or pattern by which a thing is what it is*
 } **Extrinsic** (*outside the thing*) } **Efficient** — *that from which the principle of motion is*
 } } **Final** — *that which is intended by the agent; the end*

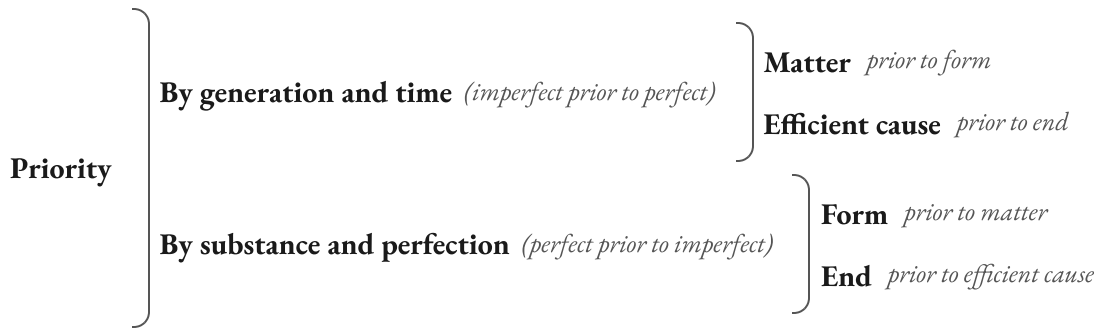
N.B. *Every agent, both natural and voluntary, intends an end. Natural agents intend the end without deliberation: “to intend this is nothing else than to have a natural inclination to something.”*

VI. PRINCIPLE, CAUSE, AND ELEMENT



Principle \supset **Cause** \supset **Element**. *Every element is a cause; every cause is a principle. Not conversely.*

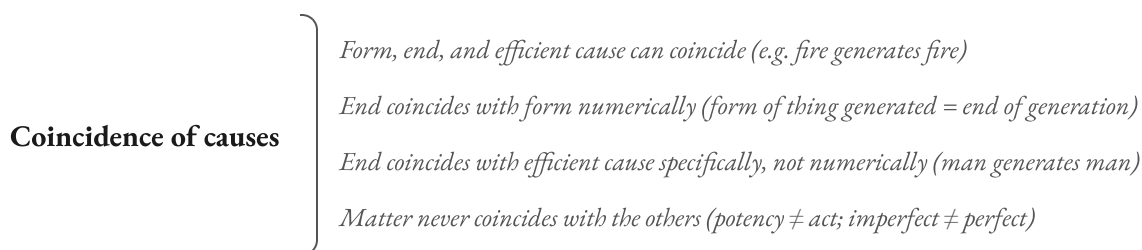
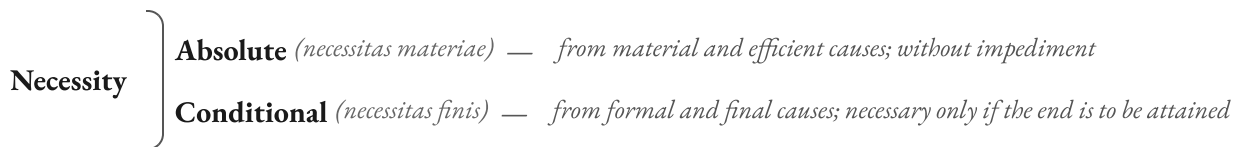
VII. RELATIONS AMONG THE CAUSES



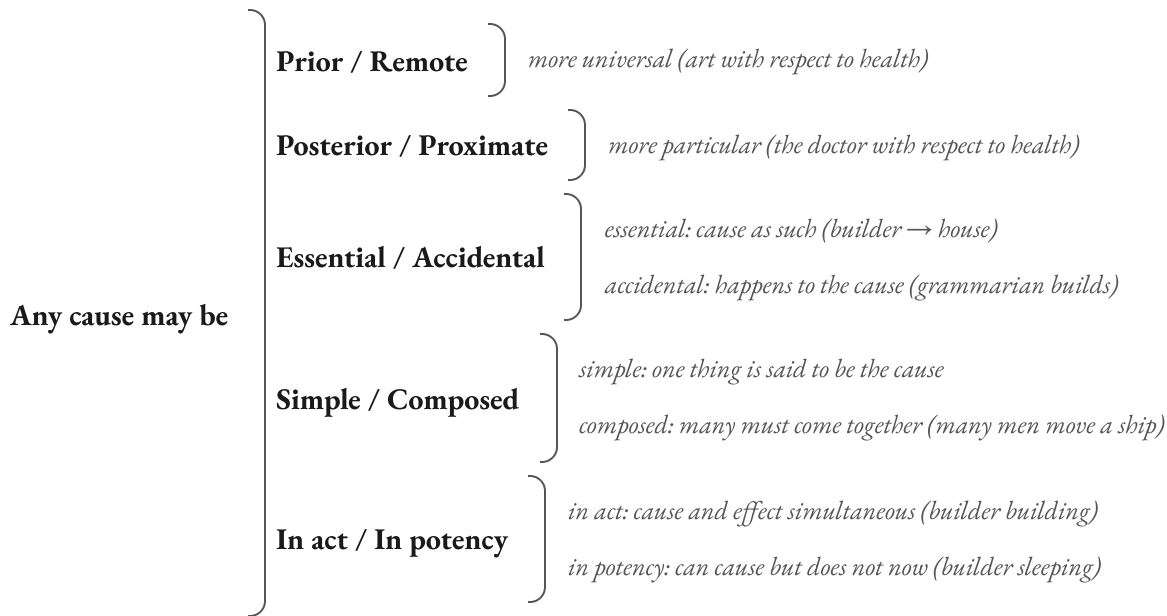
The End as Cause of Causes (*finis est causa causarum*)

- End** \rightarrow **efficient cause**: *causes it to be an efficient cause (the agent acts for the sake of the end)*
- End** \rightarrow **matter**: *causes it to be matter (matter receives the form only for the sake of the end)*
- End** \rightarrow **form**: *causes it to be form (form perfects the matter only through the end)*

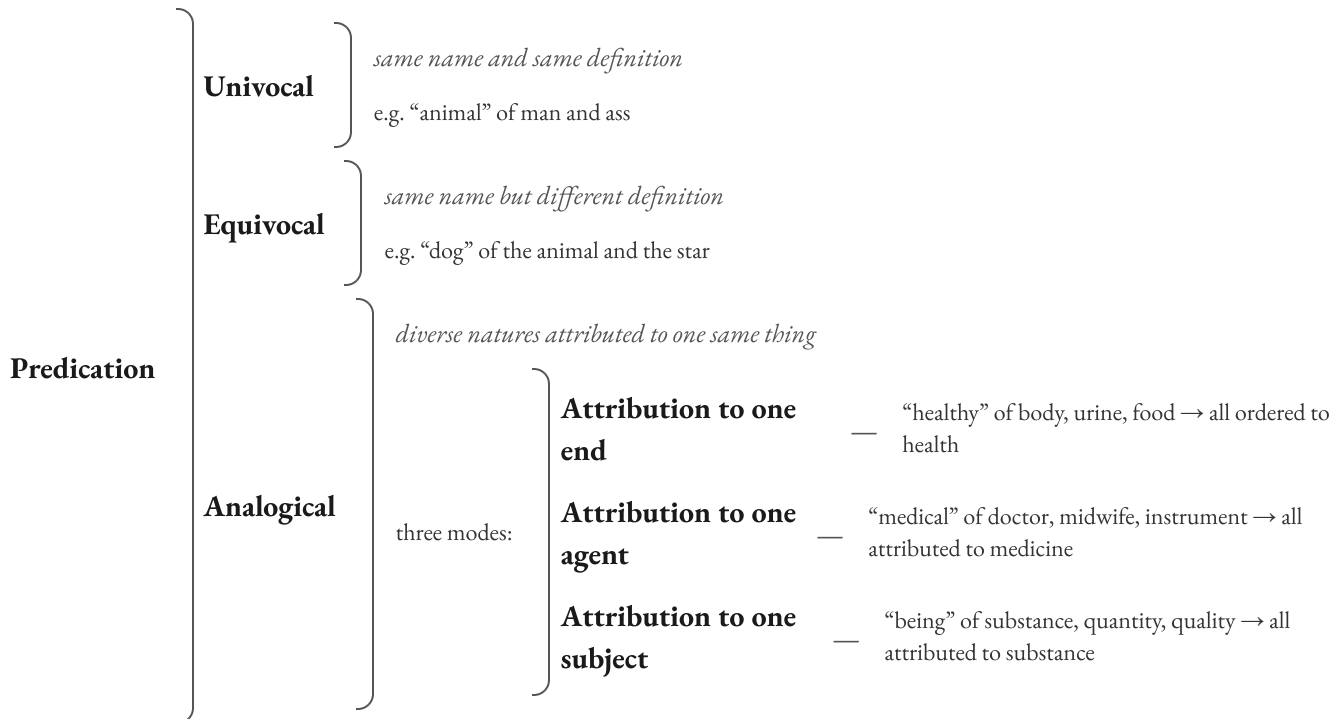
The efficient cause is the cause of that which is the end (it brings the end into actual existence), but it does not cause the end to be the end.



VIII. DIVISIONS OF EACH CAUSE

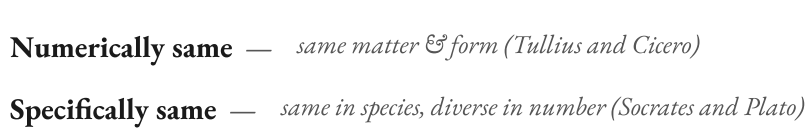


IX. THE THREE MODES OF PREDICATION



N.B. Being is not a genus, because no genus is predicated of its species according to prior and posterior. Being is predicated analogically: primarily of substance, secondarily of the other categories.

X. ANALOGY OF PRINCIPLES ACROSS THE CATEGORIES



Principles of things

Generically same — *same in genus, diverse in species (man and ass)*

Analogically same — *same only in proportion (substance and quantity)*

Conclusion: *“Just as substance is the cause of the others, so the principles of substance are the principles of all the others.”*