"In a subject" in the *Categories*: Three Interpretations

1.   Ackrill (*Categories*, Clarendon Aristotle series, 1963)

   x is IN *y* =df   (a) *x* is in *y*, or of *y*, or belongs to *y*, or . . . , and
                        (b) *x* is not a part of *y*, and
                        (c) *x* cannot exist separately from *y*

2.   Owen ("Inherence," *Phronesis* 10 [1965] 97-105)

   x is IN *y* =df   (a) *x* is in *y*, and
                        (b) *x* is not a part of *y*, and
                        (c) *x* cannot exist on its own (i.e., *x* cannot exist unless
                             there is something *z* such that *x* is in *z*)

3.   Frede ("Individuals in Aristotle," *Essays on Ancient Philosophy*, Oxford [1987])

   x is IN a subject =df   There is something, *y*, such that
                             (a) *x* is not a part of *y*, and
                             (b) *x* cannot exist independently of *y*

a.   According to Ackrill and Owen, Aristotle is defining the two-place predicate '*x* is IN *y*', and the word 'IN' in the *definiendum* is being used in a technical sense. The 'in' of the *definiens* must be an "ordinary" language non-technical use of 'in' in order for the definition not to be circular.

b.   According to Frede, Aristotle is defining the one-place predicate '*x* is IN a subject' (i.e., he is defining what it is to be an **accident**, the sort of thing that is IN a subject). Hence, 'in' is not being used in two different senses in the definition, one in the *definiendum* and another in the *definiens*. There is no problem with circularity.

c.   According to Ackrill, the only thing that can be IN a particular substance is something that cannot exist apart from **that** substance. That is, what inheres in a particular substance is **always** a particular (non-shareable) quality (or other accident), i.e., a trope.

d.   According to Owen, Aristotle is not committed to non-shareable particulars in the non-substance categories. There are no qualities that depend for their existence on Socrates. Hence something generic, such as color, can be IN Socrates; the color in Socrates cannot exist without being in some substance or other.

e.   Frede's view is similar to Owen's except for the inseparability requirement. According to Frede, for each non-substance there is some subject from which it is inseparable. But this subject may be something general. E.g., there is a subject, namely *body*, without which color could not exist.